

A TRIALOGUE ON THE POLITICO-ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL DIRECTION FOR NIGERIA

Beyond the theoretical-cum-practical basis for organising a
meaningful future



MUHAMMAD SAIDU JIMADA

THOSE WHO CARE TO THINK ALOUD;
THOSE WHO ARE EQUALLY FRANK;
AND SEEK TO GAIN SOME BASIRA OR INSIGHT

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Mr. THINKING:

Basira, you see, frankly speaking, I often feel very uneasy to raise certain very serious matters with you, even at the level of discussion. And when it comes to practice, I find it annoying, because you at least appear to me as someone or a folk who are not even prepared to understand things. Indeed the manner in which you are often prone to dismiss or explain 'away' matters is very disturbing.

Mr. FRANK:

I think you should be a bit sincere and direct about the points you are making. This will go a long way to disabuse his mind about your position or suggestions. I think the point is that at best, Basira and his kind are intellectually or ideologically evasive and practically very misleading. Take for example, inspite of the fact that we are all Nigerians; that this country belongs to all of us; the fact that we are socio-logically heterogeneous, Basira still finds it difficult to appreciate that the state can only be secular in its efforts to attend to common problems.

Mal. BASIRA:

True, Nigeria belongs to all of us who care, who are given the opportunity of belonging and have access to the instruments that make, it possible to realise such belongingness. The mere incidence that we are in the geographical expression known as Nigeria does not make us belong to Nigeria, or Nigeria belonging to us. The point of secularism or a compromise point for differences is therefore seriously speaking not that of objective differences but subjective ones, with individuals and groups serving as the sponsors of such differences. Secularism is therefore not empty of details or neutral or having a definite form, but the varying colours that we are able to make of ourselves, with resulting conveniences and inconveniences. The

state has no relevant meaning except in terms of the people as a political force. To therefore suggest that secularism is empty or devoid of any of our colours may not be useful. Indeed. Secularism means ruling colours that may be largely shared or not - but essentially ruling. There is therefore nothing wrong or abnormal in urging for the transformation of the ruling colour(s), as long as such colour(s) can be legally found and claim Nigeria. Whatever its form, it has been successfully fought for, and because it is not static, its change or modification cannot be dissociated from fighting. This is the only way in which secularism will have sociological meaning - ideologically and practically.

Mr. THINKING:

Will or should this be the Case even at the expense of Unity? Of Nigerians?
Of political stability?

Mal. BASIRA:

My dear friend, survival is not the same as existence. The former denotes dynamity or continuity where as the latter is basic or the basis for the former. Unity is not given. It has to be achieved and maintained or improved upon, otherwise, it gives way for disunity or a level and form of unity that is not generally satisfying. And this is not to deny that the process of achieving unity and its maintenance may look like disunity in the eyes of passive parties to the process.

The concept of Federalist secularism as unity in diversity is therefore meaningless and misleading. A people(s) cannot be commonly neutral. At least my kind cannot and need not afford to be so, because we are rich and have lots of things to care about or for or protect. And I am not suggesting that those who have nothing need care, but they can as well just look on rather than constituting

themselves into nuisances, the relationship between secularism and unity is therefore from our point of view a matter of big responsibility that requires forging. Since we accept that we are different, unity cannot mean forgetting, overlooking, ignoring or playing down our differences. It rather means that those of us Nigerians who care are free to disarmingly shape the form of secularism that will be in rule - to give the unity.

Political stability does not mean anything different either. It merely captures the meeting point for differences and unity for a given time and in a given circumstance and place. Thus, stability is not a problem that gets abandoned on achievement because its existence is always at the historical risk of instability. If it is therefore not maintained the alternative forces will take over and a state of political instability will be given rise to. But, this again may serve as a transitional stage in the process of improving on the form or terms of political stability - in the process of transformation.

Mr. FRANK:

Are you thinking or suggesting that, with respect to differences other groupings or groups do not care or have a lesser right to forging their identity? Does this sound reasonable to you? Do you recognize that you are free only to the extent that you do not step on others? Do you have respect for others at all?

Mal. BASIRA:

Rather than thinking or suggesting, the point is that we are dependently and togetherly legally free to care - no more no less, in forging our respective identity. We are also lucky to find ourselves in the historical circumstance with the choice to do so - to be part of the generation(s) that will forge the terms of the identity and unity. This

is unlike being born into a society like Soviet Union or Saudi Arabia, where the terms have already been formed leaving those who come into it to merely follow. Both may appear reasonable but our situation is in my opinion at least reasonable.

The question of stepping on others does not in any way arise because we all equally force, with the extent determined only by the amount of effort we are able to positively put into it differently. Those who therefore choose to be passive cannot or need not be blamed. For us, we have enough or even more than enough to care about and have no time to attend to others, in terms of giving them consultancy services. We can claim knowledge or familiarity with our case, but not with that of others. I don't therefore see anything disrespectful in this or about it.

We have the obligation to respect those who have respect for themselves, but cannot impose respect on those who do not have any for themselves. That will not be fair. Rights are neither given nor do they stand permanent, when achieved. They need to be struggled for and maintained.

Mr. THINKING:

You are therefore heading towards some form of dominance of a sociology in politics and may be even in economics. This is contrary to the present balanced state of affairs as managed by the state.

Mal. BASIRA:

History gallops along some form of dominance, and the responsibility of man is to ensure that the dominance is generally more satisfying than not. It is the role of responsibility that I stand for. I am not familiar with the kind of scale you are employing in determining the balance you claim. However, I am sure that the nationality, the trend or direction of history squarely depends upon what men are

able to successfully make or map out of the dynamic and sporadic process of history. You cannot be suggesting that we all have equal access to politics and economics as Nigerians. The state is therefore not in the position of making out balanced conclusions when it reaches out to us. It is rather freed or constrained only in accordance with what we are differently or contradictably able to make out of this situation. The logic then is the greater the access, the better or the more the opportunities. We must therefore fight. Not, struggle.

Mr. THINKING:

So, the state is not for all. We are all not for the state. Some are more for it than others. Even if this is accepted to be the present state of things, wouldn't you see the need for making it for all and all for it? Is your, position not uncivil? Are you not merely striving intellectually and practically to revert the present state in your favour, whereas there is and it is possible to direct your efforts towards a higher and noble goal?

Mal. BASIRA:

Given the context and formation of Nigeria, the assertion or denial that the state is for all is uncalled for. This is the Case because the state has a personal, human, complex and dynamic face.

Even if the man or men who symbolise the state at any point of time choose to be impersonal it will be historically impossible or found very wanting. This is because the men cannot discard their personality and those of us to be reached by the state have personalities. The point is therefore not very much that of deliberate fault on the part of the state or indeed those who man and represent the state, and therefore act out accordingly. Rather, the situation is that what the state will really be

able to do, is in the end determined by the freedom and constraints of the man or men - against the identity and expectations of those to be reached. We must therefore not make the mistake that the state is a sacred neutrality and not open to change or transformation, especially when we feel harmed. Those who feel the contrary are free to support, but not expect that everyone must support the composition and direction of the state.

The suggestion of a higher and noble goal defined by a situation of making the state for all and all for the state may be alright. But, this will be useful and consistent only for those who will have to identify with the melting of our differences as a state of mobility. For such, that will be a way out, a solution and an improvement. But for us, that is uncalled for and not required. Our identity is perfect. The question of compromise will amount to abandoning our identity. This is why we are not scared of struggling or fighting, in the name of our identity. We do not therefore need to strive towards just anything that is logical or looks reasonable. We have a comprehensive and elaborate programme and direction that will surely get us to our desired goal.

You will agree with me that there is no single civilisation in the world and the rest barbarism or primitive. There are many civilisations. That is where and why we differ. And if in your opinion we are only seeking to revert the situation in our favour, you are free to think so. If that arises out of our frustration, we will improve on the frustration sufficiently in order that it may be overcome. If at the end the others get the frustrations, they may keep it; free themselves by joining us, or we continue in the struggle.

Mr. FRANK:

Mallam Basira, I am beginning to see your point. But, the problems are not yet over.

Mr. THINKING:

I don't think there has been any improvement. The fact is that, he has deliberately refused to be open minded, to be free in his thoughts. And he probably underestimates the explosive implication of such sticking. I hope you are not getting enslaved.

Mr. FRANK:

I see your point. But the mistake is that to be open or free doesn't mean that he must agree with you or us. To suggest such, makes you or both of us worse of. I think that you are as bad as he is or equally as good. Now, Mallam Basira, do you accept that corruption is a common problem that we all cannot deny and that secularism can be helpful - as defined by Mr. Thinking or only by secularism defined by you?

Mr. THINKING:

Will you still hold that, without corruption, there will still be the need to define secularism in your terms?

Mal. BASIRA:

That there is corruption in Nigeria is undisputable. Corruption however is of various types, forms and levels. It is of general consensus that the types, forms and levels of corruption now in existence or operation need be wiped out completely. But,

this is because it fails to fit into the standards of most if not all of us, across the country. However, if it is to be wiped out the replacement of corruption by another standard or a set of standards is a point upon which there is no and need no consensus. The terms upon which we will prefer relationships - economic, political and social, to be defined as contrary to corruption will be radically different from what either of you may be expecting. This calls for the primary need for clearance on the part of each group to identify the terms upon which relationships are to be established, when the present ones are wiped out. Struggle will then follow to realise what is realisable, in the context of the people, times and problem.

I had assumed that we all know what corruption means. But, with the question of Mr. Thinking, a small clarification may be required. Granting that the essence of corruption is influence and that it is when a proper instrument or means of influence is misused that the state of corruption is said to have come into existence, it will be appreciated that the non-existence of the essence of influence in the relationships between men is ahistorical. What can properly constitute a problem is the level, the form or kind of influence. This being the case, it does not in any way shake our concept of secularism.

Mr. THINKING:

The only avenue for relief is that the claimants of the identity of Basira are yet to begin to tread his explosive path.

One may still hope that they will realise the danger and avoid it, and even join peace loving people like me to get Basira from the erring path. Basira your logic makes everybody look wise or foolish. I wish you can be more honest and understanding. Frank, what other questions do you have for our fellow citizen, with whom we have to live?

Mal. BASIRA:

Before you proceed, let me point out that other than differing from you I consider my position superior to yours in the sense that my thoughts are guarded within a perfected framework rather than just wandering in search for what is not known even to me. And the framework does not seek to alienate, coerce, eliminate or subjugate non supporters to the background, even though it does not allow for an equal stance. The positive implication of my position is that we can differently freely exist but with the clear dominance of my standards - which are not terribly out of place even for you.

Mr. FRANK:

I probably wouldn't have had any question to ask but, now that you have thrown further light on the subject, I am not sure if you really want me to get along with you, this aspect of equality and dominance as a useful concept of secularism for this country of ours is baffling. How can differences be equal and another difference be in dominance, with the result that all differences involved will not see any party oppressing it or the other way round? This doesn't sound logical. Or, is the subjugator responsible for thinking and expression, on behalf of the subjugated? I would have thought that each party should be left to sort out its own position in the context of your framework of equality - dominance that leads to no domination.

Mr. THINKING:

And I don't see how you can make sense out of this nonsense whether you want to consider the matter of the parties consciousness on subjective or objective terms - using your own words. And there is no rationality in being inconsistent, when

considering the different parties. I think you have now exposed yourself sufficiently for dismissal.

Mal. BASIRA:

I am not saying anything strange. The point and essence of my position, which you don't seem to have grasped is its historicity. You seem to get the impression that I am requesting for a state of affairs where we will be in dominance. No. Yes. You are therefore bent on protecting or defending the other differences, including yours. You have gotten the whole message wrong, upside down.

The simple thing I am saying is that the reality of our differences is both objective and subjective. That is, observers can appreciate that we are different, and we do ourselves recognise that we are different. That, we can possibly live together, co-exist and co-survive. That, the terms of such existence and survival is not quantitative and can therefore not be mathematically resolved - the most rational tool and science that is at the disposal of man. And that the only satisfying means, which men are very capable of employing is by striving, struggling or fighting for it - against others. The structure of the resulting equality and dominance is not, for me and you to pattern or outline or resolve on the terms, by discussions alone. It requires a practical realisation by all and sundry according to our differences. It is therefore, our discussion that is an objective activity and attempt at dealing with the differences. However, the goal will only be met at the point when collective efforts are mobilised on the direction of these varying objectivities, subjectively. The point of what difference will come into dominance and what differences will as a result become objectively defined as subjugated is a matter not for our resolution through discussions but that of practice. It may be your difference. It may be mine. And for the concept of equality under the domination of a particular difference, you are free

to differ. But I am satisfied that the objectively subjugated will not feel alienated under our domination. And even if they feel, if practice results in our favour, what else will be done? The only option will still remain that of historically transforming the situation, against the order that must have been founded.

Mr. THINKING:

O.K. O.K. I see your point. I would have said that you are selfish and ethnocentric. On the contrary, the approach is that we must not employ any standard of a particular difference or in abuse of all of the differences combined, to assess or even place the entire-society. This sounds fair at least. I think I should now hold unto my breath. I am not saying that you are right.

Mr. FRANK:

What else must you be saying? Are you ashamed or afraid that he may become a winner? Have you forgotten that we are not playing games? Are the rules not open? What is it that is not clear to you? Are you saying that he may be wrong? But, on what basis? Are your eyes open, leaving your mind closed. I hope the problem is not that you are a complex. It is not your right, and you cannot be right to assert that anyone is wrong - and keep quiet.

Mallam Basira, so far, so good. I think, or I am sure that you have made a theoretical point, by being conceptually consistent. We may now move to the realm of experiences. What kind of differential leadership do you expect such secularism to produce? Whatever it is, I will also like to know, why you think it will be satisfying.

Mal. BASIRA:

In practice, the leadership will be the product and dictate of the standards of that differential group(s) that successfully dominate. All the others will however not be denied their basics - they will be tolerated and at worst accommodated. The implication is that there will be clear terms of assessing the performance of the leadership objectively and subjectively. This means that observers who do not share the same identity with the leadership and parties to the leadership will both agree on the successes and failures of the leadership because there will be consistency in the identity of the leadership as a person or set of persons and those who are primarily being represented or led. This will be the case, biases of the non-party members notwithstanding.

In such circumstance, strives for improvement from within the circle of the group that sponsored the leadership cannot be denied. I mean to say that will not be the end of the struggle. And if a change is required, the sponsors of such requirement can neatly draw the lines of what is needed against what is superfluous. If the sponsors are of a different identity, they do not need be told that, they are out for a total replacement; if it is from within his group, the matter will clearly be that of adjustment. And there is every possibility that it may be sponsored by various or all differences - the dominated and dominating alike.

In that case, the requirement will be some reform – nothing really drastic.

Mr. FRANK:

And, for the followership?

Mal. BASIRA:

They will clearly see themselves as part of the identity of the leadership or as clearly different from it. However, none of them will mistake the terms of assessing the leadership and in what is expected of it. Thus there will be consistency in the concept, identity, activity, expectations and duties of the leadership by the leadership and its followership - whether they identify with the leadership or not. This consistency is a definition of the subjective consciousness of all parties.

Mr. THINKING:

This subject of consciousness. What will you say is wrong or the problem with the consciousness of our people, and its relationship to secularism? I will want you to specifically focus on the variables of the leadership and the followership.

Mal. BASIRA:

Following my definition of secularism, you already appreciate what can be expected of both the leadership and the followership. What can be deduced from that concept to be wrong with our present arrangement is that neither the leadership nor the followership has a basic, a primary or fundamental consistency in its particular and general consciousness of what is and what ought to be. This is not to deny that there are identities. The point is that there isn't any single one on which the leadership and the followership identify one another objectively, and subjectively.

It is rather always a collection of more than one identity. The leadership is therefore always groping around. It is now one thing, at another time a different thing and at times even contradictory. You can not be a unionist and class member at the same time, in terms of identity. You cannot be National leader or a statesman

and a tribesman at the same time. For the purposes of mobilisation, political education and activity, there must be some consistency.

What is therefore happening in the case of Nigeria is that the leadership cannot discard its primary personality or identity of religion or ideology. However, instead of holding firmly unto this as a means of achieving unity and progress with other differences, it also assumes the identity of tribe, state, along with religion and ideology. This is thought to be the requirement of secularism as is now operated in this country. But the falsity of this is revealed in the fact that what the leadership does to reach the followership and the expectations of the followership is all inconsistent. The result is that no difference is particularly consistently satisfied and the differences combined are not consistently satisfied. What is objectively wrong about the secularism is the confirmation by most or all of us that the state of things is improper. What is subjectively wrong about it is that no given difference at individual and collective level will be able to consistently commit itself to primarily identifying with the present trend - including those who benefit from it.

You can therefore see that we do not form a Nation. The kind of nationalism and patriotism that we practice is therefore half hearted to observers and risk free, to the actors.

Mr. FRANK:

Still on the question of secularism and the way in which the leadership and the followership are or supposed to be related to it. What constitutes the basis for the secularism which you seem to accept but question, because of the inconsistent effect it has on the kind of leadership that is produced?

Mal. BASIRA:

The question is a simple one; the concept of secularism that is objected to is that which claims neutrality without any personal face. In its place, my or our position is that the differences that need to be respected must be given some personal face. And this is in matters of specificity or details. Except this is done, the inconsistency that is pointed at will inevitably be or continue to be a reality in the socio-politics of this country. These define the extent of our objection and acceptance of the concept of secularism and its relationship to the leadership and the followership. However, this is not to object to the possibility that the specificity of every or any particular identity as being myopic or comprehensive. The point however is that our identity terms are comprehensive and all embracing. I hope this now closes the matter.

Mr. THINKING:

Let me open the matter again please. Do you accept that Tribe or Ethnicity and Religion are real in the context of this country?

Mal. BASIRA:

Yes please. In addition, I am of the position that neither of the two basis for identity can be erased nor does either of them need to. What is rather required is a need to face and deal with them.

Mr. FRANK:

Will I be correct to say that you object to a unitary constitutional arrangement of politics in or for this country?

