

ARDP

Arewa Research & Development Project

Newsletter

Quarterly Publication of Arewa Research & Development Project

Vol. 2 No.4, OCT. - DEC. 2017

WILL NIGERIANS LEARN FROM HISTORY?



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From the Editor-in-Chief

FOUNDATIONS OF THE NIGERIAN FEDERATION: DO WE LEARN FROM HISTORY?

Human activities are scientifically studied and analyzed in historical processes. Consequently, all social problems and challenges, as well as their appropriate solutions, are best articulated and appropriated in historical context. It is the appropriate historical knowledge that provides the basis of understanding how and why human societies speak particular languages, adhere to particular religions, operate particular political systems or inherently become socially knitted together with other social groups.

Knowledge of history is therefore necessary in understanding the basis, nature and dimensions of all challenges human beings face in the course their daily lives. This has been aptly captured in the well-known popular saying, which is simply put: 'you must know where you were coming from and where you are before you know where you are going'. This common-sense adage applies to all aspects of human endeavor.

To begin with, our sacred religious books, which seek to guide our daily relationship with God on the one hand, as well as our relationships with other human beings and the physical environment on the other hand, are firmly grounded on historical knowledge and experiences.

Historical knowledge and experiences formed the basis of understanding human actions in solving daily problems and challenges, as well as to engineer processes for envisaged growth and development. We all clearly know the compelling role of history in our social and political lives. Both our 'traditional' and

'modern' social and political institutions are historically produced, and would only continue to be responsive to ever changing social order in the light of concrete historical analysis. Whenever we face socio-political crises we invoke history to understand "the immediate and remote causes" of events.

In fact, we cannot underestimate the imperative need for objective historical knowledge in the fields of science and technology. The medical doctor is seriously limited without his patient's medical history; the engineers of various fields would have to use historical knowledge of their crafts to improve their products and to create new upgrades; the most important operational tools at the disposal of the pilots are the aviation logbooks. Examples in all fields of human endeavor are certainly endless.

Nigeria is passing through a period of serious political challenges, and an important question to ask is: will Nigerians learn from history?

The current dimensions of the crises are sparked off through the once-familiar mode of political agitation for self-determination by the out-lawed Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB), and being re-echoed through the debates and demands for the 'restructuring' of the Nigerian Federation. The ensuring political tension seems to be galvanizing new wave of political crisis capable of undermining unity, peace and development. This state of affairs is seriously, but unnecessarily threatening the survival of Nigeria as a single political community.

Whatever Nigerians would decide to do with the existing political structures of the federation could only be positively sustainable if such a

project is appropriately anchored on clear understanding of the inherent historical foundations upon which modern Nigerian state emerged in the early twentieth century. Notwithstanding, however, it is also imperative to interrogate the purpose or clear objectives of any “restructuring” political project. What problem or problems is the “restructuring” project intended to solve?

The major political challenge facing the Nigerian federalism is its very low level political integration capable of forging the desired national cohesion and vision. A federal system seeking to operate as a single political and economic system has three broad national objectives: first is to ensure efficiency in the internal economic union in a manner that facilitates free movement of capital, labor, goods and services; second is to ensure fiscal equity, which is based on the principle that citizenship entitles all persons to fair and equal access to all social services across the nation based on government economic policy; and, third is to ensure vertical or redistributive equity between the provinces so as to ensure that 'national standard' obtains in every province/state. These are the fundamental principles of fiscal federalism, pure and simple.

Before our next 'special' edition in which we shall navigate through the substance of the ongoing political agitations and the debates on the “restructuring” of the Nigerian federation – whatever that means, this edition intends to provide a glimpse of the history of Nigeria during its previous period of political crises.

The scholarly article, “The ‘Igbo Scare’ in the British Cameroons” may perhaps provide readers with some historical basis of the dynamics of 'Biafaranism' in the history of the Nigerian political project. The “Police Report on the official investigation into the Military Coup of 15th January 1966” may provide graphic insights that could enable readers to find clues to many questions begging for answers as regards to the scheme of the first military coup events that led to the bloody civil war between 1967 and 1970. “The Forgotten Documents of the Nigerian Civil War” by Mr.

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Ofeimun may provide readers with one of the few existing critical analyses on the historiography of the Nigerian Civil War. For the records section of the Newsletter contained the broadcast addresses of the leading actors on ending the civil war in January 1970.

