

THE COMPLETE PROCEEDINGS OF OUR CONSTITUTION DRAWING COMMITTEE



Muhammad Sa'idu Jimada

THE COMPLETE PROCEEDINGS OF OUR CONSTITUTION DRAWING COMMITTEE

Muhammad Sa'idu Jimada

COPYRIGHT © SAD-TAYY FOUNDATION 1989

Copyright is hereby granted to any interested body or person for study or non-profit circulation, provided it will be in this form and content of presentation.

First Published, 1989

Published by
SADAQATU TAYYIBATUN FOUNDATION
Post Office Box 2630,
Minna, Nigeria.

www.sadtayyfoundation.org

INTRODUCTION

The piece that follows is an attempt to realistically and thoroughly educate the reader politically. The approach is by setting out an ideal DEBATE/DIALOGUE between committed Nigerians who have disregarded their own failings or historical trappings that are responsible for what they individually are, by their positions, roles or conduct. In its place, they have attempted to resolve OUR problems by the means of producing an ideal, workable satisfying and a meaningful CONSTITUTION for Nigeria. They have chosen to be Honest, Sincere and Undiscriminatory. The members are avowed patriots some of who have become transformed into what they never intended. Those who 'chose' to live with the trappings have been presented as crooks; those who tried to be different have been frustrated; and those who did insist have been abandoned.

They have mentioned three options BUT have left the problem unresolved.

THE MAKING OF HISTORY IS NOT AN AFFAIR OF THE MEEK!

The proceedings suggest that the politics of democratic formality is as unacceptable as the present state of affairs.

OUR leaders have often chosen to neither champion nor be passive to the practical struggle for our solutions, because of their concern for peace and security of the state.

Corruption, violence and underdevelopment may inevitably continue to eat into the heart of the society.

The only option may continue to be postponed.

JIMADA, M.S.
December, 1987

A Committee of Ten is constituted by General Zulu's Military regime to draw up a Politico-economic and social programme for the civilian regime to succeed it.

ZULU

Chairman SAI-KALLO, Committee members, you are all welcome. This regime has decided to assign you to the difficult task of drawing up the terms for the general and specific operation of this country. We hope that you will all or largely agree, not to mislead us. I do not need to lecture you on how decadent our social life is; the problem of corruption in this country and the political state of chaos we are always vulnerable to. It will suffice to say that we expect some formulae that will take care of all of these from your guideline.

You can now proceed to read in unison, the statement of oath you already have, along with your chairman - before God and the people of this country, aloud.

COMMITTEE

(Chorus) In the name of, God, I undertake to be honest, sincere, truthful, direct and consistent, in all of the deliberations I shall join in. I also promise that the resolutions I shall agree to be a party to making shall primarily be in the best interest of all the people of this country, without discrimination of any kind. So help me God, Amen.

ZULU

Congratulations. Now, we have set the ball rolling. I will now depart and leave you to commence business immediately.

SAI-KALLO

Members, the procedure shall be very simple. Motions shall be moved and then contradictions (if any) raised. Motions shall then be put to vote. A motion or a set of this shall be deemed acceptable, whenever three or less are in dissent. I shall not cast votes.

MAZURU

I move for adoption, because it will mean that at least six people will have to agree to every resolution. This is more than simple majority.

COMMITTEE

(The nine members cast their votes),

SAI-KALLO

Yes. Nda, speak.

NDA

I move that, military intervention into politics be made illegal and punishable as treason. This is because good living shouldn't be dictated by force in a civilized society.

COMMANDER

I oppose the motion because men will on their own volition not do good. In a civil regime, authority is used and derived from votes, law etc. In a military regime it is votes that are absent. The element of force is therefore always necessary. I therefore move that the illegality of take-over not be explicitly and specifically stated, as it will be a mockery of our understanding.

COMMITTEE

(Five members vote for the original motion, against four).

SAI-KALLO

The motion is hereby suspended. Yes. Ta, please speak.

TA

I move the motion that, only persons who have credible achievements record in public service be allowed to contest for executive offices in the politics of this country. This will ensure that the country exploits its educated, experienced, mature, cultured and committed human resource for making public policies.