Mal. BASIRA:

Certainly, yes. And the simple basis and reason for this, is that inspite of the need for unity in this country, the identity basis for it ceases to be meaningful beyond a structural arrangement. In other words, it is not only possible but meaningful to accept and live with secular (defined in terms of value neutrality) political machinery as a protective means against foreign aggression and internal oppression of our valuable terms of differences. I therefore support and accept an arrangement that is protective in these terms - because I consider both aspects to be uncompromisable even though the secularity needed derives its status and value in the differential base.

Mr. THINKING:

You are therefore suggesting that a unitary arrangement will lead to the operation of a possibly unsatisfying pragmatic political system because it will be at the expense of the varying cultural development of the different peoples of this country. If this is what you mean, can't you see that the feasibility of forging a national political culture will be very remote? Does this not explain why this country has not been able to move, in the many respects that it is clearly very capable of making head ways - humanly and materially? Wouldn't you consider the short - live nature of Nigeria's unitary experience a great if not the greatest political - historical misfortune?

Mal. BASIRA:

The point is that Nigeria will be firmly placed on the path of forging a complex, satisfying, meaningful pragmatic culture. The present state of failure is not explainable by the non practice of the unitary system. On the contrary, it is because

the federation that is being suggested and required, to meet the qualities I have identified is not any kind of federation, but that which is based on objective and subjective consciousness and practical consistency in the terms of political survival of the leadership and followership as already defined. If this country were made up of people who share a common cultural and ideological basis that is superior to other forms and levels of differences, and goes beyond the historical accident of belonging to the same political jurisdiction; in the circumstance where ideological and cultural differences that may still be identified are agreeably only shades of a centrally acceptable culture and ideology, a unitary system will be rational, satisfying and meaningful. It is only in such a situation that the political machinery will equally be a reflection of common or generally shared terms of satisfaction and meaning for the people. If they are therefore seeking for a means of avoiding struggles, there are necessary ones that need to exist, to give meaning to the survival of a people. Thus, although the unitary trial in Nigeria could have succeeded, I am satisfied that it didn't. I am not saying that it was or is irrational, to conceive of and attempt a unitary political arrangement. My point is that it will not be satisfying.

Mr. FRANK:

Excuse me, Mr. Thinking. Mal. Basira, if you accept that a political machinery the unitary in this case, is capable of forging a kind of meaningful and satisfying culture in a social environment of cultural and ideological homogeneity, wouldn't you think that if the unitary machinery is made reflective of the social, cultural and ideological heterogeneity but without becoming federalist, this country would have succeeded in making a balance out of the seeming extremities that the two of you are representing.

Mr. THINKING:

That will certainly be marvellous. There is reason, structure, pragmatism, culture, ideology, satisfaction and meaning in that sort of arrangement. What do you have to say to that?

Mr. BASIRA:

It will still be bankrupt of culture and ideology that is heterogeneously satisfying and meaningful. Culture is dynamic. What is consistently satisfying and meaningful allow for misgivings. In special circumstances but not as a rule. But, the standard that is accepted as a rule does not bring out the special 'gives'. In other words, if for instance you are a security guard, you must not sleep, and you must not doze. However, if you do, you will normally be dismissed except in a circumstance like when you are caught asleep and intruders made effort but still failed to do away or inflict any damage to the life and property in your protection. Nonetheless, you will deserve some warning. And if you are dismissed in spite of the non-failure, the action wouldn't be said to be wrong. This does not mean that in all cases, where there is a failure, and is related or not related to sleeping, you stand to be retained or dismissed. Now imagine that Nigeria is made up of the following security companies that are absolutely defined by the following rules respectively;

- (i) Guards who sleep will go, whether stealing takes place or not.
- (ii) Guards who do not allow stealing, whether they sleep or not will be secure.
- (iii) Guards must not sleep and stealing must not take place, otherwise they will lose their jobs - if either becomes operative.
- (iv) Guards who are found to have been responsible for the damage of what they protect personally and directly will be dismissed.

- (v) Guards who unavoidable allow stealing or damage of what is put in their care will be secure.
- (vi) Hardworking and good behaved guards will be secure. Lazy and bad behaved guards will be dismissed.

If a unitary or central organisation is to be formed and all of the above parties are represented, what kind of standard do you expect that will be generally and in detail terms acceptable to all the representatives? What standard to be imposed will take the specific cares of all the respective companies? Mind you, if the unitary or central body is to take a general position, it will be in abuse of at least one or even more. The other option will be the acceptance of all specifics, at the expense of the unitary culture you are proposing. None of the two options will be satisfying if the respective companies are to be respected.

You will therefore appreciate that you cannot and need not solve cultural and ideological problems of social differences that are so dynamic, mathematically - living things, deadly. But, if you have no respect for the differences, all of these problems will not arise. And the fundamental basis for respecting and accepting these differences is that the differences are in many (not all) respects not compromisable. Indeed the take off point is that some of these differences are in our control, some are not. And I have no justification for taking one to be rational and the other as not. It is not for me to 'decide' for the other difference(s) what is reasonable, proper, meaningful and satisfying and what is not.

Mr. THINKING:

I respect, please. I was just thinking that it will work.

Mr. BASIRA:

It will meaninglessly work.

Mr. THINKING:

One can even say that the historical attempt at turning Nigeria into a unitary system was mischievously motivated. The leadership can hardly be dissociated from this.

Mal. BASIRA:

May be. May be not. May be the leadership KNEW and deliberately decided to gamble with Nigeria - in disrespect of the differences. May be it was ignorant and acted, out of innocence. But, it was disrespect. We are lucky, that, it wasn't made the order.

Mr. THINKING:

The attempt is condemnable, at least because of the killings that preceded it and the other attempt at disunity that followed its failure.

Mal. BASIRA:

I wouldn't say so. It is the price for neutral or passive dynamics for an ignorant, careless, or very determined but disrespectful leadership and support. Concepts are important.

Mr. FRANK:

From your response, it will appear that you are for Federalism, but, not any kind of federalism. This is the message I get when you said you object to federal

character federalism. Your cultural and ideological dynamics or problems must not be resolved mathematically. If that is done, it will lose its flavour. This implies that you allow for sub-units.

Mr. BASIRA:

Yes. But not subordinate units.

Mr. THINKING:

Oh! You are for strong sub-units and a weak centre.

Mr. BASIRA:

No. I am not for a weak centre.

Mr. THINKING:

But, you cannot have strong sub-units and a strong centre. It has never happened. Well, you may clarify the point.

Mr. FRANK:

It is quite feasible to have strong sub-units and a strong centre even if it hadn't been experienced. It is possible to have a centre responsible for only the protection of the sub-units who are independent, from external aggression only for the collective sub-units and among or between the individual sub-units. This is not impossible. Mal. Basira, is that your federalism? This is sound, but we have already gone far, with weakening sub-units and a growing federal strength.

Mal. BASIRA:

That is not the kind of federalism I am for. And I am not against it. I am also not for confederation. As for the experience of a growing federal strength, I am not for the way it is today, but I am for the evolving and changing form of the strength of the centre.

Mr. THINKING:

I am beginning to see that you are beginning to have a problem. It will do you a lot of good to take your time.

Mal. BASIRA:

You will probably say: If you don't go right, you don't go to the left, and ignore the middle, where do you go? But, the problem in question is not like going and is like going allowing for going the left, the middle and even to the right not of the ideological world but of a conceptual continuum, in this discussion.

I am not advocating for a federal structure of strong subunits and a strong centre. I only agree that such arrangement is not out of place - of a centre and sub - units. In their relationship to the centre and between themselves, there should be the room for differing. But, they must not differ to the point of not belonging to the federal family and will have to be within the context of being an active party and member of the nation - state. Its difference may extend to the highest point of what is dictated by the dominant politics of the sub-unit in matters of details - without threatening the existence and survival of its membership of the federation. I am therefore not for confederation. This is because; it weakens the strength of the centre. And am not for the manner of strengthening centre that we have so far experienced. This is because both the sub-units and the centre have consistently hypocritically posed as being

neutral in terms of ideology or the set of values it stands for - in this environment of enormous differences. But, I am for a changing strengthening or weakening centre, or one whose abilities are expressly limited and stated in all respects. What should therefore determine the terms of strength will be constant struggles based on a or set of consistent objective and subjective Conscious concept of socio-political economy. The centre and source of dynamics should therefore be conscious and active men. In other words, the political machinery needs not to be neutral. It should be as coloured as the composite men make of it in their struggles. The machinery shall therefore be as accessible as possible to all but not on the terms of equal number, but on the terms of what strength any identity or group is able to sponsor. Those who choose to be passive do not matter. But, distortional basis of political practice as now operates; characterized by inconsistencies can not be the take off point. And I am not suggesting that all men need to become literate before such a political practice. Most men have some form of Subjective identity and needs to be appreciated, accepted and encouraged - OPENLY.

Mr. FRANK:

You are an advocate of a secular federalism.

Mr. THINKING:

Secularism, as earlier defined by you. Or, struggling federalism.

Mal. BASIRA:

That is correct.

Mr. FRANK:

In what way then is the proposed concept of lively Federalism different from confederation and the present experience in Nigeria? May be, I should add, in what way is it also related to the unitary that you are so much opposed to?

Mr. THINKING:

This freshens the conceptual problem, for clarity.

Mal. BASIRA:

It is distant and close to all the three, to the extent that it is a conscious and consistent Federalism that strives towards the possible attainment of a unitary federal centre (in reality) culturally and ideologically, depending upon the efforts put in at the sub-unit levels. It is a Federalist system, the future details of which is not immediately determinable, other than the fact that the federal family will continue to be an indissoluble nation-state. It is a living federalism that goes beyond the structural political arrangements.

Mr. FRANK:

I am satisfied. And this leads me to the next question. In view of the fact that we all recognise that the phenomenon of tribe, ethnicity and religion are all real, Mal. Basira, you will say these are forms or basis for identity. What number of identities do you think should be recognized for the purpose of political efficacy to meet the federal political culture you have proposed?

Mr. THINKING:

Let me remind you that, there is Islam, Christianity, Baha'i, tradition, democracy, socialism, liberalism, confusion, Effik, Ibibio, Vere, Ungwai, Digbo, Bamaguje, Birom, Kaje e.t.c. Which would you choose, and which will you drop and what criterion or criteria are you employing?

Mr. FRANK:

I think you have got the question wrongly. For political practice, reference is made to only those identities that have extensive federal or national significance or meaning objectively and subjectively. The Ungwai tribe in Niger state for example, can not politically even struggle with the Kamuku. It is like the Baha'i contesting an office with Christians in Doko.

Mal. BASIRA:

I don't think you need any further response. You have already identified the essence of any identity that will be relevant; it must manifestly be located in Nigeria, cut across the sub-units-all the sub-units in the federation. The identity must be pinnable objectively and subjectively. Its name does not really matter and their number is not for me and you to decide. That control should be the responsibility of any incumbent regime whose responsibility it will be to usher this country into that path of living federalism.

Mr. THINKING:

But, what would or should happen, in the circumstance where the incumbent regime out of ignorance fails or in spite of knowledge deliberately refuses to set this country on this desired path?

Mal. BASIRA:

The people can organise and take over, by setting themselves on the path, thus, making the regime lose its credibility. Leadership is not a personal responsibility but a public and collective one. The leadership needs to recognise this. If it doesn't it must not expect to be forgiven.

And if it fails or refuses, the followership has no obligation to accept it as its fate. Indeed it has the duty to correct it. The options open are by either subjecting the leadership to the sanction required or necessitated by the provisions or rule or terms of leadership in the society or by radically coming in itself. The second option is only a last resort, when and if the first fails or consistently fails. The first requires the application of the rules of the game of collective existence and survival which the leadership has the choice and privilege of willingly allowing itself to be affected by. For example, making the positive effort of restructuring things and their orientation through policy and executional changes or giving up the responsibility of leadership for another leadership. The second, requires the forceful takeover of affairs for drastic transformations, under the guidance or leadership of a Vanguard that clearly identifies with the aspirations of the betrayed collectivity. In both cases, leadership is necessary, but the difference lies in the fact that the latter acquires its legitimacy from the educative organisation of the people which is superior to what is normally accepted as the rules and procedures of the movement in that society. Indeed, the first kind of leadership can prepare grounds for the latter positively, when it intelligently realizes that the normal terms and rules for societal movement will not be immediately useful, for reasons and factors that are known but feared. It will concentrate on politico-economic and social education that is suitable for a political culture, to be used to transit into the second type. This is rare however. Nonetheless,

consciously or otherwise, the failure of the first kind of leadership serves as a primary useful premise for the second. This is the nature and contextual relationship between what is legal and what is illegal and the transformation feasibility of one into the other.

Mr. FRANK:

Now, reflecting on the experience of this country and the concepts and direction of secularism and federalism already talked about, what will you say about tribe, ethnicity and tribalism?

Mr. THINKING:

Do you accept that it is a problem, an obstacle, that needs to be wiped out in every respect of its reality?

Mal. BASIRA:

Tribe relates to a very particular linguistic group that is distinct enough as to be identifiable by its members and non- members. The ethnic group relates to a wider scope of a related or similar linguistic group, that is acceptable and recognizable by its members and non-members. And it is true of history that they often share a common or very close geographical space.

Experience is historically inevitable. It has been and will continue to be, with Nigeria. What is experienced is subject to interpretation. And in giving it meaning, it may fall into the category of what is considered positive or negative. Nigeria has a good number of tribes. Some of these can be re-grouped into a number of ethnic groups. Tribalism or ethnicity is a system of organising the existence and survival of a group, with responsible primary roles given to the natural speaker of its language.

The survival and development of any individual is therefore interpreted in terms of the linguistic group that one belongs to. Although evidence of dissenters can not be ruled out, it is to be generally accepted as the rule or what is proper. The reward for this is the legal and informal appreciation and commendation of activities organised in that line by a conscious large membership of that group and non-members. This was true of pre-Islamic Arabia. Work and wars were executed on tribal or ethnic basis. There is nothing inherently wrong about such a system of society. It is therefore theoretically wrong and practically abnormal to totally dismiss the element of tribe or ethnicity among the people of Nigeria. What is clear is that, it is possible, and tribe will continue to attract common/natural speakers together.

From the history of Nigeria, the Sokoto caliphate cannot be said to have been a tribal system from whatever angle, inspite of the fact that Hausa (a highly Arabic content - rich language) happened to be the widest medium of communication. The force or strength of the caliphate was determined by elements far beyond the tribe. This superiority explains its successful reign beyond the Hausa speaking territories. The Kanem Borno may also not be identified as tribal, even though its scope of influence or jurisdiction was not as characteristic as that of the Sokoto. Its survival principles were simply Islamically defined. The Oyo Empire that accidentally finds a reasonably wide jurisdiction to be identifiable by the element of tribe subjected tribe to what is definable as traditions superior to language. The Igbos happen to have interestingly differed from all of the above, inspite of the fact that strong allegations of tribalism have been directed to a few of their cherished leaders. For them, inspite of the tribal advantage before the colonial intrusion, the scope of clans can't be said to amount to tribalism in restrictive or wide sense.

An alternative choice will be really unreasonable. It will amount to wanting to import others from some other place(s) to colour the tribal purity of the people. It will

therefore amount to blasphemy to suggest that Nigerians are naturally tribalistic. But, I am not denying that the use of tribe as a survival tool by our people has made a deep in - road into the social political and economic life of this country. I am therefore suggesting that inspite of the history of the first republic, the successive military regime and the barbaric war in this country and the tribal indications that can undeniably be read into our political culture - up to the second republic, we do not deserve to be identified as a tribalistic people. There are lots of other options, the tribe element is therefore constantly having the problem of Religion and Modern Ideology battering it, whenever it becomes a matter of who is who indeed, it becomes secondary. It is therefore not denied as a variable in existence nor is it denied as a useful platform for organizing survival in Nigeria. But whether it constitutes a problem or not, is not a matter for debate. Whatever people make of it is what will become of it. But a mistake that needs not be made is that Nigeria is resourceful enough in terms of survival principles in depth and variety that are superior to tribe or ethnicity. We do not all have to agree - that is history. For Nigeria, you may choose to be tribalistic, I may not choose or we may not choose. That is not the problem really. It is not for me and you to resolve because we don't have to agree on what ought to be the alternative. That should therefore be left to practice - what we are collectively or differently able to do.

Mr. THINKING:

I see. Agreed, we have to live with tribe, we need to live with tribe; we don't have to wipe it out. But, reality seems to dictate that one should urge that it be wiped out. It will appear that I am conceptually convinced. But, in the world of practice the story is a different thing altogether. The solution may still be lurking somewhere.

Mr. FRANK:

I do not on my part see any problem with the issue in question. For a wide scope of unity to make any practical meaning, principles that go beyond myopic basis of identity like tribe will be needed in a heterogeneous society like Nigeria. If this is not done, there will be distortions, inconsistencies and the goal will constantly remain distant. But, we want to get close. We want to beat the goal point. The issue you are raising Mr. Thinking seems to be the kind of consciousness defined by distrust, fear and bold ignorance that can hardly escape from the allegation that it is a deliberate bourgeois intellectual mischief. I am frankly becoming impatient with the way in which you are just determined to defer regardless of the quality of position put across. Mallam Basira, I hope that you don't have any further response to give to my dear friend. This will allow us to proceed meaningfully.

Mr. BASIRA:

I agree with both of you. What does not seem clear is the point Mr. Thinking has attempted to put forward. I think the point may be relevant, and requires a very frank response. Tribalism does not need to be wiped out but it seems difficult or impossible to accommodate it without disastrous expenses.

This is the story especially in local work places – public or private, in the states – with the domineering tribes or tribal groups squaring the other often numerous groups - sometimes irrespective of merit. Since this is true of Nigerian experience, the proposition for principles beyond tribe may become practically useful or, in national struggles. This seems to be the suggestion and the problem that needs to be resolved. I think that this is a genuine concern.

