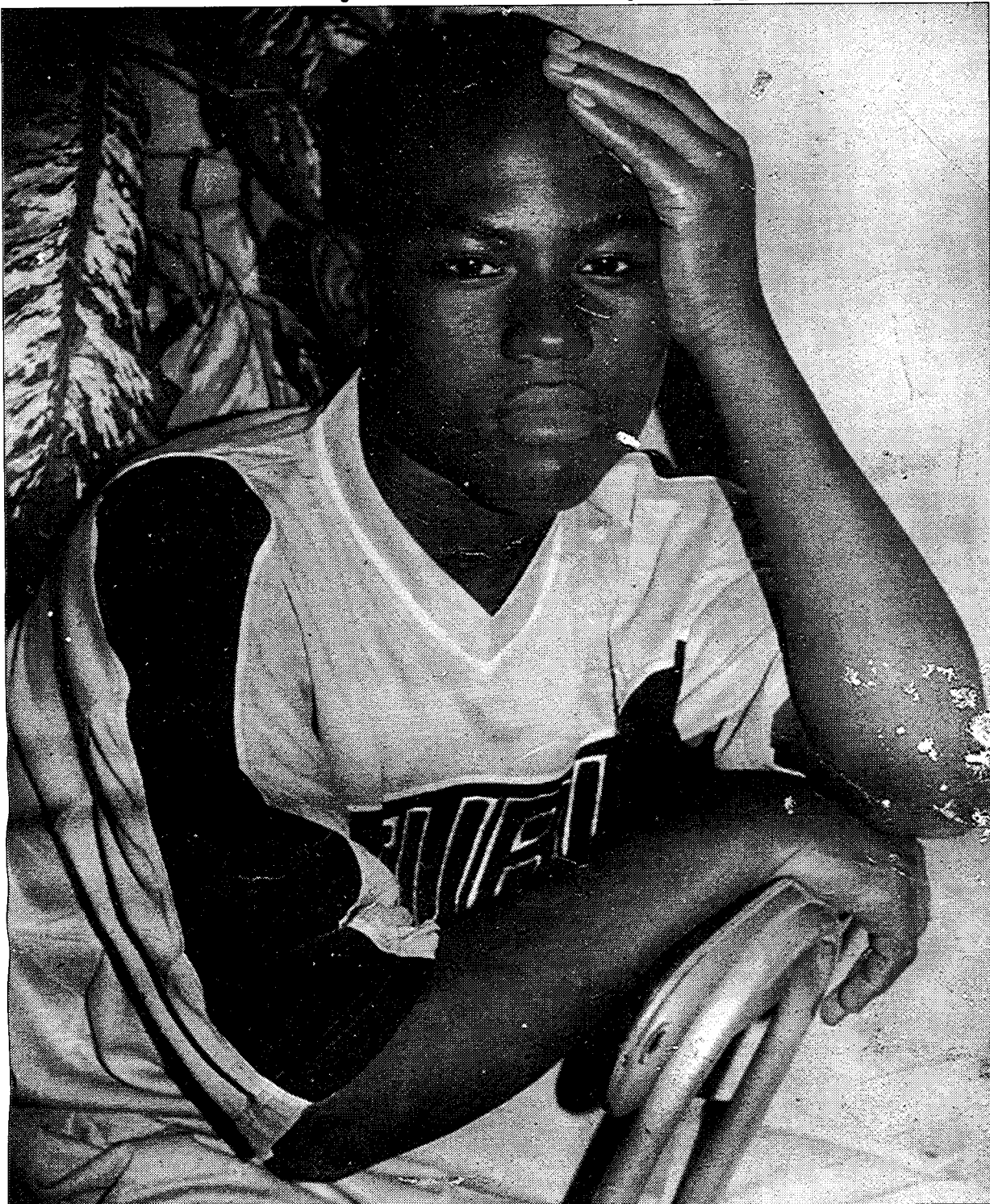


Death trails rally money to two homes

• Stray bullets kill two young people after a rally in Mushin, Lagos



• Jamiu



• Shade

By Regina Akpabio and Bertram Nwannekanma

THE victims never knew each other, though as it turned out, they shared some things in common.

They were both young, devout Moslems, lived in the same neighbourhood and died from gunshot wounds on their backs the same day, almost at the same hour and that was a day after a People's Democratic Party (PDP) governorship rally in Mushin, Lagos mainland.

They were buried the same day.

However, the similarities stopped there because while Shade Akinbola was a 16-year old Senior Secondary (SS) school student in the other victim, 21-year old Jamiu Hassan, a drop-out, was until his death, working with the National Union of Road Transport Workers (NURTW).

But the death of the two young people on Sunday, March 11 has left a vacuum in their different families especially, that of the Hassans, who lost both parents, years ago.