MODAKEKE

I oppose the motion, on the ground that achievement records can be reflective of smart public servants that have not been caught by the law, have been spared, just as it can be reflective of the qualities of hard work, sincerity, consistency etc. There is no provable way in separating the two, in this country. The chances of getting crooks to contest are as much as those of getting honest people. We should not deceive ourselves into believing that the motion is relevant and useful.

COMMITTEE

(Four members vote for the original motion, against five)

SAI-KALLO

The motion is suspended. Yes. Director speak.

DIRECTOR

I move the motion that, for any officer charged and is to be tried for corruption; it will be the duty of the accuser to prove the allegation. This is because all citizens should enjoy the right and state of innocence, until proved guilty.

POLICE

I oppose the motion on the ground that it is one single principle that has continued to miscarry justice because of the excessive right to privacy in this country. If the burden of defence is shifted to an accused, the consequence of numerous allegations is preferable. This is because individuals will be cautious in amassing unexplainable wealth and life style.

COMMITTEE

(Five members vote against the original motion, while four vote in favour).

SAI-KALLO

No resolution. Please Kenwa.

KENWA

I move the motion that this country adopts either the ideology of Socialism, Capitalism, Islam or Christianity to allow for general consistency and predictability in the public life of this country. This is because, that will be the only basis for a common platform for an acceptable supremacy of the Nigerian state.

TA

I oppose the motion because it will amount to imposition. An ideology can only be protected if it is fought for, and the heterogeneous nature of this country makes it immoral for this committee to do so. If we have to, we better impose Islam.

COMMITTEE

(Three members Vote for the original motion, three against and three remain neutral).

SAI-KALLO

The motion is thrown out. Mazuru, you may please speak.

MAZURU

I move the motion that, expertise and technocracy should guide productivity while population should guide distribution in the economic sphere of our lives.

NDA

I oppose the motion because it is short sighted and harmful. The duty of this Committee is to find terms of existence and survival that will be satisfying and also meaningful for the different people of this country. And we are not bankrupt- in values. Pragmatism must therefore need be tied to choices.

COMMITTEE

(Five members vote against the original motion, while four vote in favour).

SAI-KALLO

The motion is dismissed. Inspector, please speak.

INSPECTOR

In view of the weight of opposition to military rule, because its possession and use of power is naked, I move the motion that any contestant with the highest votes and largest spread be allowed to rule. This is only reasonable.

KENWA

I oppose the motion because the majority of our people are ignorant or less informed on most subjects and the majority cannot always be correct. Remember, the majority of our people are vulnerable to manipulation,' thus, corruption, thuggery, etc. We shouldn't allow these to repeat themselves.

COMMITTEE

(Four members vote in favour of the original motion while five vote against).

SAI-KALLO

The motion is rejected Police.

POLICE

I move the motion that it should be the duty of any regime in power to provide the people with education, health, food, roads, water, light, and employment. This is because they are basic, for the existence and development of society.

DIRECTOR

I oppose the motion because they are timeless needs and no regime has the choice to completely ignore either. Moreover, the ability to provide them by any regime will depend upon the resources available and the conveniences of doing so. Entrenching it in the programme may give one the false impression that by entrenchment, they will be guaranteed. Our practical failure will give us international mockery.

COMMITTEE

(Five people vote in favour, whereas four vote against).

SAI-KALLO

The motion is hanged. Who is next? Yes. Commander, please.

COMMANDER

I move the motion that, every citizen shall have the fundamental human right to self expression without any restraint, and to the sharing of that. This will enable the political system to maximise its inputs for processing.

MAZURU

I oppose the motion because no political system ever guarantees freedom after speech on any subject. In place of the allowance to chatterbox, assured political performance will be preferable.

COMMITTEE

(Two people vote against the original motion, five are in favour while the remaining two remain neutral)

SAI-KALLO

The motion is suspended. Ta, you are next please.

TA

I move the motion that kick-backs-kick-sides and kick-fronts be made illegal. This will save the contract system of executing government projects from over- evaluations.