However even at the local level, principles beyond the tribe are operatable. The stress and strength of tribalism at the local level is of a higher magnitude

because of the kind of indicator false consciousness of the practitioners. The other empirical factor is the fact that the element of tribe is open to a very forceful expression because that is the locus of tribe. This explains why even at the national level a public officer establishes a public utility with the support of fellow tribes men, even when it could have been and ought to have been avoided. This is not to suggest that the locality should not benefit reasonably enough in providing a fairly meaningless numerical proportion by the powers of running what shape the establishment takes. But, I must warn that the suggestion is not for a tribal balance in the public running of this country.

The principle of BEYOND - TRIBE and the RETENTION of tribe only amounts to the fact that where non - members of the tribe or a leader in any circumstance may find themselves and will need to relate, neither needs to feel, express nor attempt to make the other insecure on a basis that is not only but may be largely tribal.

The practical implication of this is that at a point in history the establishment may take a tribal face, but will certainly transit into a non - tribal and therefore superior terms. The objection is to the institutionalization of the element of tribe in the establishment and running of public or private institutions that delve into public wealth, public health, public Education and what not. I hope the point has been made clearer.

Mr. FRANK:

I see. I was the one impatient. Any further related question?

Mr. THINKING:

Mallam Basira, what will you say, with respect to the other related forms - statism and regionalism. I am referring to matters like being discriminated against merely because one is not a *bona fide* member of a state or region. Need these be encouraged? Need we live with them? Or, need they be treated as tribe - to be allowed as a necessary part of a transitory stage of a transforming Nigeria?

Mal. BASIRA:

This is a very probing but educative question, because it calls into question the subject of secularism and its relationship to federalism as already conceptualised. My position is that statism and regionalism may be temporarily accepted as the element of tribe - considering the fact that the principle needs to cut across and beyond the state and the region. However, unlike in the case of tribe, the transition beyond state and region is more complex because the ultimate objective of Federalism is to differ.

But, such differences are not to be static and ought to be Subject to civil transformation towards an acceptable unitary system that is comprehensive rather than being restrictive. I don't think I need to repeat the details of these, because we have already talked about these. I am therefore suggesting that at least in the initial stage not being a bonafied member is not a mere thing - it is very serious. And I have no objection to the melting of these into one, but on civil terms and through a complex means. And it is not the responsibility of those of us here to work out the terms; it is a matter of practice. Our responsibility as individuals or as a group is only a part.

Mr. THINKING:

That is correct. But, this leads to another question. What is the character of the unitary system that is envisaged. What character or form of nationalism?

Mal. BASIRA:

Very simple. The nationalism, which terms or details are rooted in one of the comprehensive identities that is located in the country. Nothing neutral. This is because the resulting nationalism will in fact end up to be beyond tribe; possibly the state and the region, but will still retain some social relevance that has existed and consciously struggled along with other differences and won. This is the Nationalism.

Mr. THINKING:

Don't you think that the freedom to freely struggle will in fact give the present STRONG an upper hand? Do you consider the other smaller differences that have no reasonable amount of numerical followership and support unimportant?

Mr. FRANK

That is a very useful question, although such question had earlier on been raised and answered.

Mr. BASIRA:

In response to Mr. Thinking, I will simply say, NO. This is because what is now strong can be properly so if it largely satisfies the essence of the principle - beyond tribe e.t.c. The objective of Federalism which I advocate is not the static and separatist recognition of all kinds of differences, in abuse of historical dynamics. What is being objected to is the use of myopic terms for questionable national unity.

The struggling identity needs to be capable of absorbing non-tribal members, non-state members, non-regional members, but Nigerians. I don't think that numerical strength matters that much. This is because principles penetrate through numbers. And there is abundant evidence in history that numbers have never mattered in respect of principles. Take Islam, protestantism, Marxism/Socialism or Democracy, the story is the same.

Mr. THINKING:

That is correct.

Mr. FRANK:

This leads us to another question though already raised, but in a different form. This is in connection with what you referred to as induced or false consciousness of tribalism. Why is it so identified?

Mal. BASIRA:

As already pointed out, tribalism is a factor that cannot be practically discarded; it is therefore unreasonable to call for its total dismissal. However its ineffective retention is the kind of consciousness that is being advocated. The resulting practical culture will then be superior tribe and non-tribal consciousness/people e.t.c. will not stand any risk. The reasonability of this lies in the simple fact that the element of tribe cannot be used effectively on a universal term for political, social and economic unity or developmental base that all Nigerians can pleasantly identify with. And because this is what is defined as the required or true consciousness on individual and collective basis for all Nigerians, irrespective of our differences, the tribally based is impliedly the state, the condition or orientation of false conscious-

ness. But, in addition, because tribalism inspite of its unreasonableness on a national context could appear reasonable and be really effective on a local or restrictive (geographically) context, only those who deliberately and willingly or forcefully - whether in the open or secretly, champion any course on tribalistic terms can deserve to be said to be properly false conscious. Those members and actors who are however taken in willingly or unwillingly by the tribally conscious constitute those who have been induced. The argument that is therefore being put across is that false or induced consciousness defines one of the roots of non- commitment, by the majority of Nigerians and frustration or the short lived nature of the results that may/or have been achieved by those who have attempted to be honest, patriotic or public concerned. This is the position of false and induced consciousness, with respect to tribalism vis-a-vis Federalism and unity.

Mr. THINKING:

Mal. Basira, I see your point. But, let me still ask. What will happen in a state of numerous tribal identities when one particular tribe constantly holds firmly unto the key positions in that state? Are you suggesting that the losers are to keep mute? To watch? Must they not struggle, and fiercely too?

Mr. BASIRA:

I see your point. They will not keep mute, they will need to struggle. But, not as losers, because the incumbent will neither see themselves nor stand to be seen as tribal winners. That is the consciousness that is being called for. And positions are public and must be made to serve the public. Any deviation from this will amount to criminality. And succession cannot be by inheritance or on clan or tribal lines. However, there is nothing inherently wrong about this, if either of these defines those

who are most competent (ideologically and practically) and also deliver the needed goods. The acceptable condition therefore has no straight jacket answer. What it has is that, the consciousness is untribal or beyond tribe - not detribal.

Mr. FRANK:

This PUBLIC. For avoidance of doubt, is the reference not a proper fit for the CIVIL SERVICE as we have it today?

Mr. THINKING:

And the implication of that is that the political view point put across by you becomes useful for only the transformation of the civil service - is that the scope of your concept of politics?

Mal. BASIRA:

The public. It is meant to include everybody. And the civil service or the civil servants are not being proposed as trustees of the public interest. Nigeria has experienced enough abuse of trust. The civil service needs and is urged to be included in the transformation. But, not alone. And no group is being considered in isolation. No particular group is therefore used as the model or sample. Theorisation doesn't allow for it. However, I accept that because of the particular historical conditions or experience of Nigeria, the civil service makes a very pronounced appearance, which calls for your question, requiring further clarifications.

Mr. THINKING:

But, the matter is yet to be clarified. You have already argued that the public includes everybody, and that it is public interest that is untribal. How does this agree with your dissociation from secularism as neutrality?

Don't you see that except those burdened with public responsibility are neutral, it will be impossible and even impracticable to protect the public interest that you so much cherish and advocate?

Mr. FRANK:

In other words, don't you think that the civil servants are so central to the political model you have proposed? That, if they had the right neutral consciousness and public commitment, the present state of political, economic and social quagmire will be non-existent?

Mr. BASIRA:

You again and again seem to have grasped it, announce that it is clear, only to ask questions that point at your non-grasp of the issues. Once again, I am not for neutrality. I am not for tribe, to the extent that it must not stand as a matter of rule or tradition. My secularity is not neutrality. The problem is not mathematical. I do not therefore seek to or advocate for its solution in an unhistorical terms. I have no choice but to respect and accept processes. Tribal neutrality is a base, or a comprehensive identity, which combines philosophy and reality for men, on universal and total terms. However, beyond the take off point, the terms of struggle is for the differing identities - with a domineering identity taking an upper hand. And because that will not be the end of the struggle, it will need to continue until a fairly safe (in terms of scope and depth) terms of domination become regularly

established. That is when the civil servant can justifiably claim and be associated with some form of a definite neutrality.

The neutrality that ignores differences and accepts similarities is out of place. To ignore differences is to passively allow for some damage to take place. But, this is as bad as actively doing some damage. And to passively allow for what is expected or accepted as proper is no good either. This is because; if it were damage nothing would have been done about it. I am therefore only advocating for a tribally neutral but a dynamically non-neutral political struggle, with everybody involved, with no trustees.

Mr. FRANK:

No trustees - ideological and practical? Or, do you mean that, there will not or need not be any isolated trustee?

Mal. BASIRA:

No, I mean that there will be no neutral trustees, no permanent trustees. Of course, like any other society Nigeria needs ideological-cum-practical guides and dependence, the source, base and roots of which must however be SELF or LOCAL or NIGERIA.

Mr. THINKING:

Are you in support of all ELITE?

Mr. FRANK:

Okay, let me get your response to that.

Mr. THINKING:

Yes, if its 'superiority' or respect arises from its intellectual or ideological (knowledge) exertion, in comparison to others, rather than based on or associated to wealth or power.

This is not to suggest that such knowledge will be empty of experiences. It only means that the members have no amount of possessions that makes them among the economically or politically special members of that society. They could therefore lose their possessions and retain their sanity satisfyingly. This is what makes them HAVING NOTHING TO LOSE and not WRETCHEDNESS.

Mr. FRANK:

This is to suggest that you respect and support the existence of special members or groups and the continuation of the same. How can this be related to the principle of equal or fair access or opportunity that you have hammered on so much.

Mr. THINKING:

Are you in support or opposed to Equity, fairness or the in - of either of these?

Mr. BASIRA:

I am not opposed to special individuals, groups or persons per se. I am largely opposed to the present terms of special existence however. I am not opposed to the involvement or development of any, provided, it is not through the means of some special institution - public or private. I am therefore not advocating for public ownership without a private one. But all must submit to public control. For example, I am not against private schools at whatever level. But the standard, fees e.t.c. must all be controlled; to keep them in equal line with the level the public is able to afford.

This is to avoid the use of such private outlets as criminal means of establishing objective basis for making elitism an inheritable thing. And because I insist on quality the public institutions must not be allowed to expand at an unreasonably economic, professional and cultural rate. This is not to suggest that handicap people don't need special attention. This is what defines equal opportunities. The terms of struggle must therefore be made equal.

There is a distortion in this respect today because children go to schools of different standard because it will appear as if some people can afford it for their children while others cannot. But this is not correct. It is only a reflection of distortions. To worsen it, the rate at which public resources have been engaged in the expansion of higher education makes the struggle skewed in nature. The so called weak are therefore faced with the seeming 'concession' of being allowed in with lesser prerequisite standard. This is how the organizational pattern of the politics, economics and sociology can boost or distort the educational aspirations of society - especially of the kind of living Federalism that I am advocating. The system does not therefore disallow for social talents, but it disallows for the development of the weak or the retardation of the talented on the mere and terribly unjustifiable grounds of highly questionable difference in the kind of access or means that members of the same society go through.

Mr. FRANK:

What will you say about health services?

Mal. BASIRA:

Not, really different. The private participants will be encouraged. But, the long effect of the educational system will certainly not allow for private clinics and hospitals being better than those of the public.

Mr. THINKING:

Why?

Mal. BASIRA:

The logic is very simple. The public will be most capable in the provision of such services and the maintenance of personnel and acquisition of equipment. Individuals who go into it will not be disallowed, but can not for that simple reason make it unreachable by citizens who cannot afford. To be unable to afford for the treatment of any disease by any hardworking citizen that is an adult will be absolutely out of question. Except of course such service is not available within the country - the jurisdiction of the state. The private shall not be positioned to change the way they like or think fit - but must be in line with what the public provides. No citizen shall technically or simply be unreasonably more exposed to disease than another or more improbable to get attended to than another, on the mere and questionable ground of access or opportunity to what is available in the country.

And the basis for this is very simple. Knowledge, productivity and wealth are all SOCIAL. Accessibility to their benefit can therefore only be allowed to be private in their first term or form of presentation. Its ultimate term shall however remain solidly SOCIAL.

Mr. FRANK:

Back to the problem of education. With no special Schools at any level - except for those that can be ordinarily justified, and your extremely reasonable rate of educational expansion which is meant to preserve quality, don't you see or think that Nigeria will be left behind in the process of social development - in this fast moving century? And when that happens, that we shall be economically and politically backward?

Mr. THINKING:

Are you against compulsory education, the Universal Primary Education, Adult education or what?

Mal. BASIRA:

Oh! No!! Please. Let us not make the mistake of mixing up or confusing LITERACY, which is a popular thing, with EDUCATION for which literacy is only a base and especially education as TRAINING of the younger generations for the continuity of existence and survival of the society at large. The scope of the third must always be kept within high quality control, the second will certainly be wider and the first must be what is made universal. In other words the expansion of the second or the first must not at any time be allowed to affect the proper manning, equipping or developing a specialist school, faculty, college, university, institute or centre, which comes under the third. Our aspirations or ambitions must not make us blind to the priority order of what we must do to sustain our present levels of achievement. I am not advocating for moving forward after we must have moved backwards but forward from where we have already reached.

Mr. THINKING:

This question is extremely important because, you have all through only highlighted the means and terms of utilising the resources and only very minimally and indirectly. On Agricultural production, it shall be largely private and indigenous. No individual shall own and control more than what is owned and controlled by the individuals on the average. The public shall control, to the degree of maintaining and developing the cumulative services to be given. Agricultural proletarianisation of the peasantry will not be allowed even when the public is engaged in agricultural production.

The same principle shall apply to industry. The private shall not be disallowed to own, but the control shall be finally determined and dictated by the state.

The controls in these spheres shall however be less than those in the productive but non-creative areas like services. Private service producers like in commerce (who are private) shall face the highest degree of controls.

Mr. FRANK:

What about individuals or corporate bodies of foreign origin?

Mal. BASIRA:

They shall be free to exist and operate along the lines of the conditions initially dictated by the state where the foreign body does not propose conditions. And as for when and where it does, the foreign body shall be conditioned by those terms that are finally resolved on and are not in abuse of the standard conditions that would have normally applied, if no proposition had preceeded. These define some of the modest terms for structurally providing some equal or fair opportunity to all successful strugglers in respect of the creation of wealth for SOCIAL BENEFIT.

Mr. THINKING:

Is that to suggest that your concept of social does not include all men or at least foreigners?

Mal. BASIRA:

It shall include all men but the people of Nigeria or specific locality firstly. It shall not prohibit profit but shall reasonably restrain it. Of course, those who are displeased will be free to leave in accordance with the conditions applicable to foreign saboteurs. And that will be very serious, because it will amount to intelligence assault.

Mr. FRANK:

The terms of fairness have been defined by you and the kinds of structural conditions that will make it possible. However, what other thing or condition do you think it will guarantee members of this society at large?

Mr. THINKING:

Yes, especially because, you seem to suggest the retention of the room for special individuals or groups and you are opposed to wretchedness.

Mal. BASIRA:

It will hopefully disallow the propping up, development or emergence of individuals or groups characterized with excesses and will put an end to wretchedness.

Mr. THINKING:

Mallam Basira, don't you think that the goals you have in mind can still be achieved through the medium of the fundamental freedoms entrenched in the 1979 constitution of this great country? Don't you think or even agree that with the freedom of speech, sharing of the same and that of association, it is very possible to achieve such transformations?

Mr. FRANK:

That is a logical set of questions. But, how fitting are these questions, considering the fact that the position of Mallam Basira cannot and need not be dissociated from the basis for political organisation and participation or practice? In other words, you need not replace his concept of secularism and Federalism for your own and merely employ the conditions or provisions of freedoms. This is probably what explains the outstanding and growing problems, inspite of the entrenched freedoms.

Mal. BASIRA:

But, in addition to that, the structures I have proposed will be timelessly useful, not obeying the bias of the terms of political struggle - the value of which lies in offering the meaningfulness and satisfaction for living at all. As you will agree, politics needs not be isolated from a peoples' philosophy of life. And because we are heterogeneous, the value of struggle needs not be emphasized. It is just obvious. It is not enough to be said to be free it's more important to make freedom possible and recognisable. Although we have to be free in chains, the chains should be that of our choice. And because there are a variety of chains in existence, it is not enough to

choose but to struggle in the insurance that we are chained with what we like. My argument has been that chains are not neutral.

Mr. THINKING:

You seem to have deliberately or otherwise played down the very positive ability or capacity of the press. If you had considered this, you might then be in position of appreciating the possible resultant impact or effect of the freedom of speech and association irrespective of our concept of secularism. What do you have to say to this?

Mal. BASIRA:

If the press is to be accepted and is to properly play the role of mirroring the society, it is the society that matters, otherwise it will stand to be disintegrated by the press. This is because, the press is probably the only instrument in society that underestimates its powers, considering TIME factor. It might have only come to the consciousness of the media houses and men after the fall of the first republic in Nigeria.

Mr. FRANK:

After it had quickly even if unconsciously, destroyed the first republic. In addition, not even the most intelligent men outside the scene of events reported can afford not to be badly affected. But if and when there is a direction to be charted or followed rather than it being the initiative, guide or finding of the press, the society should itself do it. The press can only assume responsibility in the societies where the members have assumed responsibilities for their fate.

Mal. BASIRA:

And in addition to that, although attempts have been made in the change or transformation of the political leadership through a variety of means in the sense of the actors and the ruling principles, the press has virtually largely remained untouched. At least the sponsors or entrepreneurs have not changed their positions - as retrogressive as they are - with the exception (to a reasonable degree) of the federally owned. And even here, it is because the choice is not there. A free press rather than a licensed press is advocated, but to be conditioned by the society.

Mr. FRANK:

But, is this to suggest that you are opposed to the existence of privately owned and controlled media houses of the PRINT or ELECTRONICS?

Mal. BASIRA:

I am completely opposed to private ownership. I prefer a corporate ownership, which can be identified with the kinds of political base for struggles. However, those that are state owned will differ only in respect of the fact that it will be directly sponsored. Those established by corporate bodies must be transparently sponsored by only part of what the members decently earn and publicly declared on a regular basis. Control, shall remain the final privilege of the state. And the direction of media activities of the state owned shall not be directed or dictated by the state under any circumstance.