Jamiu's 82-year old grandfather, a herbalist at No. 12, Omotayo Street, off Post Office Road, Mushin was still dazed, when *The Guardian* visited their home at the weekend.

Sandwiched by sympathisers and relatives at his consulting room, which also served as his bedroom, Alhaji Kasali Bakare could not hide his anguish, as he stammered to speak in passable English.

"He was the only son of my son, Hassan, and with the death of Jamiu's parents, I took solace that at least, I have him. Now that I am getting old, now, look what they have done to me?"

"He was the one helping me to get some things and attend to my customers", he said as tears trickled down his wizened face.

Overcome by the pain of the death of his grandson, the old man could not continue.

A neighbour, who simply gave his name as Hammed, took over the story. He said: "Baba has not been himself since Jamiu was brought to the house that Sunday afternoon, seriously injured and bleeding profusely."

"He tried all he could to resuscitate him but the boy gave up the ghost. It was a big blow to him."

"Shortly after the rally, there was fighting among the boys over money given to them by the politicians."

"This went on the rest of Saturday and into the next day, Sunday."

"Then, the police from nearby Olosan Police Station, Mushin, were drafted to quell the crisis but unfortunately, a stray bullet hit him at the back where he was standing at Ojuwoye Street. Before we could bring him here, he was almost dead".

He said he could not understand the use of live ammunition by the police to restore order when a group of boys were fighting.

"That is unacceptable and has led to the death of innocent people", he said.

Jamiu, as he was popularly called in the neighbourhood, dropped out from school in 2001 and had been working for the transport union since then.

In that aspect, he differed from Shade Akinbola, whose fatal shooting that same day has plunged her family into grief.

Shade, a much-loved first daughter, had called her father on her cell phone to hurry home to avoid being attacked by the hoodlums who had taken over the PDP rally in Mushin.

The miscreants were all over, quarrelling over the money given to them by politicians and harassing innocent citizens.

She worried that her father would run into them, not knowing that death would meet her at home a few minutes later.

The 16-year old SS 3 student of STA Private School made the call and went into the sitting room to wait for her father when a stray bullet came in through the window and killed her on the spot.

Relating the incident that led to her death, her father, Mr. Rasaan Akinbola, a retired civil servant said: "The PDP had a political rally at Olorunsogo area of Lagos on Saturday, March 10."

"After the rally, I learnt they gave the young men, popularly called *area boys*, some money to share among themselves."

"But a group among the *area boys* ran away with the money. The other faction that the money did not get in the donation started a fight, which degenerated into a crisis that lasted till the following day, Sunday."

"When the police intervened, there was exchange of gunfire and one of them was killed."

"People could not go to their normal businesses that Saturday due to the crisis."

"On Sunday afternoon when the problem had subsided, I decided to go to the shop with my wife."

"It was when we were at the shop that my daughter called me on her mobile phone to come back home, as the *area boys* had started fighting again."

"We were about 100 metres to the house when I heard the two gunshots. There were two policemen."

"One released the first one into the air while another shot towards the direction of my house."

"The bullet pierced through the window and killed Shade who was

with her colleague, Musa, in the living room", he said.

As if Akinbola suspected something was amiss, he decided to call his daughter on phone.

"When I called her, there was no response for a few seconds."

"Then, her colleague answered the call and I was even annoyed that she should allow her friend to answer my call. It was then that the colleague told me what happened", he added.

Following the incident, the grief-stricken Akinbolas have abandoned their apartment where the bullet killed their daughter, Shade, and relocated to the family house in Oshodi.

Shade, the first among his four children, Akinbola said, had a bright future.

"She was preparing for her West African Examinations Council (WAEC) Senior School Certificate Examination and had already obtained a Joint Admissions and Matriculation Board form."

"She told me she wanted to read Banking and Finance", he said.

As the eldest child, her father said she had washed her clothes and those of her other siblings that morning.

To show how close father and daughter were, he said, Shade fed him with a spoon.

"She fed me that morning as we ate boiled yam and fried eggs."

"I did not know that would be the last meal from her".

He called on political aspirants to shun money politics, which he said is tearing the society apart.

The mother, Ikimot, who was surrounded by a group of sympathisers said:

"Shade used to help me a lot both at home and in the shop. Even for my one-year old son, Shade's name was closest to his lips. Since morning, he has been calling her".

The Divisional Police Officer of Olosan Divisional Police Station, Mushin, Chief Superintendent Emmanuel Fajuyigbe, denied knowledge of the death of the two youngsters.

According to him, though there was a crisis shortly after the rally at Mushin, nobody had reported any incident of death to him.

He appealed to politicians to desist from giving money to the *area boys* as it always triggers crisis.

But Jamiu's grandfather, Bakare, said the police was duly informed. He called for investigations with the view to punishing those who fired the shots.

He also wants help since his only grandson that had been assisting him had been killed.