MAZURU

I oppose the motion because in practice over- evaluation can only be detected long after the expenditure, where it has happened. Indeed, those who get covered up by the ignorance or collaboration of auditors never get reported and queried on record. And no constitutional provision can on its own really solve the problem of over-evaluation, where crooks are in control.

COMMITTEE

(Five members vote against the original motion while four vote in favour).

SAI-KALLO

The motion is dismissed. Police, it's now your turn.

POLICE

I move the motion that as a deterrent, the constitution should provide that every succeeding government must probe a preceding one. This will check corruption and wastages.

NDA

I oppose the motion on the ground that its institutionalisation will be used for protective purpose or the systematic entrenchment of corruption that will be difficult or impossible for the law to justly reach. It will be a wasteful and mocking provision for a great country like Nigeria.

COMMITTEE

(Three members vote in favour, four against and two remain neutral).

SAI-KALLO

The motion is thrown out. Members, before we proceed any further, I will suggest that we consider the present procedure for a possible amendment. I am getting a bit disturbed by the position of neutrality. I am not suggesting that anyone should not be neutral, even though without it, we might have gotten some results. But...

NDA

Mr. Chairman, I move that the procedure for this committee be amended. We should adopt whatever the majority vote for. In the alternative, I fear that the committee may not be able to resolve on anything for this great country.

DIRECTOR

I second the motion sir. We should now put the motion to vote.

SAI-KALLO

Mr. Nda, as long as I remain the chairman, this committee will not operate on disrespectful terms, no matter the value and workability of principles or motions advanced. I will always expect that intending speakers show by hand. They shall only proceed, on permission to do so. Meanwhile the motion and the secondment are disregarded. Yes, Mr. Director. Please speak.

DIRECTOR

In view of our inability as a committee to reach any single conclusion, I move that the adopted procedure for the committee, with specific respect to adopting or dismissing any motion be for a single majority. In addition, where there is a tie, the chairman should take side.

POLICE

I oppose the motion, because the majority cannot as a rule be always correct. This is precisely what this motion implies. I consider it uncomfortable, though seemingly rational and the only logical option that may exist.

MAZURU

I equally oppose the original motion because the corruption of the police, the civil service etc. today, can only be explained by the majority view that sacrifice and dedication should be the primary concern of the members rather than pay packet and conditions of service. But, the fact is that we live and need things of good life like all the other members, thus, corruption has become inevitable.

NDA

But, even if the motion is thrown out, it will be equally uncomfortable to move the opposite of the original motion. If the majority can turn into a mob, it will be dictatorial to accept as a rule, resolutions of the minority. They cannot always be correct.

TA

And we cannot trust the chairman, to dictate what committee resolutions ought to be after deliberations, without votes-with due respect sir.

COMMANDER

And an about-turn to the initial procedure motioned by the chairman himself may not lead us to any single conclusions.

KENWA

But, we need to reach conclusions that will serve as definite positive guidelines for the incoming government. This is the expectation of General Zulu. We shall be failing in no small measure if we fail in doing this in any respect, and to any degree.

MODAKEKE

Fellow members, I wish to add that the entire nation is very expectant of this august committee. But, we should be cautions against giving just any kind of guidelines, merely because it is expected.

SAI-KALLO

Thank you members. If I may ask, is this committee prepared to give some kind or form of guidelines? I mean, regardless of consistency in the purity, uprightedness of and our agreement on them? I am certainly not prepared to prepare even two separate reports that may differ only in one respect. And it will appear that General Zulu and his regime wouldn't have bothered in the constitution of this committee if it had thought it wise (just) to just receive memoranda from individuals, groups and organisations for its own decision. I believe, that would have been undemocratic and uncivil, to say the least. Gentlemen, what are we up to?

INSPECTOR

Now, I will speak. In view of the fact that we have, from our expressions all agreed that we differently and strongly agree and disagree, we should now consider the honour (on our part) and workability (on the part of the expectants), of submitting no report but only records of our proceedings to General Zulu. If we agree on this, we shouldn't wait or waste any further time and resource, of our persons and the government, but prepare for the submission. A motion can easily be moved in this respect and direction.

SAI-KALLO

Nda, you want to move a/or the motion? Please speak.