Mr. THINKING:

Mallam Basira, I sense that your proposal for corporate ownership is not unrelated to the desire to root real ownership and control here in Nigeria. But, if they

are to take the kind of secular identity that you advise, what is the feasibility of your secularism transforming into the living federalism. I am tempted to ask this question because the press is a structure, a powerful institution for that matter.

Mal. BASIRA:

I don't see the problem. Structures and Institutions are the making of men. If men can be taken over and changed or transformed, the structures/institutions will helplessly follow. This goes to point at the importance of the damage external influence can do. The more it is therefore reduced or controlled, the better for Nigeria, as a moving society.

Mr. FRANK:

One may infer or deduce on the kind of men to man the corporate owned media houses. But those of the state, if the state or incumbent government more precisely, is not to direct or dictate the terms and mode of its sponsored media houses, who is to do it? I do recognize that, the objective is to ensure that the press is genuinely free. But, how?

Mal. BASIRA:

The top professional and management positions will be manned by men who are clearly and powerfully associable with the knowledge, recognition, appreciation and commitment to the changing nature and level of the kind of federalism and secularism I have already attempted to define. They shall all or largely be professors - those who have things to profess I don't mean people with university badges or names or positions. I don't mean those who may be so specialized that their identity

amounts to alienation. It will appear that as of today, a few houses consciously or otherwise keep such crop of men.

Mr. THINKING:

Will you please mention a few of these?

Mal. BASIRA:

That will be unreasonable. They have been but not consistently, because none of them operates in accordance with my secularism.

Mr. FRANK:

Taking you back to the question of identity and struggle to dominate, who in your opinion or by your standards, will be a real fit or misfit? In other words, the identity strive may have a consequence(s) that is harmful or harmless. What therefore is the essence or face of the identity you share?

Mal. BASIRA:

What I personally share may not be important enough for the information of other men and the objective of this dialogue is not to put across the view that I am even good. What I will say defines my position is that we must and can organise to direct our affairs in a way that we consider meaningful. One thing is however certain. I am not advocating for laziness or non - work. I am certainly advocating for much work, if not too much work. That condition for the work will be made convenient through fairly equal access to a fairly equal standard of education. Once such an economic and sociological base is available, it will be an effective springboard for political development.

Mr. THINKING:

I think that we may have to return to this question later in the day. I appreciate the fact that the dialogue should be able to benefit all of us. But, you will also agree that since we are different, it may not be unwise to go into the zones of the differences. I am not insisting that we must talk in specific terms. After all we have been talking on a kind of general terms that is sufficient to guide any particular difference that cares. If I therefore get Mr. Frank correctly, his question suggests that as a Muslim or believer, what will you say defines the essence of such an identity, in the secular politics that you have already defined? And you will agree with me that the value of such a direct question is enormous.

Mr. FRANK

That is another very interesting and important dimension.

Mal. BASIRA:

But, that was not the intended question. What you asked was what you intended. Did you find my response any useful?

Mr. FRANK:

Yes, in all respects.

Mr. THINKING:

What then is your response to the dimension I have raised?

Mr. BASIRA:

For the Muslims it is a simple affair. It is a matter of declaring your identity and the sustenance of that. The refusal to sustain such declaration does not change your identity but certainly transform it into some strange or corruptive kind of identity. The result is therefore that of frequently mistaking the Muslim for something else - at times close, at times very distant.

The declaration is entirely a matter of the self – the very individual. And at this level, there is no compulsion. You are only obliged to the conditions of sustenance if you willingly declare. And those who are not declarants do not stand any risk by such difference – as individuals and as groups.

The sustenance is OF THE SELF; BY THE SELF; OF OTHERS; THE SELF; BY OTHERS; FOR THE SELF AND OTHERS. In other words for the benefit of the individual and the collectivity in nature or character. For example, whether with PRAYER or WORK in seeking mercy of Allah in the hereafter or in making of history here and now, there is the individual, by himself, the collective at the same time for the benefit of the individual and the collectivity.

Muslimship and muslimhood is not literarily just facing the East.

For identity purposes, as an individual and along with a group you cannot chose to declare and not sustain or seek or strive to sustain without declaration. You cannot pray without working or work without praying. You are either a Muslim or you are not. Of course Muslims are in grades, but that is not the basis for the difference. It is in IMAN (faith), and that is a different story altogether.

Mr. FRANK:

Mallam Basira, you said FOR THE SELF AND OTHERS, I will want to think that the others are the likes of the self, from what you have already said.

Mr. BASIRA

Certainly Yes.

Mr. THINKING:

Certainly yes. But, against OTHERS, of different identity?

Mr. FRANK:

No, that can't be. You can't be yourself and also be another at the same time. Even if you can, it cannot be on a consistent or continuous basis. For the moment you are one, you are not the other except under very special circumstances. And this is a simple logic. What I think is crucial is for Mallam Basira to define the extent of AGAINST others, which is silent.

Mal. BASIRA:

I think that you have already answered the question. In other words what is important is the riskless nature of the existence and survival of a non - declarant (since that is the starting point) in an environment controlled by Muslims. I have already said that there is no room for compulsion. But there is room for encouragement (not inducement), with respect to declaration. And the room for work is certainly very open. This is not to deny that they will not be as open, when or if the non - declarants are in control. For example, you can work and rise in a field that is accepted as not harmful to the declarants. You cannot brew alcohol or farm marijuana even if you can prove that they are harmless. And you cannot take away another person's wife or daughter merely because you are free. Nothing that will abuse the spirit or essence of the declaration and sustenance will be

accommodated. Some will certainly be tolerated. You cannot ban a people who are drunkards from drinking or brewing over night. Indeed you may not be justified for doing so for ever, if they choose to be so for a long time and are concentrated in a place that will restrict the 'harm' to them.

Mr. THINKING:

That is alright. But, then, if such differential terms are allowed, what will be the fate of our constitution? Shall we be changing it with every change in the dominating group? Shall the structures of society be changed with such change? Wouldn't that be too expensive, too unreasonable and too destructive a means of building a living Federalism?

Mal. BASIRA:

I see your fear. The constitution shall not change, at least for the moment. But, that doesn't mean that we should be blind to the needed and appreciable dynamics that may take place within the same system. You seem to find difficulty with indissoluble differences and not with Unity in diversity. My dear friends, we are lucky to be different.

Mr. FRANK:

Are we really lucky to be different? Don't you think that it forms a basis for the entire crisis we have experienced and will continue to experience? Is that luck?

Mal. BASIRA:

I am afraid. That is the only historical basis for forging a Nation. Crises form the only fertile basis for motion. The responsibility of men is to fashion the pattern of

resolving the crises on a more permanent basis. And we are a very lucky generation. We can at least take the initiative of idealising it and urging ourselves into the needed crises to precede motion. The luckier generation will be those to really physically execute it. The luckiest generation will be burdened with the sustenance of the terms of crises resolution. Don't ever think that there are no and there were no and there will be no differences in highly organized societies like soviet Union, Saudi Arabia, United States, Britain or Sweden. Frankly, if you allow yourself to think and believe so, you will become a living dead person.

My friends, you seem to reveal an only unexpressed interest in the resolution of our problem (ALL) through PHILOSOPHY through TALK, through DIALOGUE: This is itself unhistorical. That has its limits. It also has to be SCIENTIFIC, PRAGMATIC AND PRACTICAL. When the two are made to meet, the very details that get resolved may be in accordance with, moderation of or in abuse of philosophy or science or both. It is only then that the terms of reality relevant for the specific people, events and times of our history will get defined. Until this process of history is championed by a people, they can never make a nation, less, of making it great.

Mr. THINKING:

And this is not in contradiction of the National objectives entrenched in the 1979 constitution of this country.

Mal. BASIRA:

True. But, what we are talking about is the basis required for achieving such objectives, in a secular state of a federal character, and in the twentieth century. This is why I have not turned my attention to the picking of holes in the constitution.

Mr. FRANK

That is also to suggest that there are holes in the 1979 constitution that can be picked. Would you mind identifying some of these? I think that three will be enough.

Mr. THINKING:

Holes. Holes, in the making of some selected and elected Wiseman across the entire country.

Mr. FRANK:

Remember that the Wiseman were not unanimously agreed. An attempt at another alternative was officially oppressed. Students who cared to make it public were brutally attacked by the police. And nothing has been done since then. May be Mallam Basira is with this alternative. May be not. I think we should be patient to listen.

Mal. BASIRA:

Thank you for the clarification. I will also be brief in stating only three instances, as modestly requested. Take the case of the fundamental human rights. Take the right to life. If the case of the police and the Armed Forces is understandable in not being considered as having been deprived of their life, while in the course of their normal duty that of the watchmen is very questionable. This is because, in the circumstance of a war, or a serious break down in law and order even life can be sacrificed for the restoration of peace and order or stability. But, for a watchman, it is either needed of the police and the Armed Forces for public institutions like financial houses and records buildings, otherwise watchmanship is

abnormal. It is a reflection of fear and distrust, which may be justified only on the basis of the social evils in the society at large. It is however a very unnecessary and expensive service that is a short term remedy. The more systematic basis for solving such problem will be by providing the majority of the people of this country with basic necessities and employment. I am therefore suggesting that the provision of the right to life is a mockery for some section of the society - a superfluous service - at the convenience of only those who seem to be able to afford the accumulation of wealth that is socially produced and is therefore very questionable. As for the other rights, their effective use squarely depends upon the political culture - beyond the formal structures and processes. The point I am making is that rights are not licenses. But, the limits need to be cushioned and meaningfully understandable and acceptable to all the people.

Under the Directive Principles, the ownership and control of the commanding heights of the economy by the state and the room for individuals and groups to participate in other areas is only a statement of good intention. However, with the entrustment of the commanding heights to an arrogant, uneducated, immature and exuberant leadership that successively comes to power to be supported by a growing corruptive, frustrated and uncommitted civil service, nothing short of economic crises will continue to be the result of working out the details of such a good intended principle. This is why Education which is thought of to be a very solid basis for moving the society through compulsory education to a particular level was from the take off point of the Universal Primary Education the root of all the unpardonable crises in education now reflected in the level and rate and quality of social crises in our society. And as you know, these are not without economic, political and cultural implications.

Mr. THINKING:

O.K. But what do you think about the provision that there shall not be a state religion and that Nigeria shall be made up of a Federal Capital and nineteen, other states?

Mal. BASIRA:

These are reflective provisions of the present state of affairs. And as you know, these are open to amendment. It is therefore not contrary to the thing I am advocating. All that is required is the necessary political will and action- by the people.

Mr. THINKING:

You are therefore for the politics of production as you are for that of distribution of what is to be produced. You advocate not only the politics of economics and sociology but also that of knowledge.

Mal. BASIRA:

That is correct.

Mr. THINKING:

Mallam Basira, do you have any place for any kind of elite in your political, social and economic framework at all? It will appear as if you are completely buried in everybody for everything - something popular.

Mal. BASIRA:

May be, maybe not. But, my point is that nobody deserves not to be cared for at all, merely because he identifies himself independently and differently. I am also saying that someone or some people or group will preferably be given and accept the primary responsibility of managing the society at large. And it does not deny that persons who are not directly and immediately identifiable with the leadership or dominant group cannot, may not or do not in fact influence the historical course of that society. I therefore don't dispute and don't object to the existence or development of an elite but will insist that there must be a responsible identity that can be definitely held for the course of events. I mean something more specific that has to do with a set of principles.

Mr. THINKING:

What specific again? I would have thought that for the simple and objective or understandable fact that federal Nigeria is made up of a conglomeration of different ethnic and religious groups, the principle of secularism will take care of all the parties sufficiently. But again, you have earlier on dismissed this concept of pragmatic secularism.

Mal. BASIRA:

As I have already pointed out, ethnicity or religion is not denied. But, they will only assure a primary or prominent status if either of them strives enough. And my position is that they don't only need to be given a chance but must be made the basis for effective struggle. And the simple reason for this is that it is more comprehensive in terms of ideology, and the spread of its membership across constituencies can be practically meaningful. The idea of secularism as postulated

by you is not practically unfeasible but is not committal enough for the mobilization of people.

Mr. THINKING

Do you appreciate that the experience this country has so far gotten, has not been positive, with respect to events that at least claim to be religiously based? They were the maitatsine, the Kalakato, the Izala etc.

Mal. BASIRA:

I don't know what you consider to be positive. I would have thought that the failure to make any historical impact due to restraints will not make those experiences to be negative. For, if they had succeeded, they would have been assessed as positive. I will rather say that they were transformational attempts.

Mr. FRANK:

Are you honestly opining that the events under reference have your principled support? Does that mean that that was Islam, as they claimed?

Mal. BASIRA:

Regardless of our opinion, the participants acted on the premise of religion. If they had succeeded, it would have been a different story altogether. For political science, the value judgement is secondary. Don't you see the war between Iran and Iraq is considered by both parties as holy?

Mr. THINKING:

What in your opinion will you say has been the lesson derivable from those experiences that were probably really the instigation of the ignorant mob by a selfish invisible few?

Mal. BASIRA:

Call it what you please, one thing comes out very clearly. Religion can be effectively used to mobilise the people effectively to achieve some goal. It may be spiritual, political, economic, social or whatever. The question of proper or improper Islam that is employed cannot be resolved at the level of theory, dialogue, debate or discussion. It is practice that is required.

Mr. FRANK:

This means that you don't support the experience on the basis of the principles claimed, but does not justify the outright condemnation of the events? Otherwise, we shall become blind to the lesson(s) that is derivable from the events.

Mal. BASIRA:

That is correct.

Mr. THINKING:

I now see your point, not to agree must not be made synonymous with no appreciable. But there is yet another point that has been ignored. Mallam Basira, granted that the disagreements require practice, to be resolved, is that to suggest that might is right? If reason is not given a superior place and role to play it cannot mean otherwise. Wouldn't that send us back to the setting for jungle justice? Mallam

Basira, this is not funny. Mallam Basira, it may or even certainly explains the barbaric commitments with which these people shout PEACE and engage in large scale and variety of damages.

Mal. BASIRA:

I think you are correct. But, that is on the grounds of innocence. But, you see, politics is a more serious affair, where passivity or neutrality cannot in either case make things move. One needs to be deliberately active. Even seeming passivity or neutrality must be based on conscious and deliberate role as such, with the aim of influencing someone or something. As for intra - religious conflicts and even inter-religious conflicts, the only term or condition for absolute certitude – beyond the fundamentals, the Apostle will need to be around. However, you will appreciate that most conflicts arise out of disagreement(s) on non-fundamentals. This is because ideology can only meet up with the concept of its ideals when it is practically and conflictingly struggled or fought out - within and without. It is as simple as that. Might can be right as an acceptable standard. But, it is also subject to change with time. This is to say that might cannot be right, that is not historical. If a system is established today, it becomes the right - except you want to be ethnocentric - and that will be stupid. But, except it is continuously maintained or secured, it will get changed through improvements, amendment, replacements or abuses in the face of what is in prior establishment. Reason is therefore politically meaningless for life if it cannot be realised in practice. And the resulting end it susceptible to change with time, and needs to be appreciated as such. I therefore don't see why you are so worried or think that there can be a very pragmatic optimism based on a static conception of history. Control, is the key role.

Mr. FRANK:

I agree with you completely, though only in principle but will radically differ on the terms of practical organisation.

Mal. BASIRA:

Your degree of agreement is most sufficient; we don't have to be the same.

Mr. THINKING:

May you make known your degree of variance Mr. Frank? I now agree with your agreements.

Mr. FRANK:

My idea is very simple. All men are endowed with the capacity to work for living and comfort. The ability to do so will always be restrained by the conflicting nature of our varying capacities - natural and artificial but all social. For that simple reason struggle must be or need be organized along the lines of work - not carrier or profession. Society need be seen, see itself and strive on the basis of the identities of being a worker or not. As with work which is primarily economic, so with politics and with society and therefore culture. You may call it class; you may call it religion - that is where we differ. But, we solidly agree that conflict is necessary and desirable for living as conscious men. History making is not, may not become and was never ever, the responsibility of the meek - the individual or the group.

Mr. THINKING:

I see, he is only the man and you the woman, differing only in sex.

Mal. BASIRA:

And you are the ape, looking like man.

Mr. THINKING:

Granted. But, let's now consider the reasonability or logic of either or both and attempt to improve on both.

Mr. FRANK:

The proposition is not clear to me. I don't seem to get at what is not clear to you.

Mal. BASIRA:

He wants some principle and practical basis superior to both - our differences. He wants to establish some commonness or stability in the dialectics or dynamics of history. But, the basis differs. My position is as good or as bad as Mr. Frank's. For certitude, NOT reason, we will need God Himself or the most superior intelligence accepted by both of us to serve as an arbiter. And that intelligence may not come by. Reason cannot take its place because we have differently subjected it to set our differences. Mr. Thinking what else?

Mr. THINKING:

Are you suggesting that there is something sacred about your differences and therefore need not be subjected to the directions of reason? Don't you see our difference? I am so simple and straight forward and you two are so difficult and cunning.

Mr. FRANK:

Is the problem that simple? Mallam Basira, what do you have to say?

Mal. BASIRA:

We are probably only more honest, more sincere and very clear about the destination we are heading for. If I get Mr. Thinking very well, sacredness as used by him is not restricted to what the theologians will hold it for. It simply refers to what will not be compromised, for whatever reason - infact will not be exposed to questioning, a reconsideration or if done, will be considered as ridiculous. In essence even where reason is employed for its protection, it is a mere intellectualisation which can be dismissed or dismantled but does not as such make it give in. For example, the philosopher of the Catholic Church Saint Thomas Aquinas is reported to have 'explained' the rationale for incest especially between a brother and sister as to avoid too much love with the latter defined as lust between couples.