NDA

I move the motion.

DIRECTOR

I oppose the motion.

COMMITTEE

(Eight members vote against the motion while only, one votes in favour)

SAI-KALLO

Well, members. in view of the present position and the obvious fact that we have not raised all the issues we may possibly do, it will appear that we cannot reasonably, logically and comfortably conclude that the initial procedure of voting will certainly not enable us to reach even one conclusion. If you don't mind, I move that for the moment, we continue with our existing procedure.

COMMITTEE:

(Nine members all vote in favour of the motion).

SAI-KALLO

Yes. Director please speak.

DIRECTOR

I move the motion that the private ownership of any kind of media house be prohibited to allow for state control of common interest-especially peace and stability. From the recent experiences, it is clear that private or group interest, propagated by the non-state owned media houses distort peace and stability, though not on a regular basis. And without such control, we shall at best delay the process of development as a nation, not to talk of the possibility of breakdowns and the need to often start all over again.

TA

I oppose the motion on the grounds that the state can't always be correct. And the mere fact that the club in power may misinform or even disinform the public on crucial issues. Only the private sector can serve as a check on this possible abuse. Take the issue of family planning. What is correct? For who? We should please allow for differences and a forum for it needs to be institutionalised.

COMMITTEE

(Three, members vote in favour, three against and three remain neutral, on the motion moved).

SAI-KALLO

The motion is dismissed. Nda, please speak.

NDA

I move the motion that the state systems should be phased out, allowing only the Federal Government and the local governments in the affairs of running this country. This is because the state systems have suffocated the local governments of essential revenue, even though the latter is closer to the people. This will allow for general development rather than the concentration on the headquarters.

COMMANDER

I oppose the motion because in themselves the structures are not harmful. A shift of power base is no sufficient assurance that the people will even get goods and services now delivered. Remember, all local government councils have the same structure for works, Finance, Education, Health, Information, etc. In my view, it only

amounts to creating more states with differences .like the absence of governors, commissioners etc. Other names will be created, with similar duties. Not even the differences in cost can be assured. For, what is the difference between the costs of a commissioner, a permanent secretary, staff officer, secretaries etc. and a councillor supported by numerous secretaries? Problems will need to be processed always and records need to be kept.

COMMITTEE

(Three members vote in favour, three against and three remain neutral).

SAI-KALLO

The motion is disregarded. Yes. Director please speak.

DIRECTOR

I move the motion that legislators should be on contractual allowance rather than drawing a pay. This will curb the abuse of the privilege to determine their conditions for work - as in the past.

NDA

I oppose the motion because it will be irrational to deliberately fix any amount for them. Since the value of the allowance will depend upon its purchasing power, indeed, like the review of salary structure, the house may easily do it. since no constitution disallows amendment(s). And since they will need to commit themselves fully to the country, why should their condition(s) be structurally different from that of the Executive or Judiciary, on a basic thing like salary?

COMMITTEE

(Three members vote, in favour, three against and three remain neutral).

SAI-KALLO

The motion is dismissed. Ta, please proceed.

TA

I move that the Nigerian state adopts a one-party system for the reasons of discipline, order and a fast rate of development. This will put a stop to the ramblings and chaos that go with the two or multiparty system.

MAZURU

I oppose the motion because, inspite of the clear advantages of a one-party system, for a developing polity characterised by differences like Nigeria, one party system will amount to imposition of more than what may immediately be known. In societies that have resolved on a fundamental direction, that is superior to all other differences, they can afford a one party or no-party (Zero) system. The Soviet Union has Ideology, Saudi Arabia has Islam. Those who practice multi-party system either lack any fundamental basis of a value system for political pragmatism or are genuinely striving towards adopting one. The Western democracies and third world countries largely fall under these categories respectively. I believe that we are all for a party system that will be useful and relevant, not Just one that will deliver goods and services, at the detriment of our values. And party-system can either be absent, one or more. The concept of two is strange. It is like the difference between two and many, as if many begin from three.

COMMITTEE

(One member votes in favour, one against while seven remain neutral).

SAI-KALLO

The motion is suspended. Police, please speak next.