I agree, only a worker is sacred; only a believer is sacred e.t.c. You are correct. But, you are only unconscious of what is sacred for you - because you may just be moving without yourself being clear or assured of the ultimate end. Your sacreds are therefore momentary and quickly give way to other sacreds. You will probably say that with historical process or development there is no finality. This appearance of a sound base is not denied even by us. That is the superiority of a comprehensive, satisfying, meaningful, stimulating base and our constant struggle to realise it. The latter is what expresses the historical process. You are therefore really bankrupt for lacking that sacredness. That which you may appear to have which are really empty, include politics to deliver the goods, economy for comfort and society for cultural enrichment. Your problem is always the entire society - taken as a single and similar variable. But, that is the pit fall. For us, the superiority of our sacred life is

in its comprehensiveness, its constant retention and more seriously the mode of achieving it. You don't really care or don't seem conscious of the need to equally care about the mode or method. Thus, the identity on comprehensive formulae of our final sacred defines the terms of approaching a society. We are interested in differences because they are not only real but most important.

Mr. Frank will take off from those who are and accept to be workers, join and encourage those that are but don't recognise that they are workers etc and a combination of these will then fight all the others who are not or mistakenly think that they are workers with the ultimate objective of establishing the dominance and superiority of the workers who sacredly AUGHT TO BE IN SUPERIOR CONTROL or even ABSOLUTE CONTROL. I will add that even if they constantly fail, they are better human beings than those who have no end and the beginning is not forceful enough.

Mr. FRANK:

Mr. Thinking, do you think that if men were reasonable, there would have been need for politics? Is it correct to say that men are reasonable or that men may or can be reasonable? Do you become the almighty Himself merely because you can act and do act as a vicegerent?

Mr. Thinking you are probably familiar with the hen came from an egg and the egg came from a hen, you will not deny that the cock also comes from an egg, from a hen and that without the hen, sufficient warmth will come forth with a chick from an egg. But does that dismiss the relevance of whether it was the hen or the egg in the very first place; whether whichever it was, was by itself or not? Mr. thinking can the restricted be favourably compared with the comprehensive? You tend to mistakenly and badly think and impress that science has no metaphysics. But, it is logic that

may not have, NOT science. Religion and science, no matter how different and even opposing, are holding one form of metaphysics or the other. But, consciousness is another thing altogether. The theologian is more conscious in this case.

Mr. THINKING:

Does that define my folly and your wisdom?

Mr. FRANK:

No, no, no please. That's all alright. Let me proceed to ask, how will this domination be realised?

Mal. BASIRA:

The question had earlier on been answered. Through a struggle. It may be the vehicle of a revolution, by reformist means, by the ballot box proper or its rigging as is the norm with democratic practices or by a military coup d'état.

Mr. THINKING:

Mr. Frank, do you also have an unfriendly distaste or dislike, I mean as much deep hatred for all the variety of freedoms that only democracies will allow?

Mr. FRANK:

Why dislike or hatred? I would think that the point is very simple. Democracy does not in itself guarantee anything positive on a general plane. In fact the question can be raised, whether democracy is possible, to produce positive results for the general populace. I would want to think that it gives a false psychological satisfaction of participation in politics meaningfully; it provides an institutional means for change

of government or continuity; and the leaders will have their lives and property fairly protected.

Mr. THINKING:

Malam aren't these virtues of democracy worth considering? If any system is to be one, and a political one for that matter, wouldn't the leadership need security? Wouldn't the society at large need continuity? Wouldn't the operational mode need to give the feeling (psychological) of being part of what is going on? Would the contraries be the needs?

Mal. BASIRA:

Democracy is no doubt impressive. But, democracy all through may be what is objected to. I think Mr. Frank is throwing aboard, restricted democracy. Democracy may give you any kind of leader. A coup will probably not. What people need are of two levels - the needs and wants. The basic needs need no democracy to deal with; wants or subsequent needs may be allowed democracy. It is as simple as that. The psychological feeling of belonging or participating is a cover up. And you can only get it with an established system in a society. Don't you see that societies with monarchs are equally if not more satisfied with their leaders than with democracies? Aren't socialist dictatorships as satisfactory in their societies as monarchies? Didn't Nigerians jubilate with every military take over? Have Nigerians been generally unhappy with either the parliamentary or presidential system when either came into being? Didn't you see how Ironsi unitary attempt was short lived? You think Ironsi was mad? Is the federal centre not more powerful than the state and local centres combined? Didn't the attempted break up for Biafra fail? Can't you see the peculiarity of the federalism of Nigeria? Are we not moving? Mr. Thinking, you may consider it

naive for a leader not to bother about his security because of the other alternative. You must take hard steps in order to make a break through. And for continuity, all the time that will be sufficient to set up a system and make its objectives reach to men, is the minimum requirements for the continuity of the system. On a more sentimental ground, it may be the doing of leader; it may be that of a chain of leaders. Whichever is the case, will depend upon the degree and scope of protection given to the leadership rather than the one developed by the state.

Mr. THINKING:

You prefer a coup to the elective process Malam Basira?

Mr. FRANK:

That is a good question.

Mal. BASIRA:

A military coup - yes, no, But, it could be a revolution, which may be most preferable, since it guarantees near absolute security for the leadership that it produces. But, again, that is a rare hope. It could be a civil coup like the history of the suspension of the Russian DUMA. The essence is that a section of the elite will break away from its role of opportunism in order to carry out this social responsibility. Mao Tse Tung will refer to the same as class suicide. In both cases, it is related to a transformed kind of consciousness that have social and economic implications through a drastic political means. The difference however is that while the class concept is supported by a mass base, the coup concept is restrictive. In either case the leadership comes from a breaking in the elite club. This immediately suggests that

the coup is more risky, may be more responsible. It is like the Messiah or Mahadi or Saviour compared with democracy.

Mr. THINKING;

Mallam Basira, your postulation is alright, but with a break in the elite club, what will be the security fate and how wise will the leadership be, in ignoring the certain contradictions that will come from the club members in the main?

Mr. FRANK:

This is a very serious problem that will need to be properly settled. The elite, you will agree manipulates the mass of its people, but with a break in the club, the mass of the people will also break. And very often the greater members of the club will carry with them the greater number of the masses. And quantity is quality in this social respect. The more the people of the larger club the more their view will appear to be the correct one.

Mal. BASIRA:

That is correct. If you live short, you will die a martyr. In the alternative, you may be condemned for being oppressive while you are in power but no one will lose sight of what has been inevitably achieved because of the leadership discipline. You will have died a hero after your death even if only the spirit is appreciated. You will have died a 'useless' death if things return to their old line.

As for the continuing elite, those who did not break away, they will automatically appear to be the enemy of the system. However, the leadership should be able to distinguish between the real enemies from among the continuing elite club against those whose elite status is not systematically entrenched in the history of the

people. For example contractors are no doubt the greater enemies of the system when compared to sports stars or university professors. And professors who side or even have attributes of contractorship are more dangerous.

Mr. THINKING:

This leads to two arising questions. What are the things that define discipline for leadership? What method is to be employed in dealing with the enemies of the system?

Mr. FRANK:

These are extremely critical questions, if a coup is to be given a chance - assuming that we can get the material from among the planners/plotters.

Mal. BASIRA:

As for discipline the ingredients include, KNOWLEDGE, INTELLIGENCE, WISDOM, CONSIDERATION, RESTRAIN and AMBITION.

The method cannot be reasonably catalogued. It will be a mixture of encouraging, appealing, compelling means in various degrees to set the society on the path of a pre-prepared and conceptualised programme that defines the general problems and the solutions to their nature.

Mr. THINKING:

The philosopher king leadership is alright, even if he emerges through the execution of a coup. But, the programme you have introduced, what if it is or ends up to be a misconception, a miscalculation e.t.c. Do you still consider that wise? The serious issues you are raising are leading to even more serious ones.

Mal. BASIRA:

The pre - prepared programme background is certainly wise and preferable. This need not be mistaken for a bad programme that becomes the case only on implementation. The point is very simple. Whoever gets into power will inevitably be faced with the resolution of conflicts. Any effort in resolving conflicts consciously or otherwise patterns out a direction. The direction can be effectively used for deducing the concept of what is acceptable against what is not – as far as the system goes. Thus, those who are against the status quo will only distinguish themselves with a provision of an alternative. And this need not be hurriedly drawn up or never drawn up at all. The system shouldn't take the transformer unawares. This is why pre-programmed based action is a forgivable mistake when it fails. But, this must not be confused with successors in power who are there by chance and will at best only make the system to continue with maybe a cosmetic difference. It is indeed different from a determined and radical successive leadership that has come to merely cleanse, rather than transform.

As for the probability of getting a philosopher king I think the seeming fear is genuine, but short sighted. Any coup planner/plotter is a highly committed and determined person(s) that is more dissatisfied than satisfied; In addition there is some (even if false) conviction that the society will largely support the overthrow. Dimka and Buhari were not in this respect different from Vatsa. The point therefore is that this base is enough. The next question which cannot and need not be answered immediately is, the kind of coup I have preference for. It's that which will be motivated and championed by those who care for more than their kiths and kins - by tribe, residence, occupation or religion. The coup led by rogues who have become great is certainly not the point.

Mr. FRANK:

You do not dispute the preference for a mobilised mass take over, over the coup options.

Mal. BASIRA:

That is correct.

Mr. THINKING:

Both of you thought differently but easily fall in love with mob action or chaotic experiences in the name of achieving the popular objective. You make every effort to make it appear better than even civilisation.

Mr. FRANK:

Mr. Thinking, please don't be ethnocentric.

Mal. BASIRA:

What we are advocating is superior to your civilisation the seeming consensus of democracy and the objective realities of the people. After resolving what the objective material conditions of the people are, we proceed to mobilize the only and most powerful force known to history (men) in order to realise the misgivings in the material existence of the society. The intellect therefore sorts out and leaves it to the heart which in the words of Rousseau understands what the head cannot explain. Supported with human passion, the goal will be reached marvellously - the most reliable but difficult way of transforming history.

Mr. FRANK:

That is correct.

Mr. THINKING:

I do not expect you to say the contrary. You are birds of the same feather and cannot contradict each other. You talk of the people, who are these?

Mr. FRANK:

The workers and their allies.

Mal. BASIRA:

The believers.

Mr. THINKING:

All said and done it will appear that either of your biases may work in Nigeria. But, like democracy that has tryingly failed, do you think the monster known as tribe will allow even your own options? I mean to ask, even if everybody is tribal, don't you think and see that some people are clearly more tribalistic?

Mr. FRANK:

Do you mean the Hausas, the Igbos, the Yorubas or any of the minority groups?

Mal. BASIRA:

I think it will be embarrassing, no matter what basis we think one might have to opine that any group is the most tribalistic. What is however clear to me is that,

any large settlement that has the natural/historical misfortune (or otherwise) to belong to the same ethnic group cannot afford not to look or even not to be tribalistic. For living, you need to associate and your environment goes a long way to shape the concepts and concrete terms of such association. Those who radically differently live in a given area stand a better position to forge their unity based on principles superior to ethnicity. They are thus more tolerant, more direct, more appreciable and understanding, when it comes to differences. But, for the ones who have had uniformity eaten deep into their livelihood, their ability to forge a principled unity is not only questionable but often practically superficial. Such societies therefore easily produce seemingly powerful leaders though may be very unintelligent. And those whose background is defined by contrary circumstances don't emerge out of simplicities.

Mr. THINKING:

That is sound. Let us now move into the area of the pre-prepared programme that ought to be used when the coup will have effectively taken place or following a revolution. What will be the character of this programme, this document? Will it be a plan or catalogue of what will be done, like in the budget speeches or development plans that are so popular but illusionary?

Mr. FRANK:

It will be like the manifesto of the communist party but certainly more than that. It has to be more, because the circumstances that will lead to its formulation are different. Marx and Engels wrote the manifesto not with the view that it will have the impact that followed it. And they were not looking forward to be part of the process of take over. But in this case, it will be with the conscious objective of aiding those who

take over and the leadership in particular, to understand, organise and move the victorious along the inspired path.

Mal. BASIRA:

That is correct. The manifesto has the distinctive quality of identifying the historical nature and process of the existence of the state, its society, its enemies, the needed formations to guide and execute the new order and the justification for it. The state is an instrument of the ruling class, the society is made up of opposite groups with the principal ones as the bourgeoisie and the workers who have evolved the larger nature of the state and society because of their peculiar social economic and political positions; the bourgeoisie are the greatest enemies - not by their physical looks or blood relationship but that of ownership and control of the means of production and the attendant effect on the workers; the need for the workers and their allies including intellectuals or opportunists who identify with their interests and guide the workers who are the 'victims' to fight for themselves through constant critical interpretation of events and activities in the society; and the fact that production is a social activity - contrary to the state of private ownership. I also agree that the programme needs to be more than this in every respect, because we are in different times, different people, with differently more advanced or ambitions objective Mr. Frank, will you mind proceeding/from here? After all we only differ in the take off and directional terms not in all respects. Whether we are rightists, leftists or middle readers, we cannot MAKE IT if we don't work.

Mr. THINKING:

I agree with you. I don't equally see any justification for choosing to be lazy or wasteful and expecting to be prosperous, all in the name of freedom. I love a lot of

freedom but will consider foolish the lack of self - discipline. Mr. Frank, you can please continue.

Mr. BASIRA:

Is this to suggest that our differences are in ideology, the choice or preference of people, the approach but not in the basic strategies, not in the ultimate objectives?

Mr. FRANK:

That is exactly what it means, what I am saying.

Mal. BASIRA:

But, that is not to devalue the relevance of differing and fighting or struggling ideologically etc.

Mr. FRANK:

That is correct. Mr. Thinking, do you differ in this respect?

Mr. THINKING:

Not really, Mr. Frank, please, you may now proceed.

Mr. FRANK:

Malam Basira, where did we stop?

Mal. BASIRA:

The proposed pre - prepared programme needed for our epoch needs to be superior, more complex and more ambitious to the manifesto of the communist party.

Mr. FRANK:

That is correct. It will need to be able to identify the very peculiarities of our politico - economic and social epoch and existence, because that is the only basis for carrying the people along with you. For example if a commission agent is mistaken for an equal status with a bourgeoisie or contractor in their enmity to the general society through the state, actions carried out based on such unrefined concept of the actual position will lead to more havoc than intended and even unreasonable.

Mal. BASIRA:

That is correct. The programme will have to show a definite appreciation and decision on what is exploitation, the levels at which it operates, the principal level that is of its concern, especially because this is a largely service, trading, commercial oriented economy - what the first world can allow of the third world. There will also be a definite need for an appreciation and decision on the categorization of groups in accordance with the rationale for the ultimate goal of the struggle. If the issue is corruption and productivity, those who are so because they can criminally afford it or those who may questionably be conditioned to be so e.t.c. need to be clearly distinguished. There must be no muddling, otherwise the surgery will not do away with the ailment. For example if you want to deal with corruption how do you position the police, the custom, the civil servants, the contractors, the foreign investors, the bankers, industrialists, the drug pushers e.t.c.? It is not enough to name them and want to eliminate them. The system to be built is to define the degree of criminality of each of these groups. The closer the group is to the principal crime the more serious its unfriendliness. The programme may not just condemn a corrupt police officer at

the check point, with the stagnant pay packet, increasing inflation and a lot of powers of arrest. A corrupt custom officer who has to choose between corruption, loss of job or even security of his life may not be the target. The civil servant who lacks job security and is sure of not getting a house to live in, given his salary alone, may work hard for up to retirement and pensionable age but without missing any opportunity for building a house and setting up a business. The principal contradictions will need to be identified against the secondary contradictions.

Mr. FRANK:

These are very necessary, after all the motivating factor is not just that doing good is good but that goodness is possible within the given circumstances, where there is no goodness because of some abuses. Marxism is not a talisman. A people who are not naturally endowed are in a less probable position to become prosperous. Where much exists and is wasted or misused a TRANSFORMATION is possible.

Mr. THINKING:

I am following, very closely.

Mal. BASIRA:

That is correct. Mr. Frank. People have no reason to fight against anyone or group for no interest, no objective, no purpose, no hope.

Mr. FRANK:

I will also think that the issue of age could be of some importance. Even though the physiological age of eighteen is now popularly held as the take off point

for political maturity one is tempted to point out that some level of reasonable exposure need precede the election, selection, appointment and acceptance of any person or group to take up the mantle of leadership. This exposure will be both mental and physical – with a special insight into politics in the twentieth century.

Mr. THINKING:

This is very agreeable. There can be no doubt about the simple fact that one of the serious problems facing even the seemingly fairly intended leadership in this country is that of political immaturity coloured with some variety of exuberance, lack of knowledge, appreciation and even some philosophical orientation that befits the times and problems that are with the society. But, for the purposes of guide rather than as a rule, what age do you have in mind Mr. Frank? A rule will be absurd because it will not allow for exceptions but the guide is necessary so that folly does not become standardised.

Mr. FRANK:

A minimum of thirty and thirty – five will be most suitable. Forty will not be a bad idea, fifty will be good for consultation. In very exceptional cases fifty-five to sixty may be given the mantle - if they are found to be extra consistent in their activities. But, the minimum of thirty must not be seen as the only required condition to become fit. The fitting thirty must be accompanied with at least some certifiable quality in schooling achievements, near or up to a decade of working experience, with a reasonable part of it in the playing of fairly highly responsible role(s).

Mal. BASIRA:

What a catalogue, Mr. Frank. But, that is not enough. I would have added, the person need be a male, of at least forty years of age, married with children - free from the clutches of family planning tricks application, a professor and advocate of a given faith and coming from an only average family background - not rich but modest, highly knowledgeable and respected, one who is contented with a little, very unexpected but a great striver for the general good.

Mr. THINKING:

You have added very disturbing dimensions to it. But they will all be alright because they are to serve only as guiding poles. Mallam Basira, is this agreeable to you?

Mal. BASIRA:

Only partly. They should Guide, but we must insist on one who comes close to achieving all. Because we will clearly not go for a mad man does not mean that an epileptic should be accommodated or one of temporary insanity. No matter how knowledgeable one might be, if he comes from a very wealthy background, that is more than sufficient disqualification. To lead, the majority must be carried along and the wealthy are not the majority. Their number is closer to that of madmen in our society. I therefore agree with you, but in this given context. In other words there are uncompromisable rules that can be drawn from the catalogue. A faithless person will automatically stand out. A non - committed faithful or an ignorant person will be dangerous and a bachelor at forty coming to power will amount to some risk. A woman will be out.