POLICE

I move the motion that a woman be appointed in each of the cabinets of the Federal, State and Local government to reflect a national recognition of the contributions by women in our society.

COMMANDER

I oppose the motion because no law prohibits women from occupying any office. Is your motion to hold, irrespective of her nationality, her state of origin, her local government area, her qualification, her experience, her competence, her disposition, the need for her service etc.?

COMMITTEE

(Three members vote in favour of the original motion while six vote against).

SAI-KALLO

The motion is thrown out. Yes, Kenwa it's now your turn.

KENWA

I move the motion that a sub-committee led by the chairman should meet General Zulu and request for an extension of the life span for this committee. This is because, it is now three months and we have not reached one conclusion.

DIRECTOR

I second the motion and wish to add that the chairman should now simply name three members to join him.

COMMITTEE

(The nine members vote in favour of the motion).

SAI-KALLO

The motion is adopted. Mr. Nda, Mazuru, and Ta should join me. Yes, Police please speak.

POLICE

I move the motion that the committee adjourns for a 168 hour break, after seventy-five days and nights of hard work. The sub-committee should give a report on resumption please.

COMMANDER

Seconded.

COMMITTEE

(The nine members vote for the motion).

(Members depart).

In the Military Kangaroo Chamber, Sai-Kallo and his members meet with General Zulu on the Constitution.

ZULU

Gentlemen, you are all welcome. I have been wondering, what the committee will need my audience for. My guess is that you want to give me the privilege of an interim report. Yes please, Mr. Chairman.

SAI-KALLO

Sir, thank you for the commendation. But, we are only, here for two things. In the first place, we wish to intimate you that all have been well except for the probable misfortune that we are yet to arrive at any single resolution for the Nigerian people. In the second place, we wish to request for extension of time for only three more months effective from two weeks from now. Thank you sir.

ZULU

You have not reached any conclusion! You have not reached any conclusions!! You have not reached any single conclusions!!! This is worrying. We have all our hopes on you. The extension is not the problem. I had already released N700,000.00k additional deposit to the hotels taking care of you and another N999,000.00k to your secretariat to cover stationeries printing and other expenses. We will do this after every six weeks to save you the need to request for them. I will formalize approval for the extension immediately. But Mr. Chairman. I will like to meet you personally.

SAI-KALLO

You want the members to excuse us?

ZULU

No please. I mean, want to talk to all of you as individuals - beyond your role as Committee members.

SAI-KALLO

O.K. Sir. *(And he turns to the other members)* any comments? Yes. Nda.

NDA

General Sir. We really would have gone far but for the committee procedure. We resolved that only a motion that carries six Votes in its favour will be adopted. This is because, a single majority will not do. The chairman doesn't vote. And five votes against four wouldn't always do because one out of the five may be a lapse. Indeed any person who remains neutral on a subject will complicate the matter further. We also considered the simple majority principle, but was understandably thrown out. That is really, the problem.

TA

The Committee is afraid of imposing anything on the Nigerian people on a simple majority or minority terms. And it is becoming disturbed by the results of its commitment. That is why we are now here.

MAZURU

We are keeping to your advice and our oath-providing some formulae to Nigeria's problems, informed by honesty, sincerity, consistency and without discrimination of any Kind.

ZULU

I am lost. Yes please, chairman.

SAI-KALLO

The key problem really is DISCRIMINATION. If we do, it will become impositional on those it will negatively affect. If we don't, we may not reach any conclusions, even after the next three months. And if we have to, we have no hope of agreeing at all. This is because, no issue that seems universal or objective, really lacks some peculiarity or subjectivity.

ZULU

So, what do you people advice now?

NDA

You may opt for a different procedure, which will give results.

TA

In that case, the committee will become a technical one. I very much doubt, if the main committee will solidly agree to such dictation.

MAZURU

Except the oath is withdrawn, and your statement that supports the oath is publicly withdrawn. In fact, I will personally decline to serve on such a committee. I consider it dishonourable.

SAI-KALLO

Or, you may want to table the problem before the Kangaroo council. Many heads may be better than few, just as two may be better than one, where the many or two are not those of sheep.