Mr. THINKING:

A woman will be out. A bachelor will be risky. A faithless will be out. An ignorant will be dangerous. A non committed will be equally dangerous. Malam Basira, you are already drawing up rules rather than guides. I am beginning to think that even Mr. Frank will soon backout.

Mr. FRANK:

I will wait to hear him first.

Mal. BASIRA:

I don't see the difficulty. Politics is more than polemics and debate. It is not just argument. It is feasibility. It is acceptability. It is recognition. Thus when commitment attends to it, you get not just long standing pragmatism, but one that is satisfying. Without going into the terrific 'misgivings' that women liberation symbolises, the male and female advocates as well, you will not dispute that the ideology and movement is yet to make an inroad into the mainstream of recognition and acceptability in our society. I am not suggesting that women are in themselves largely incapable. I am saying that the limitations in what they will be able to achieve are very great and I don't see why we should wait until the limitations are cared for before the society moves. This defines the limit to which my sexual bias is momentarily advocated.

Knowledge and practice or commitment must go together. You cannot understand a thing by merely knowing it. This is especially the case with living. Those who will therefore be chanced to lead must not be spared the combination of these. The majority of our people are women; the majority of the adults who directly keep the society going are married (productive people) and there are numerous

problems that can best be understood and solved only when the critical position and role of women are grasped. Why wouldn't one be sceptical when a bachelor or a divorced or a widow props up as the winner? I frankly think that our society deserves not to be run by any one or people burdened with egoistic concept of solutions to frustrations that may be socially shared. For example, if marriage is considered an obstacle to certain things, the person is free to go alone. If he is to carry the people along and they recognise and accept marriage, he must carry it along too. I am not advocating for some funny elite revolution. Moreover, Mr. Thinking, is the source of your concern, even if the guides are made rules, the fact that such men do not exist in Nigeria? Are you so pessimistic?

Mr. FRANK:

The question he might now want to raise is how such men will rise to power – by election or what.

Mr. THINKING:

That is correct. You should now answer the question. And I hope you will not say that only the will of some supreme being will make it. That need not be introduced now. We have all through, been empirical.

Mr. FRANK:

I would have responded but the question has been corrupted with some metaphysics that I don't agree with. I frankly think that, you should answer the question yourself.

Mal. BASIRA:

This is not the proper forum to make you see how the supreme will play a role in the rise of the crops we are advocating. But for the side that you can understand, suffice it to say that it will have to be through effective struggle that succeeds. They may be sponsored by coup executors, by a revolution, by accidental election, by democratic, autocratic selection. The least probable means will be by, they, struggling to get into leadership shoes. For me its a bit different. Mr. Frank will say communists will lead as the guides but socialists will do the real fighting. It is the latter who need to liberate themselves from alienation and oppression. The former identifies with it because it has a grasp of the intricate nature of the problem - that is class suicide. It does not mean abandoning your goodies of life as charity. On the contrary, for me, such separation is not clearly possible, because the direction of consciousness is beyond economics as the base. It goes beyond sociology and politics. It combines all and appears as faith. It goes beyond but carries along the Marxist dialectical materialist phenomenon of class. It is as simple as that.

Mr. FRANK:

I see.

Mr. THINKING:

It is as complex as that.

Mr. BASIRA:

It is as frank and thoughtful I will say, Mr. Thinking. Complexity applies to all systems - whether it is goalless as logic may indicate, as comprehensive as the ambition of Mr. Frank or as simple as what option I have pointed out.

Mr. THINKING:

I have heard enough, what else about the pre-prepared programme?

Mr. FRANK:

I have since handed over to you, Malam Basira. You can please proceed.

Mal. BASIRA:

The leaders or champions of the programme or movement must need be reasonably familiar with the nature and details of the state of things - socially, politically but especially economically in order that they may be able to work out some realistic prospect. If it is built on empty expectations, the followership will be demoralised and the leadership in particular will fail - thus the movement, the coup or the revolution. The choice of a transition formula is not just between peace and violence. The details of the strategy will depend upon what is on the ground, the feasibility of whatever optional strategies are opted for. The continuum allows for a rise and fall in the combination of peaceful and violent steps to be taken. Politics for me is not like memorized formulae eagerly waiting to be applied by a student of mathematics going into an examination room. A worthy mathematician who has not out of the disgraceful foreknowledge of the problems to be solved pretended to prepare will normally allow the problem to determine the needed formula. In this respect, my difference with Mr. Frank is that I am not in the same way hopeless. In other words, the only option is not a revolution. Even Marx did not explicitly prescribe that only a violent revolution is the answer. He did provide basis to justify the claim of Lenin that monopoly capitalism is a stage that will in itself generate the forces and basis for the construction of capitalism as a mode of production. But, the world is

larger than Russia, than Eastern Europe, than the East and West of Europe, including, North America. The details and opportunities for sustaining capitalism are far beyond the thinking of Lenin. And I believe that current Marxists/communists are grappling with this problem. It explains the directions now being taken by the Soviet Union and China; how Cuba and Zimbabwe and Angola fought and are categorized as socialist. Poland is another experience. There is no dogma in the whole affair. Libya and Tanzania are not strangers either.

Mr. THINKING:

I hope that you are not misrepresenting the case of Mr. Frank.

Mr. FRANK:

I have no objections whatsoever, on the issues raised.

Mal. BASIRA:

Mr. Thinking, you may please raise any objections.

Mr. THINKING:

I can restrain from being foolish, all the time.

Mal. BASIRA:

Another point that needs be raised is that the champions or directors of change must be assured that the necessary facilities for effecting the proposed or aspired change can be mobilised and brought under control. There is no need mobilising beggars in a capitalist society, when the workers are clearly the most critical group. It is therefore not being suggested that belief or believing or working is in itself

enough. In either case, it must be resourceful enough to carry the responsibility of transforming the entire society. It will therefore, be appreciated that a social revolution can be differentiated and carried out without being politically liberated. And these two can be affected without economic change. It will therefore appear easier to carry out either of the above, a combination of any two or even the three, against going beyond, to include a given faith.

Mr. FRANK:

What therefore distinguishes you from what I am advocating? We share the same things, the same concerns, except the non-essential faith element. That, I have consistently said, needs to be transcended.

Mr. THINKING:

Your question is uncalled for. You are for the workers, he is for the faithful, I am not for either, but for the deliverance of goods and services through standard structures and processes that are made accessible to all.

Mal. BASIRA:

As for the last part, so you intend. But, all never get the access. Democracy is not as same as you project it.

Mr. FRANK:

Democracy is for the crazy demons.

Mr. THINKING:

Malam Basira, now that you have suggested the feasibility or possibility of undertaking a social as against a largely economic or political transformation, how is this possible? What really do you mean? What problems are you referring to? I am for instance of the view and conviction that the extended family system practiced here is part of our problem. This problem of overpopulation, the need for family planning to be seriously pursued.

Mal. BASIRA:

For whatever form or kind of revolution, there will always be the need for sound and critical education, so that the consciousness of men will be tuned along the line of what is aspired for. Men should be able to see where they fit in and desire or need to act in accordance with certain rules, so that the ultimate objectives can be reached. These will define the terms for mobilisation. I also agree with you that the risks that attend to social change and economic change are in comparative terms, less than what moves for political transformation will attract. Let me however quickly point out that none of the facts identified for analytical convenience isolates one from the other. A social change will have bearing on politics just as political change will have bearing on economic change; and economic change will have some bearing on social and political changes.

Mr. FRANK:

I am beginning to see that this new direction might appeal to Mr. Thinking. He will say it is more civil, more logical and more democratic. What do you say to this?

Mr. THINKING:

Do you have any objection to that? I will prefer this kind of evolution rather than the revolution you have been advocating. I will have no objection to a people or class striving towards some transformation of the social and then their economic being before going into politics.

Mal. BASIRA:

Except for analytical purposes, the separations suggested do not exist. They are dialectically related. And even more serious is the fact that the terms and direction are dictated by the relative strength of the attributes of the dominant group that is being oppressed. History has already revealed that there could be a bourgeoisie. What is critical in this circumstance is the fact that the workers don't only have the capacity, but also the ability to take over and dictate. The 'workers' revolution in the economic sphere is the most appropriate because it is the economics that dictated the central occurrences in those societies. However, it is no more news that a revolution can be carried out or sponsored by peasants as in China or a cross section of workers, bourgeoisie, petty bourgeoisie e.t.c. as in Cuba. And it is clear that the ability of making things work, after the revolution depends upon the resourcefulness of the rising class and its precise aim, at the very target or facet of the society that is critical for putting things under control. In a country, where dependence is on external loans, the situation or step that is needed may just be the injection of honesty through preaching or the constant change of government rather than the entire system. The story of the transformational process is therefore not as simplistic as it might appear. Let me remind you, as I have already said, Nigeria has a peculiarity.

Thus in a society that is not economically independent, regardless of the size of the working class, if the country is not blessed with natural resources, the change will rest with a political take - over, at the risk of confronting local and international masters of the society. Where there are natural resources, but are not controlled by the nationals, the story may not be different. In such a circumstance the history of the country will be coloured by patches of political cliques that strive to take over. The masses of the people will be at the mercy of the manipulations of either of these cliques. In other words, the politics of personalities will be very strong. And if the workers or the masses fight to take over, they are most likely going to be at a dangerous loss. Thus, in a circumstance where the real enemy is externally located and the workers are lacking in the skill of transforming the blessed environment after displacing the political stooge of the external enemy, the revolution will be full of regrets. In fact the feasibility and reasonability of this will be most dangerous if the political stooges are able to play that disgraceful but privileged role by virtue of the number of those who identify with them. Any arrangement and attempt to oppose such a politico - sociological set up will primarily require that the sociological base be infiltrated by the positive support of revolutionaries. Of course, the option is that they will become heroes after their death - If the victors or history ever cares to record it.

There is no unilineal way about it; the formula is not fool-proof. The peculiarity of the environmental circumstance in which a people live in, needs to be closely studied, understood, with the above parameters only serving as guides, before a programme of action packed with the needed concepts, definition of the nature of the problems, the way out and the most effective course that will lead to the specified aspired goal can be reached. No people, no person, of any epoch, of any given society must make the mistake that there is a secret formula to prosperity. Our missions are different, though in the same world. These define the general principles

that must guide the terms or plunging into the process of effecting a drastic transformation. It applies to religious transformers as well as Marxist - Leninist revolutionaries if success is the goal.

Mr. FRANK:

I agree with you completely. This is precisely why when labour unionism is mistaken for class struggle; it raises expectations, only to be dashed again. In fact it explains the dilemma in this country where, when we depend upon oil, pay rise seemed positive and as a solution. But, now that the oil is no more, one can foresee the seriousness that is required in improving the material conditions of the people of this country - the workers inclusive, if the workers are to champion the course. It will be fool hardy to take over a largely service oriented economy without a comprehensive programme of, SAVINGS, INVESTMENTS, etc.

Mal. BASIRA:

I will say, the production of goods, goods, goods, then services, services; goods first.

One more thing please, if we all agree on this, why can't we resolve on it as the principal basis for our living ignoring all the prejudices already raised, now that we have a firm basis for unity?

Mr. THINKING:

That is logical, but I will want to disagree. If men were that rational, the problems wouldn't have arisen in the first place.

Besides, men need more than food. Indeed, we differ even in the kinds of food that we need. And settling the terms of sustenance is only the beginning of the problem. Life involves the continuous resolution of conflicts as long as we are alive.

Mal. BASIRA:

Mr. Thinking, you easily get fascinated by a solution to your immediate problem. You don't seem to recognise or appreciate that history is larger and more complex than the immediate and that man aspires beyond the immediate.

Mr. FRANK:

Mal. Basira what about the extended family, as an obstacle.

Mr. THINKING:

Yes! Will you dispute that?

Mal. BASIRA:

The issue is not just yes or no please. It needs to be located within a given history. How can you talk of over population in a society where one million live and the resources can optimally fend for five million - except for bad organisation, inefficiency and the rest of it? Except you are suggesting that such a people should put up with and accept to live with inefficiency and misorganisation as an economic system. Don't you see some families are seventy in number, without the extended arms, and all members are living extremely very well? Don't you see some are only five or even less, and they are always faced with the fierce battle with hunger, thirst and shelter? Are there no many that you know of, who are just able to contain hunger, thirst and shelter? Who then is to plan what? Do you think that those who

are less than five and live extremely well should guide us or those who are seventy and live extremely well? There is certainly more to learn from the seventy than from the five who live equally. Extended or restricted family size is not in itself a problem. It is the resource organisation. And the way of dealing with it may not be through escapism. After all the more we are the stronger we are - given a state of organised resources. But for those who are not endowed, they may resort to planning. For those who are, they can improve on their quality, from an increase in their number. Man is a resource. Such people can afford not to live on charity, pity or aid. Nigeria is highly under populated. Mass education and mass mobilisation for an organised action is a superior alternative to family planning or birth control that is only an economic/financial boom for countries manufacturing, selling contraceptives; a boom to the culture of escapism and a boom to the politics of deceit championed by the United Nations dominated by euro American culture.

Mr. THINKING:

May be my point is not clear. Malam Basira, are you suggesting that family structure has no relevant relationship with economics? It is not that, I haven't got the point you have made. But, you seem to flatly dismiss the necessary relationship. I mean that you don't seem to be conscious of the possible impression that people can just marry anyhow.

Mr. FRANK:

In other words shall people just marry, irrespective of the state of the economy? Shouldn't the family structure respect one's materialist condition?

Mal. BASIRA:

That may appear to be a valid question. I am far from suggesting that people should marry in isolation of economic considerations. And I mean marrying, in terms of monogamy, polygyny or the social production of increasing children in either case. However, there is nothing wrong in having such number of children that you can't even remember all the names, how they look e.t.c. And I insist that the father must be responsible for them - individually and collectively. As for marriage system, it is clear to me that polygyny is superior to monogamy. The character and direction of the materialist conditions of men (any family) in any society is the primary responsibility of the state- to organise. However, in the event of failure, the society or group from it (families) will have to take up that responsibility, in order to transform the state.

Let it therefore be clear that the case for any family structure needs be located with a given historical context and more specifically, its relevance to the existing materialist condition must be made dependent upon the responsive and responsible nature of the economic system and the government or regime in power. Any failure to recognise this nature of relationship will amount to suggesting and accepting that any kind and form of economic system and any kind and form of managing government or regime should be acceptable as the promise on which to build the family. In other words the social (family) system should be subjected to any kind of economic state of affairs. The later is sacred, and must not be touched or tempered with. The family is secular and can be tuned accordingly. I don't think in the reverse either, none must be accepted as a rule. Both can be tempered with and drastically organised. And I don't see why I should be keener in affecting the human body or what some may unjustifiably consider to be excesses of the body, than putting restrains on THINGS, the economic structure. Rather than drug men with side-

effects full contraceptives in order to curtail over population, I will first want to be absolutely sure that the production and distribution terms of the society resources will not reasonably go round for the population and that NOTHING can be done to change it. Men are in my conception not living for THINGS or economics - to eat. On the contrary, things are there to be employed by men as they deem fit. There is therefore no economic basis in the history of Nigeria that justifies monogamy as a rule or the encouragement of the practice of family planning as a priority today.

Mr. THINKING:

Malam Basira. Are you completely against family planning?

Mr. FRANK:

I don't think so. I think, it is O.K. under exceptional circumstance.

Mal. BASIRA:

It may not be as simple as that. It is true that I am not completely against it. In a history where the economy allows for family planning as an escapist means, it may be cautiously practiced. This will be in a society where the means of survival is simply more than difficult, and nothing can be done about it. In that society, planning may not be prohibited but the state must be satisfied that it is in the interest of the collective society. If and when this is not done, the operators need be held for treason. For those with genetically transmittable diseases, it may be easily allowed. But, even there, they must not be forced. Even if there will be encouragement, it must be cautious, the simple reason being, scientific knowledge is not finite. And the reproduction of social life (biologically) need be cautiously tempered with. On the contrary, exemplary couples or families that are identified by the state must be

prohibited from planning. After all, they normally don't over produce. This guide does not extend to insisting on intelligent people getting married to one another. Although this may be encouraged, it must not be made a rule. The rule should simply be that good people should be encouraged. I am therefore saying that as long as something can be done to the economy to improve things, the society will be treading the path of historical suicide and timidity by going for planning the family instead of the economic state. But, in a largely disorganized society, this will not be surprising.

Mr. FRANK:

Thus, an intelligent person, generally recognised to be so and identified by the state might be encouraged to practice polygamy.

Mr. THINKING:

That is correct. But, Basira will add, if the desire and ability is there.

Mal. BASIRA:

In addition to that, it will not suggest that I support polyandry. It will rather suggest that no intelligent person meaning one that is generally recognised and accepted as superior in some good and aspirational sense will be allowed to remain a bachelor or spinster for a long time after the quality has been identified. Any attempt to refuse must be treated as treason.

Mr. THINKING:

But, all of us are yet to dispute the fact that planning and marriage should be for those who will be able, against those who will not be. In other words, you still don't disagree that some people are different from others.

Mal. BASIRA:

I have disputed a state of some being able and other not being able. I accept that some may be much more able than others. But, even this will critically depend upon the kind and form of economic system that is deliberately forged.

Mr. FRANK:

Has the superiority of polygyny been explained?

Mr. THINKING:

Yes. If an intelligent person gets married to more than one wife the probability of increasing his kind is then fairly conditioned - when compared with monogamy. The simple arithmetic is that with monogamy you may be able to reproduce that or traits of that intelligence ten times. All things being equal, with four wives you may be able to make forty.

Mal. BASIRA:

There, I disagree. Not forty. May be twenty. The simple reason is that it is possible for four women to get pregnant the same month by the same man. You can't rule out twin or triplets. But, even if they are not there, it is more efficient than monogamy. Some women are more fertile than others. Not all women will be able to deliver the same number of children. Some will find hell in one, some will get to twenty before the hell. And mind you, this is for the benefit of the larger society.

Mr. FRANK:

You will not mind polygamy imposed or practised by the elite, even though you will not withhold the practice from the downtrodden.

Mr. BASIRA:

That may be deduced. But intelligence is more serious than belonging to the elite club. The elite have no monopoly of intelligence against the masses. Some are there by accident and very undeservedly too.

Mr. THINKING:

What about lust?

Mal. BASIRA:

With monogamy yes. With polygamy no. With the former, it is always with the same partner and without break. With the latter, there is variety and a necessary break is instituted or restrain, because each takes her turn. The lust is therefore at worst only associable to the man. This is why you commonly get the phrase of sharing my man/woman from people who are that cultured. But the role of the marriage institution is far superior to fucking, screwing or whatever. Thus, in a society where it is almost the role for the elite to go monogamous and the masses to go polygamous, you cannot but live with the mass expansion of social, economic, political, aesthetic, cultural, intellectual and such other misgivings always out of the control of the elite. My dear friends, what number of insane people do you think one sane person can operate a democratic system with? a socialist system with? a theocratic system with? I will simply say, not even one. However if the same are in domination, the insane will get conveniently controlled. This kind of misbalance in the family system, coupled with the large implications it generates culturally, is a critical root cause for a good number of our inabilities as a system.

Mr. FRANK:

I see you point.

Mal. BASIRA:

And the imposition of family planning tricks and hazards will not do the magic. It may worsen it because the few elite will drop polygyny and the masses are certainly slower at dropping it. Monogamy means more than the seeming beauty of one man, one wife, one house, one dog, one car, one house boy, one son and probably one daughter or even none.

Mr. THINKING:

Why is the certain beauty only seeming?

Mal. BASIRA:

In a booming economy polygyny can be practised. In a wretched economic society where nothing can be independently done, polygyny will have to be rare. Monogamy will be beautiful - not extending to pets, cars e.t.c. The point is that real beauty rests with the quality of men and their quantity. Thus, although the conveniences of the seeming beauty in the kind of monogamy mentioned may not be denied as part of the quality of the men, the efficient reproduction of that quality will depend only on the economic arrangement and polygyny.

Mr. FRANK:

That is clear. Although it might appear to be the same question, what really makes for the superiority of polygyny? Please don't mention the moral advantages, because, that is obvious, though only for those who care for social standards and

insist on the high social responsibilities of the reproduction of society. That is already recognised as a historical role that any responsible group of society need insure.

Mal. BASIRA:

It is very simple. The quality of man rests not in the materials he is able to consume but in his orientation, his mind, his approaches to things, his response to situations of difficulty. I do not need to argue that a polygynous background provides the variety and quality of such difficult exposures early in life to the child. It is therefore the responsibility of the parents to help resolve them, for the child to see, hear, for learning. This is where leadership means a lot. A situation where the child has no one to interact with except adults is very unhealthy, if it can be helped. Where the primary actors are always the mother and the father, it is too limited a scope for learning, because the quality of exposure or its expression depends upon the problems he is faced with, their quality, their quantity, their regularity, their variety. Only polygyny is blessed with all of these. This is not to deny that it can be a miserable experience for weaklings or the meek. Polygyny is not for the practice of simple-tons. Thus, if monogamy fails, the parties need to be questioned, in a booming economy. Indeed even with polygyny, there is no success if its products are freed from getting exposed to sufficient difficulties. This can be the case when wealth is employed to intervene in isolating the members reasonably. There should be a lot of social interaction between the various members coming from different backgrounds (families, mothers, tribes, nations, e.t.c.) with different prejudices. But even this will not be enough unless there is from time to time some highly qualitative experience of insufficiency in basic necessities at individual and group level - but not the lack of it. Members must make effort to express, expose or make open, their prejudices otherwise there will be no meaningful socialisation. Thus, the role of the

leader of the family will be that of an intelligent, brilliant, learned, cultured, highly principled and pragmatic one. The family should be seen to believe in him through voluntary respect. This is why, a break in the relationship should be made, only when unavoidable - where the member to be expelled is injecting more harm to the system than any good. I am therefore suggesting that although monogamy may not be absolutely lacking in these blessings, it is on the average largely lacking. This is why those from royal background and wealthy families who face no problems are the historically most unfortunate.

Mr. THINKING:

The superiority of the family head is tied to knowledge and the superiority of polygyny background with modest infrastructural or resource support is tied to the capacity and ability of the group to generate contradictions and the resolution of these for the members but especially for the new generation. It amounts to like living in the school where mature roles are played. I see your point. But, there is still a small difficulty. What about justice?

Mr. FRANK:

What about justice? Its definition? Justice for who? By who? For what?

Mr. BASIRA:

What is your response to that, Mr. Thinking?

Mr. THINKING:

I am eager to hear you. You may answer all, some or just one. Indeed, you may just respond to my original question, the way you deem fit.

Mal. BASIRA:

You have asked; what about justice? I would have frankly retorted, what about justice? What is it that is your problem about justice in polygyny? A few things are however clear to me.

In the first place, justice is to be experienced through the efforts of all parties concerned or involved. And you cannot talk of justice between equals. It is the superior who has the role of justice to play for the others - not the inferiors. In this case, it is the husband. It calls for knowledge, decisiveness, consideration and principles - the meanings of which change with circumstances. This is because the problem is not a mathematical one. For example where and when one of one's two wives is sick, it is not just to administer the same drug or drug at all on the healthy one - in the name of justice. In fact, it will not be just to pay the healthy one any money equivalent to the value of the drugs given to the sick one. It will be as out of place as meeting one of them who is suffering from some kind of vaginal infection merely because it is her turn. Neither will the day need be marked as a loss that need be compensated. And if the husband falls sick or will be away from the family justice does not call for necessarily going with all of them. Those who have this concept can only belong to the monogamous club whose concept of society and history is only as developed as that of the child that stops at the stage of fixation.

Secondly, it does not dismiss some kind of 'equal' treatment. For example, everyone shall have her turn, equal to that of any other. But, this does not mean that the turn of one cannot be voluntarily allowed to the other, or that it cannot be sought for or even bought, for the other. Indeed, it is not to suggest that the ability of the husband should be overstretched. You can't because you have four wives purchase

one automobile, when you can afford five for the family. It also does not mean that they shall have equal number of children or the quality of these.

Thirdly, distinction need be made between capacities and abilities – vis-a-vis the primary role of raising a family. For example, the husband's attraction to anyone of the wives and the attraction of any of the wives to the husband depend on physical, emotional and spiritual strengths of the parties, which had already been fashioned by the cultural backgrounds of each individual and the individual's training to deal with such exposures. Justice here is not like in the court of law, where the judge could stay aloof. Thus, a girl who grew up seeing and learning that the mother finally decides what her father does will have a lot of problems when married to a man who plays his proper role. And a man who has become exposed to experiences of lust from his monogamous background may run into a partner who will run away due to over engagement. The same principle goes with values. A husband from a chaste background will face constant embarrassment from a woman from a loose, sicalidic background. Justice does not here mean that the husband should take just anything that comes. But, it must not suggest that any differing wife need be forced either. What is required is that the expressions should be honest and sincere with each party making his or her point clear to the other. This will then be followed by a resolution. And the latter will depend upon the closeness of the issue or activity to the principles of marriage, the quality and regularity of the differential experience. It may therefore become accepted, tolerated, accommodated or dismissed. And because of the superiority of the principles (not the whims of the husband) the wife cannot afford to be ignorant. If she is, the polygyny will be rough. But where the principles stand at par, the marriage should be prepared for a close. Marriage must not be taken for imprisonment. And there are more things couples come to know of

one another only after the marriage than before. The exceptions are those who know the future.

Fourthly, it therefore means that justice is a process of learning in polygyny between members of fairly equal intelligence but will always at least require that the husband commands that intelligent leadership. All parties are therefore equal in their subjection to the principles but the husband is the first - not in number but in his role as guide and guard. The 'polygyny' that is made up of meek and submissive and ignorant members is social barbarism with polygamous face. All members must therefore express themselves fairly well, but the husband has the supreme responsibility of always expressing himself positively, especially in areas of differences; and of understanding even the wife that is introvertive.

Fifth, it means that the main resource for carrying polygyny is intelligence and not clothes, drinks, houses, cars, horses, money or power. Intelligence based on knowledge and experience of the principles of marriage is like land and capital or means and forces of production in economics. The employment of clothes, money, power, horses, drinks and such other material things to operate polygyny is secondary. In other words, if you are a man of office - ascribed or achieved it does not guarantee an effective, satisfactory, meaningful or judicious practice of polygyny. The same condition holds for the man of wealth. These are scarce resources that, to a degree need be combined with intelligence in the practice of polygyny. Thus, when money takes the place of productivity, you get what you deserve; chaotic family or inflation. The responsibility of the family and especially that of the husband is therefore to struggle for fending for the family members. What is disagreeable is the standard that is below minimum. What is commendable is the mean, the medium, the average standard. The rule is not above average. The superfluous must not be the rule. The urge to make it so through monogamy or planning is indiscipline

defined by unrestraint from man's animalistic tendency towards lust and away from the sacred role(s) for which the marriage institution is established.

Thus, polygyny is the efficient social system for the reproduction of a better society or generation, if the present has anything to be build on. Justice therefore changes with time, the participants, the circumstances, the issues. This makes polygyny the rightful microcosm of the society and not monogamy. Of course the members and especially the husband must be seen to do what is best and convenient and members must believe in one another and especially the husband. The husband as a personification of the principles and not the physical man. It is therefore sixthly important to appreciate that justice is a dynamic process or a means of achieving the utopia of a better, better society through a fast numerous and qualitative reproduction of ourselves. If' you are out for mathematical justice – not in history; and if justice is to be free for any degree of injustice, that is to deny men their follies. These are clear to me, in the relationship between polygyny and justice.

Mr. FRANK:

These clarities are all welcome. But they lead to one other problem. If this is what polygyny stands for, then that is not what our people practice, and this is why we condemn it.

Mal. BASIRA:

You condemn polygyny because it is badly practiced. Aren't you worse? You condemn the practitioners because the principle is wrong? That is not what you are saying. You are saying that you condemn the principle inspite of its goodness because the practitioners are bad. Mr. Frank, what are you saying please?

Mr. THINKING:

Yes. I agree with you. The condemnation is more irrational - if it is of the principle, merely because of the practitioners.

Mr. FRANK:

Thanks for the clarity.

Mr. THINKING:

Yet, another question may be raised. Given the Utopia objective and the delicate but highly responsible means or process of the relationship between polygyny and justice; and in view of the fact that it requires a rich intelligence base, will you think that polygyny is advisable,- given the responsibilities. Do you think justice is reasonably possible?

Mal. BASIRA:

The society gets what it strives for. Like apples we get the amount and quality of justice that we need. We don't get what we want. And knowledge is peculiar in the sense that it can be shared without any loss, it cannot be forcefully taken away from the possessor. In a society largely ignorant, polygyny will be disastrous, if no efforts are made towards knowledge. And where education is commercialised polygyny will be in bad light. And indeed where the economy is disorganised and the leadership is irresponsible, arrogant and hopeless polygyny will look suicidal and crazy. But running away will not solve the problem. The principle may often need to be separated from the convention. If you want to revolutionize the sociology, this is how to do it. The more we are, the stronger we are and the greater the possibility that a greater number of positive exceptionals like geniuses will be of us. No amount of feeding,

drinking and other comforts that monogamy can easily boast of will provide the increase in the essential quality of individuals and their collectivity.

Mr. THINKING:

The point of monogamy as the rule and polygyny as the exception is therefore non-essential.

Mr. FRANK:

That is correct. I believe.

Mal. BASIRA:

I will say, very misleading. Such concepts reflect the influence of our different cultural and environmental background and our interpretation or understanding of things. It is like the Greek man who sees justice as equality and suddenly shifts to equity and fairness on being faced with changed practical situations.

Mr. THINKING:

Do you mean that the whole difference is cultural, and all of these are intellectualism?

Mr. FRANK:

Not really.

Mal. BASIRA:

My objective is to educate, not to convert.

Mr. FRANK:

So everyone with the intelligence and a reasonable resource should now register for polygyny. Is that acceptable to you Malam Basira? That is logical.

Mal. BASIRA:

No, I am not advocating for that. I stand more for energetic polygyny. The practice of this by adults that are disposed for it by the age of forty latest. I am not saying it is wrong to be marrying at the age of seventy. But, in order not to produce weaklings it is better, while you are still strong. The old who get married to youths often either lose their senses or end up in frustration. No man or woman should spend all life reproducing. Indeed, it shouldn't be done lately. There are other things to be done in life, of personal and social value, beyond reproduction.

Mr. THINKING:

You are therefore in support of early marriages.

Mal. BASIRA:

Yes. But not very early marriage.

Mr. FRANK:

But, for the man, how does he cater for the child?

Mal. BASIRA:

Educating the child does not start or end with contracting him, out to the school system. He needs more than delicious meals, expensive schools, comfortable conveyer, cold drinks, e.t.c. Not even an insurance scheme or savings is good

enough for the child. It is the experience. The child will be unfortunate if all he can get from you is the money and payments for his requests because you are too old or dead when he grows up. The monogamous insist on settling down, the polygynous know that the grave is the only place for settling. But, in a badly organised political-economy and commercialised education nothing matters.

Mr. THINKING:

They will say, monogamy is the rule.

Mr. FRANK:

Polygyny, the exception.

Mal. BASIRA:

Is that to suggest that marriage is compulsory even for mad men? That is what will allow for monogamy as the rule. But, some should be barred, discouraged from marriage. As for whether it can be the popular rule in practice, I have earlier on responded to that.

Mr. THINKING:

Well, in the lighter mood, Malam Basira don't you think or even feel that polygyny realises the selfishness of men and the exploitation of women, in addition to all the positive things about it?

Mr. FRANK:

That, in fact, is a serious point.

Mal. BASIRA:

I frankly don't think that the objective of polygyny in relation to the society or the problems connected to it are in principle sexual. I don't understand this issue of selfishness. Do you mean that men have wombs to carry babies and are refusing? What and where is the misfortune sexually? And shouldn't women who have the reproductive organ produce children? Can they do it without men? Do you think that there are enough men for women? Are men or women here for fun? Are the women who first get married to men the best resources for the greatest expansion of our society? Will any woman who follows suite be only better or just good a resource? Should there be a standard of morality in society? Should society be reproduced anyhow? Are some men or women generally more deserving in being protected against falling into immorality than others? This issue of selfishness and exploitation is ridiculous. I would have thought that for productivity, exploitation has to take place. What we should bother about is the organisation of exploitation processes and how the products are appropriated - privately or socially. And don't see anything to argue or arguable about the fact that we should in our productivity efforts always strive to maximise productivity, saving time and thereby improve on quality socially. They don't want to struggle or fight and they want to win; they don't want to work hard and they want to live well; they want to foster their identity but they don't bother about marriage seriously. Frankly, this is very serious.

Mr. FRANK:

This issue of first, second, third and so on, of wives, I am referring to the order.

Mal. BASIRA:

My dear friend that may be useful only for the purpose of identifying the wife. It is better to use their names. The point of the principles is that each one is alone and with the husband alone. The relationship is not that of one wife being subjected to the instructions of another by law. There is nothing wrong if such respect develops in a healthy way. But, it must be clear that where it does not exist it is not an anomaly. Those who therefore practice it are not abusing any law of polygyny, and those who don't are not in conformity with any law of polygyny. It is a practice of convenience, convention, tradition, e.t.c. The superiority of a wife in the eyes of the husband is not to be measured by the turn she took in coming into wedlock with the husband. It is essentially by how she fits into the superior role of the wife in a polygynous circumstance. Her intelligence, openness, obedience, e.t.c. all count.

Mr. THINKING:

That is sound, Malam Basira.

Mr. FRANK:

I personally think and agree that the principles are satisfactory and sound. But, the practices are so much in abuse of the principle that it will appear insane to go for polygyny. It is said, and it still remains to be disputed; ONE woman, one trouble; TWO women, two troubles; THREE women, three troubles; FOUR women, four troubles.

Mr. THINKING:

I may even add that, if the increase in the trouble were to be of the same kind it might be easier to deal with. But it varies in kind and in magnitude. Don't you see

that only the Almighty can afford to be polygynous, especially because even practitioners of polygyny confess this?

Mal. BASIRA:

I see your point - because the seeming points boil down to the same thing. But, let me clear one thing. The science of society is not the same as the science of chemistry. The variables are not and need not be controlled, in order to understand them. Thus, the method to be employed in understanding them must be different. The logic of one woman implies a given amount and variety of trouble(s) goes to suggest that polygyny is always more nasty than monogamy. As a rule, this is wrong. There are more monogamous experiences that are nastily conditioned, except if we will accept the subjective carelessness of its members due to their culture of choicelessness - for better or for worse. Nasty is here used to mean, not just problems or difficulties, but those that cannot serve as a basis for social development or are contrary to the principles of polygyny. There is no denying that polygyny automatically means a wider and deeper scope of responsibilities, restrains, experiences e.t.c. These are needed for the firm and healthy development of social man. But when the polygyny falls into the state of Hobbesian nature, where members, at the slightest provocation will take up knives or guns, get into ring for boxing or the destruction of property, that is nasty. Of course it will not be so, in a society where these are counted as positive aspects of marriage culture. I think it is easier to assert that it is more common to find the uncivil state of the husband dreading the wife in the monogamous circles. It is therefore nasty to go into monogamy and stick to it like a rock or mountain is stucked to the earth crust. If it doesn't work - transform it.

Mr. FRANK:

Transform it will mean, marry another or divorce her and then marry another. Is that the culture you are advocating?

Mr. THINKING:

No. He is just confirming what infact polygyny has done to the sacred institution of marriage.