ZULU

No, that will amount to usurping the role of the committee. Rather, let me send for the most intelligent, wise and committed three. Kare, get me the DIRECTORS for Finance, Intelligence and Comfort immediately.

(For the few minutes it took the directors to be around, the chamber was mute, with nothing to be said by anyone.)

(The directors arrive and pay their formal respect in turn, to the General)

ZULU

Well, we are all here again. The story has been told and we need a solution, not any kind of solution. My dear comrades in arms, what do you have to say to this?

DIRECTOR OF INTELLIGENCE

I would want to know, what the problem of the committee is. It has been sitting and the proceedings are being recorded. I personally don't see anything abnormal with winding up and submitting the proceedings and no report. I mean it is not impossible and it is explainable and understandable.

DIRECTOR OF COMFORT

That is alright. But, for pragmatic purposes, of what use will that be? For this regime.

DIRECTOR OF FINANCE

But they will not accept any imposed procedure contrary to what they are satisfied to be honest, sincere, consistent and non-discriminatory.

DIRECTOR OF COMFORT

Maybe, they should be given the chance to complete their work first, before any concern may be raised.

MAZURU

That may be too late.

DIRECTOR OF INTELLIGENCE

No please, the Kangaroo council may then opt to either employ the principle of simple majority or in addition even convert all neutralities to support for original motions or alternate them for contradicting the motion. In either or all cases, we shall get results.

SAI-KALLO

But, in that case, the committee may decide not to even continue with the assignment. And the issues so far raised are not sufficient for a constitutional document.

ZULU

This means that raising the concern now is both disturbing and useful.

NDA

That is correct sir.

TA

Indeed, the suggestions of the Director for Intelligence are dangerous and- very unacceptable. I for one will not accept my positions being used for adopting even one issue or conclusion that will be inconsistent with what is initially recorded as my real position at the committee level.

ZULU

Gentlemen, so, where do we head for from here?

MAZURU

The situation for now seems hopeless.

ZULU

But, we need not escape; we must face the problem and deal with it. Sai-kallo, what is your candid view or suggestion?

SAI-KALLO

I have no suggestions whatever. In my view, what we can't run away from, which is what the committee hasn't said directly, is that the terms for the resolution of public or collective conflicts, in values, beliefs and practices cannot be satisfactorily done through debates, motions, meetings and conferences.

DIRECTOR OF FINANCE

What is that supposed to mean?

DIRECTOR OF INTELLIGENCE

Chaos of course. It means that the government should sit and watch crises take off and settle into resolutions without intervention. It means that an open struggle should be allowed, and whoever becomes the winner, be allowed to dominate. The government is to be passive. General Sir, this is absolutely not in the security interest of the state.

SAI-KALLO

But, gentlemen, isn't order the control of disorder? In the process of achieving or establishing order isn't it in fact a party to the order of disorder that is given or is able to establish an upper hand? Is there any state of order that is permanent? Is there any state of disorder that will remain untransformed for as long as time, space and change will last? No sir. I share your concern for security, but it is not sufficient to justify the imposition of any form of politics on a people by a committee living in the comfort of hotel management.

DIRECTOR OF INTELLIGENCE

But, you will agree that, though your position is logical and historically preferable and more satisfying and reliable, that will have to be done outside the legal framework. No country has done it legally, I agree. But, for now, for this regime, I am tempted to say that we shall not tolerate that. It already confirms that your proceedings will be subversive, even if not directly. I will immediately recommend that all items used by your committee and the activities of the members, with no exception whatsoever are kept under close security watch. Indeed, even after the exercise this should continue.

ZULU

No. We haven't got to that stage. We are talking frankly. Your points are noted. Yes, Mazuru please speak.

MAZURU

I only want to say that even if the hotel, the members and the secretariat of the committee are burnt, in the name of security, it does not in any way and to any degree make any difference to the honest, sincere and indiscriminate position of the committee and the value of this to the Nigerian polity.

NDA

Yes, that is correct. But, it is also very correct that, regardless of the value of our position, Nigeria needs a legal basis to build the illegality upon. It is the legal basis that we are concerned with.