Mal. BASIRA:

You should have patiently waited. Nonetheless, the dimensions are interesting. There is nothing wrong in what Mr. Frank has stated. Nothing wrong. The point is that polygyny should be encouraged or even imposed on those who will be able, in the larger interest of the society. It is also true that this is being practised. But, isn't it true that it is easier to fall than it is to climb? to destroy, than it is to construct? To maintain and develop, than it is after taking off? That explains it. But, it does not in any way point at its impossibility, rather, it is that it is often badly started. I am not advocating for indiscriminate rate and forms of divorce and marriage. Why we have all these happening is simply because both monogamous and polygynous practitioners largely go into it without the sufficient knowledge of the compatibility of the partners. And this applies to all aspects of the individuals' personality. It goes beyond physical/emotional attraction and consent; religion, interests, hobbies or profession; and it needs to go beyond race, nationality, ambition. Fitting behaviours that are most preferable, from the angle of the individual's potentials is extremely important. But, when ignorance becomes the dominant determiner of coupleship in a society, they can only reproduce their misgivings. It is indeed most serious when there is no avenue or provision for change.

The objective of marriage is to improve the lot and quality of the society at large. polygyny must not be reduced to the troublesomeness of women. Men are also troublesome. It is not only women to blame. Men are not the angels while the women are the devils. But, the concept of the woman informed by ignorance is what is responsible for men as the angels. Polygyny is not a licence for the maltreatment of women and those who practice monogamy are the proof that theirs, is not an escape from maltreatment. For those who are very observant, they will appreciate that maltreatment seems to have been avoided, only to be replaced by being irresponsible to the larger society. This does not mean that maltreatment is always absent in monogamy. But, it is easier to notice in polygyny because of its elaborate and more challenging conditions. Thus, with no knowledge, no intelligence, monogamy or polygyny will misfire. Polygyny will only appear to misfire the more, because, given its scope, it is more responsive. We can therefore not claim the understanding of either by merely computing the actual submissions of the practitioners. The truth, in this case, goes beyond quantifying and weighing or manipulating the observable/empirical variables.

Mr. THINKING:

It will appear from your analysis that knowledge is superior to even consent.

Mal. BASIRA:

Seemingly, absolutely yes. But, I would rather say that the place of consent be minimised and will be sufficient if the expression of discontent is not consistently outright and if the party is fairly informed about the motivating knowledge. In other words, even a neutrally expressed consent can be coupled with what knowledge appropriately dictates. When the consent goes along with knowledge, which is a

model start and the standard even if the consent is not there. These define the mode of transforming our society on the grounds of ideology, genetics, socially, politically economically, psychologically, for the better. Any deviation from this is a deviation from the path of transformation.

Mr. FRANK:

It will appear that if the family system and terms are revolutionised, with a programme, the politics will be made easier and more effective and more meaningful to struggle for possession and use; it will also boost the economy.

Mr. THINKING:

This cannot be disputed. But, earlier on we had been given the impression that it is intelligence and economy that matter most, rather than intelligence and the family, marriage or society. This may not be contradictory, but it will need to be explained. And it cannot be denied that political power is a master force that can go a very long way in improving the society in most, if not all respects.

Mr. FRANK:

These too cannot be denied. But, that leads us to the problem, Malam Basira. Where are we, where are we going, what are we doing?

Mal. BASIRA:

The problems of man are not in the context of what we have been discussing mathematical. The solution can therefore not be one. It cannot be unilineal. But, since we have no choice but to use language, we will need to try to make it dynamic, dialectical, because, that is what it is. You are both correct. And there is nothing

contradictory in what we have been sharing. In history, in the experience of Nigeria, is it not true that the Hausa language and culture socially dominates? Aren't people of the geographical north easily mistaken for Hausas? Isn't that mistake more incorrect than the mistake that all west is Yoruba or all east is Ibo? But, are there no minorities? Are these minorities not really majorities to others? That is the impact of social fosterage. Are the Hausas the political champions as well? Isn't this the sphere of the Fulanis? Is that not related to the Sokoto Jihad? Aren't these the experiences that gave birth to the concept of Hausa/Fulani? Doesn't a combination of these give the impression that the geographical north is wholly or at least largely Muslim? Isn't that reasonably correct? But, do this same category of Nigerians, control the economy of the country? Who own and control the largest investments even in the geographical north? Where are industries more established? Are these not expressions of the power of the social base, the political base, the economic base? Don't they explain the reasonability for tribalism, regionalism or confederation and the character of the Mixed economy that is in principle so hopeful and in practice so hopeless? Is that not why secularism is so appealing even to the daft minded? Why federalism is so acceptable? Why the strong centre in our federalism is so effective? Isn't that the basis for the absolute superiority of principles like work or belief as optional terms for the retransformation of Nigeria? You are therefore both correct. But, none of it is more magical than the other even though it might appear as if one is over the other(s). It critically depends on the circumstances of a given place and people.

Mr. FRANK:

I see and firmly agree with you in every respect.

Mr. THINKING:

On my part, I don't really see anything to dispute.

Mal. BASIRA:

We are therefore all now together in agreement, in every respect.

Mr. THINKING:

That seems appealing; I can only say that I respect your positions, in principle and in practice, and even the terms. What I reserve is a difference in the terms and in some respects, even the principles and the practice.

Mal. BASIRA:

We are therefore yet to be all together. We are still what we are, all different though similar in some respects. But, it is clear that the similarities don't bother us, it is the differences that we are concerned with and therefore emphasise.

Mr. FRANK:

Yes. That is correct.

Mr. THINKING:

May be. I am not really sure.

Mal. BASIRA:

Mr. Thinking, has anyone of us suggested an outright rejection of an election system?

Mr. THINKING:

No please.

Mal. BASIRA:

Mr. Thinking, has anyone of us objected to some form of mobilisation or what you may call campaign?

Mr. THINKING:

No please.

Mal. BASIRA:

Mr. Thinking, has anyone of us denied that the one to lead need be known to the led and acceptable too?

Mr. THINKING:

No please.

Mal. BASIRA:

Mr. Thinking, has anyone of us declined consenting to intelligence as the principal basis for politics?

Mr. THINKING:

No please.

Mal. BASIRA:

Mr. Thinking, has anyone of us refused to recognise that differences will always remain and that politics is meant to resolve them?

Mr. THINKING:

No please.

Mal. BASIRA:

Mr. Thinking, has anyone of us failed to appreciate that political education is very critical for whatever form of politics we stand for?

Mr. THINKING:

No please.

Mr. BASIRA:

Mr. Thinking, has anyone of us dissociated political consciousness as a solid basis for political practice?

Mr. THINKING:

No please.

Mal. BASIRA:

Mr. Thinking, are these areas of disagreement?

Mr. THINKING:

Agreement please.

Mal. BASIRA:

Have you any reservations about these agreements?

Mr. THINKING:

No please.

Mal. BASIRA:

Do either I or Mr. Frank share the principle, term or practice of majority always having its way, while the minority continues to have its say?

Mr. THINKING:

No please.

Mal. BASIRA:

Do you have preference for a politics based on workers' interest(s)?

Mr. THINKING:

No please.

Mal. BASIRA:

For believers?

Mr. THINKING:

No please.

Mal. BASIRA:

Are you married to a revolution (socio-political?)

Mr. THINKING:

Not at all please.

Mal. BASIRA:

Mr. Thinking, are these areas of agreements?

Mr. THINKING:

Disagreements please.

Mal. BASIRA:

Do you have any reservations about any of these?

Mr. THINKING:

No please.

Mal. BASIRA:

Mr. Frank, are you following?

Mr. FRANK:

Very closely.

Mal. BASIRA:

Mr. Thinking, then, Why MAY BE?

Mr. THINKING:

I agree with you completely.

Mal. BASIRA:

But, who frankly thinks that we can resolve the differences effectively and meaningfully or satisfyingly by two of us abandoning or discarding our differences in order that we may become the same with the remaining one?

Mr. FRANK:

It will be alright with me if the two of you will be the ones to discard your differences, so that you will join me and take up my own identity.

Mr. THINKING:

That does not sound feasible.

Mal. BASIRA:

If the three of us make up the entire country and we can only dialogue, would there be unity among us, to act politically, economically and socially?

Mr. THINKING:

Yes please.

Mr. FRANK:

But, it will be empty of meaning and satisfaction.

Mal. BASIRA:

What if Mr. Frank has plenty of money?

Mr. THINKING:

I may be tempted to reconsider some of the differences between us.

Mal. BASIRA:

I will also be interested in how he has made that success. But, if the two of you join efforts what will happen to the unity?

Mr. FRANK:

The terms will be reasonably consistent, though against you, in some respects.

Mal. BASIRA:

What if you have a gun, inspite of the wealth of Mr. Thinking?

Mr. FRANK:

I will be able to force both of you to abide by my terms, even if not for a long time.

Mal. BASIRA:

And, what if there were two Mr. Thinking, one Mr Frank and five Malam Basiras?

Mr. THINKING:

More guns or a better gun may be needed to force the seven of us. But the three of us are likely to be often very suspicious of the Basiras, because of their number.

Mr. FRANK:

Yes, especially because the Basiras may be vulnerable to being influenced by wealth; may be limitedly forced, even if for a very short time. But, none of these is certain, because I will be vulnerable to being arrested; inspite of my gun, which on its own weakens the deliberate attempt or guts, on the part of the Thinkings, to influence the Basiras.

Mal. BASIRA:

Who is or are unintelligent? The Thinkings? The Basiras? Frank?

Mr. FRANK:

Except from another's point of view.

Mal. BASIRA:

We have therefore all testified to the power of politics, the power of economics, social power and the need for knowledge/intelligence to guide the organisation of society. We have also testified that deliberate organisation and struggle is the only answer to the problems of violence, poverty and crimes; unity; secularism e.t.c. It goes beyond the table conference, debate, and wishes.

Mr. FRANK:

I see your point.

Mr. THINKING:

The point is clear.

Mal. BASIRA:

And of the Basiras, the Thinkings and Frank, coupled with their wealth and the gun, in terms of power, which of the categories is most powerful? Which is more powerful? Which is only powerful?

Mr. THINKING:

The gun will depend upon its quality and efficiency. The many will depend upon their concern and the wealth will depend upon its quantity and the uses to which it is employed. Except we agree that the dependencies are identified and finalised, it will not make sense to order them in terms of which is most, more or only powerful for the unity we are talking about.

Mr. FRANK:

That is absolutely correct. And we have no basis or reason whatsoever to hold the level, quality or quantity of Frank or his gun, Thinkings or their wealth, Basiras or their intelligence constant. Frank can become Franks, with or without a gun or guns or even better guns. The Thinking may buy off the gun or guns; the Basiras may better use the wealth e.t.c. There can be no straight jacket projection about what will happen.

Mal. BASIRA:

That is dialectics of change. It may be the coup to the rigging of elections; it may be ownership and control of the means of production; it may be an upheaval, in the language of the status quo.

Mr. THINKING:

It inevitably means that all efforts should be used in the securance and employment of all the available resources at one's disposal in the process of the STRUGGLE.

Mr. FRANK:

That is absolutely correct.

Mal. BASIRA:

I would not say so. Not all means justify the goal. Here comes in the ethic of politics. Here we differ. But, on the struggle, we cannot differ.

Mr. THINKING:

And we cannot differ in the social, political and economic terms.

Mr. FRANK:

That is correct and undisputable.

Mal. BASIRA:

In principle, yes. In practical details, maybe not. For, don't you see that what is social is also political and can be economical? And don't you appreciate that with politics the gun can be used; the ballot box may be used; hereditary may be used; rigged elections may be used? Are they all the same? Are they all equally acceptable?

Mr. FRANK:

I see your point.

Mr. THINKING:

I agree with you.

Mal. BASIRA:

You agree with dialectics?

Mr. THINKING:

No. But, with its logic.

Mal. BASIRA:

Mr. Frank sees with me. Better still, he sees my point. You agree with the logic of dialectics, not with dialectics. In essence, we don't agree, we are not the same, we are different. But why, having come so far, we can't agree, we can only see each other? Better still, we can only understand what is superior to the differences. Shall the similarities give us the satisfaction and meaning that our different identities stand for?

Mr. FRANK:

What a chain of questions? Which is to be? Which is not to be? It all boils down to the necessity for struggle, in order to resolve all these. No debate, no discussion, no conference will resolve them. If they are allowed to do, we will have

failed in balancing up the head and the heart, the thoughts and the passion, the theory and the practice.

Mal. BASIRA:

That is another point. The world is full of rationality and irrationality. There is nothing irrational about executing the aged in a society, to reduce the population or to wage a war on a neighbour that is clearly stronger, with the view of cutting down on the population. They may in fact just be assembled in a hall and gassed to death. They may be bombed e.t.c. That is reason. And there is nothing rational about one on whom war is waged to be passive or neutral. There is nothing rational about cutting down or restraining the reproduction of man - the most complex, the most magnificent and powerful resource that has made a distinctive record of impact on the surface of this earth. But, in between the two or a mixture of both is convincing, carrying, satisfying e.t.c. Thus, family planning. And even this has to be struggled for.

Mr. THINKING:

Are you two suggesting that the truth can't be reached?

Mal. BASIRA:

Not with the head alone. Not with passion alone. Not with only theory. Not with only practice. It is in the combination.

Mr. FRANK:

This is why truth differs or changes. It depends on what a people make of it.

Mr. THINKING:

Truth differs or changes. It depends on what a people make of it. Do we differ in the need for food, drink and shelter? Do we differ in the need for peace, security and progress? Isn't it what we resolve that matters?

Mal. BASIRA:

It is not as simplistic please. Don't food vary? Don't drink vary? Don't shelter vary? Is peace not consistent with orderliness in the dictates of one's principles, expectations, aspirations and standards? You think that peace means to be calm? Is death experience to the survivals peace? Does security not imply the same thing technically? Where your standards are abused, are you secure? You think security is synonymous with jail? My dear Mr. Thinking, the elimination of differences amounts to no identity. On the general plane, we may appear to be the same, going to the details, you will be amazed. I am not suggesting that uniformity is an evil. No. What I am saying is that we can never erase differences. We must not start by ignoring them. We should fight to retain those that we are able to. We rejoice after some work. The task of history is to forge it according to our abilities.

Mr. FRANK:

If we may go back to one of the other questions-why can't we agree and accept on the table?

Mr. THINKING:

I frankly think that we can. But, it will only become possible if we stop being manipulative. If we keep to being objective.

Mr. FRANK:

That sounds reasonable and difficult. We will all want to be reasonable and objective.

Mal. BASIRA:

That is rationality. But, who is not manipulative? Mr. Thinking, you? Mr. Frank or me Basira? Are you suggesting that we should be objective and reasonable without the employment of logic. Should there not be any sequence, any organisation in our concepts, the presentation or sharing of these? Can we reach convictions without logic? Your problem is with the choice of words. The word manipulation in essence does not deny logic, argument consistency, and organisation. You may say cunning, you may say lobbying, you may convince, you may say seduce, lure, intimidate, force e.t.c. The essence remains the same. The difference is technically either in the level of relationship like convince, through the medium of discussion and force through the physical relationship of the parties, or in the prejudice of the complainant. It is as simple as that.

Mr. FRANK:

I beg to differ a bit. One is at least manipulative when the victims are unaware or untold of the ulterior or ultimate goal strived for by the manipulator, the principal actor. And it is in my opinion undeniably so, when it is in the only or larger interest of the manipulator. This becomes definitely the case, when the manipulation is constantly done and the contradictory interests continue to sharpen.

Mr. THINKING:

And I will want to add that religious people have done it most. It is harmful. I hope you will agree with us on this simple point. Please, don't disagree.

Mal. BASIRA:

I agree that it is possible - the harm. I am not in the position to say that what has or have happened In this country are religious manipulations. This is not to deny that many of those who champion the course are crooks of long, wide and deep history. From your stories, you are suggesting a concept of manipulation which connotes the principal actor taking advantage of the ignorance of the victim(s). But, that does not change the essence, as I have already defined.

In addition, it is not rational for anyone to agree that a religious mobiliser is a manipulator, when a none or even an anti religious person points it out. There must be consistency in the familiarity of the accuser and the accused with the knowledge in question. Where there is disparity, it makes no sense. It is like a priest being relied upon not only for consultancy but for submission by any person for the treatment of peptic ulcers. The priest deserves to be listened to, but his conclusions must be assessed on the basis of a clear demonstration of his familiarity and sufficient grasp of the problem at hand, as will be done by a medical consultant and a physician. Indeed it will be most irrational for the 'educator' to claim that a variation is manipulative while he is not. It will be very wrong of a Baha'i priest to accuse the Imam of manipulation and at the same time suggest that Baha'i is the answer and way out. The followership will be most misled.

I am for instance not a communist. I hold on to the position that the communists have faulted in certain respects at least. How can you take me seriously

if I am ignorant of communism and proceed to say that Islam is the only answer? And how can I be familiar without displaying it? History is display. The hereafter may be able to handle intentions. We therefore must be ruled by displays.

Mr. FRANK:

That is alright. But what about objectivity?

Mr. THINKING:

I said, if only we could avoid manipulation and be objective, we will agree.

Mal. BASIRA:

For objectivity, it remains in the thinking head, until practice makes things look or take the form of what the head is thinking of. Only then is empiricism objective, undisputable. But, this does not mean that objectivity is static and not open to change, at least not in the cultural sciences. And the only basis for this is objectivity. In other words, until the subjective assumes the objective garb or until objectivity becomes subjectively sponsored, it will never become a historical fact. It is like a people complaining that there are classes in their society and the principal ones are the redundant traditional chief against the working peasants. As long as the peasants don't subjectively sponsor this concept, it will remain in the head. Evidences in support of positions are not always sufficient. Most often, you have to be selective - randomly. Mind you, all history is the fact that it is always changing.

The relationship between objectivity, subjectivity and manipulation is therefore that a distortion of the relationship between objectivity and subjectivity is what produces the circumstances that are described as manipulation. For example, the vanguard of the peasants who themselves are normally not peasants will accuse the

traditional chiefs as manipulator, to achieve their own ends. The point however is that unless the vanguard has a recognisable grasp, knowledge and understanding of the traditional chiefs, it will be foolhardy to easily take it seriously. This is not to suggest that it has no right or justification for working as a vanguard for the peasants. And the peasantry will continue to be the victims of both the vanguard and the traditional chiefs until they subjectively take side with either of the objective presentations and fight.