TA

That would have been alright. But, what is legal depends on what is proper, acceptable and enforceable by the government on the society. This is what is creating the problem. That is why the legal has been difficult to agree on, that will be relevant for everybody. Laws don't drop from heaven and are not value-free.

NDA

In addition, the committee may not be ready to submit just anything to serve as legal, as the needed take off point, for those who would want to abuse it, transform it or improve on it, according to - their concepts and power.

DIRECTOR OF INTELLIGENCE

That is clear. I will also want to remind you that, the length of time that will be involved will depend upon when the composition of the state or government and therefore the law, equally breaks down, out of physical defeat and personnel disorder. Until such a time when a reconstitution of the government and acceptable but changed constitution takes control of things, disorder will be the order.

DIRECTOR OF COMFORT

O.K. gentlemen, will your committee be prepared to give us just any kind and form of constitution? If yes, I believe it will be o.k. We shall leave the revolution to follow later, at its own time and pace.

KENWA

No please. We can't. The committee has been publicly sworn in for a purpose and on a guideline. We cannot submit something, we don't agree on, with our signatures. That will be immoral.

ZULU

So, it would have been better or at least more feasible, if the committee wasn't sworn in, made public and given some guidelines.

SAI-KALLO

In that case, you will have probably gotten a committee, but certainly, made up of different people.

TA

That would have been most unpopular.

DIRECTOR OF COMFORT

In fact that would have been unbecoming of this regime.

ZULU

O.K., what do we do?

DIRECTOR OF INTELLIGENCE

Well, another option is that of asking the committee to receive inputs from the general public and make a constitution out of that.

ZULU

What a good idea. This can easily be formalised after the committee has completed its assignment at a deadlock. And if the present committee accepts the terms, well and good. Director for Finance, please arrange to make available some N5 million for the purpose.

DIRECTOR OF FINANCE

That is certainly not a problem. A constitution is one of our topmost priorities.

SAI-KALLO

Provided, your conscience will not prick you, that will be alright.

NDA

In addition, it presupposes that inputs will not need to be assessed by the committee that will do the job. That, the conclusions arising from the assessment of the inputs will not vary.

ZULU

No, they will vary, but, the final result will not be a deadlock.

TA

Provided the committee will employ the procedure of a simple majority-whether of their assessment or of the inputs.

KENWA

More of the committee. If the inputs are to be used as the yardstick, those who know of it will rig it. And, what assurance is there that all persons who are eligible to contribute will do so?

DIRECTOR OF COMFORT

The system can't be fool proof.

DIRECTOR OF FINANCE

We can only be sure of conclusions that will be popular, even if the popularity is unwise.

SAI-KALLO

You will get not only conclusions, but of any kind, any form, any package. Is that what you want, General?

ZULU

Not really.

DIRECTOR OF INTELLIGENCE

But, that is what we may afford sir.

ZULU

No. Don't repeat that again.

DIRECTOR OF INTELLIGENCE

Sir, the other option, is to suspend the present committee and continue with the way things are.

NDA

Continuing with the history of gambling with the social, economic and political life of our people. Then coups will eventually get institutionalised.

KENWA

I agree with you. Civil rule will be no more. Well, the exception will be, if this regime is flushed out, the succeeding one may resolve on the second option.

SAI-KALLO

We may only delay the struggle option, but not kill it. It is the only one that has the life that we all crave for.

MAZURU

And someone has to take the initiative to champion it. Those who want to make history cannot afford to be meek.

DIRECTOR OF INTELLIGENCE

That may be true. But not from the top.

SAI-KALLO

Is it impossible? What is wrong with legally, smoothly, and painlessly transforming what is now legal into the contrary? Even those who adopt the illegal strategy are only forced to do so. And, whether from the top or bottom, by legal or illegal means, only those who are top, in their heads and minds can set the ball rolling. The difference of office, which you only temporarily occupy, is only significant if it is merged with what your head and mind dictate as the option to commit your life to.

DIRECTOR OF COMFORT

General Sir, I think you have the very wrong people in the committee.

SAI-KALLO

Or, you are in the wrong place at the right time for the right people.

THE END