Kabiru S. Chafe, PhD

Editor in-Chief

THE 'IGBO SCARE' IN THE BRITISH CAMEROONS, c. 1945–61

BY VICTOR BONG AMAAZEE

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ON 11 February 1961, the southern part of the British mandate in the Cameroons voted, by a large majority, to leave the newly independent federation of Nigeria and join instead the Republic of Cameroun, successor-state to the French mandate. A major factor in this plebiscite was fear of Igbo domination in trade, education, public and private sector employment, politics and social life. Igbo had begun to move into the Cameroons in the 1920s, and by 1955 there were nearly 10,000 Nigerians in the two southernmost divisions of British Cameroons, most of them Igbo or Ibibio. This immigration had been facilitated by the fact that, ever since the League of Nations had assigned mandates over the former German colony, Britain had administered the divisions of Victoria, Kumba, Mamfe and Bamenda as part of south-eastern Nigeria.¹ With the approach of independence, local resentment against the immigrants strengthened demands for an end to the Nigerian connection.²

There were indeed some grounds for this resentment, but politicians actively exploited ethnic stereotypes. The nature of these is illuminated by the novelist Chinua Achebe, himself an Igbo. He points out that Igbo culture was receptive to change, individualistic and highly competitive. This gave the Igbo an unquestioned advantage in securing the credentials for advancement in colonial Nigeria. The Igbo were bound neither by a conservative religion (as were the Hausa), nor by a conservative tradition (as were the Yoruba), and were correspondingly quick to make use of the opportunities created by the white man's civilization. Unfortunately, the Igbo's success bred in them pride and indifference to the feelings of others. Added to this was showiness, noisy exhibitionism, and disregard for humility and quietness. All this aroused envy and hatred.³ Another writer has associated Igbo openness to new ideas with the adoption of new standards, an eagerness to be in the mainstream of progress, and an ambition to be noticed. A recurrent feature of Igbo life is a spirit of open rivalry. The man to be admired is he who has wives and children, bestirs himself, and makes money. The humble gentleman is not respected. A further aspect of the Igbo stereotype is 'aggressiveness'; this has been attributed to a combination of high population densities and an absence of large-scale social or political organizations. Characteristic of the Igbo is an egalitarian belief that there are no social and class barriers to self-advancement.⁴

¹ Until 1949 they constituted Cameroons Province (which up to 1939 was one of Nigeria's Southern Provinces and thereafter one of its Eastern Provinces). In 1949 Bamenda Division became a Province.

² T. Eyongetah and R. Brain, *A History of the Cameroon* (Harlow, 1974), 141–2.

³ Chinua Achebe, *The Trouble with Nigeria* (Enugu, 1983), 46–7.

⁴ Kalu Ezera, *Constitutional Developments in Nigeria* (Cambridge, 1964), 10.



Fig. 1. British Southern Cameroons (1938).

Increasing contact between Igbo and other cultural groups tended to generate unfavourable stereotypes of Igbo behaviour. What the Igbo took to be virtues were liable to be regarded by others as weaknesses. In the light of values characteristic of many Cameroonians, the Igbo seemed self-centred, obsessed with wealth and lacking in respect for traditional authority. These supposed failings were in no way compensated by Igbo readiness to work hard; if anything, this only tended to exacerbate ill-feeling towards them. It was all too easy to arouse anti-Igbo sentiment where they seemed most threatening, especially in the towns of Victoria, Tiko, Buea, Kumba, Mamfe and Bamenda.⁵

The Igbo came into the Southern Cameroons in various ways. The first were government employees who had to accept whatever posting they were given. Others left home to work for expatriate firms. Some came to work on the Nigeria-Cameroons road; of these, some died on the job while others returned home, repelled by their working conditions. But the most resilient persevered; they followed the road into the Cameroons and settled in road-building camps. In the course of time, they brought their families and began to farm the land around the camps. Eventually, the road-builders diversified

⁵ B. O. Nwabueze, *Constitutionalism in the Emergent States* (London, 1973), 84; K. W. J. Post and M. Vickers, *Structure and Conflict in Nigeria, 1960-1965* (London, 1973), 30.

into trade, at first part-time and then full-time. The original owners of the land began to resent such Igbo.⁶ Igbo also came to work on plantations: by 1932 these employed nearly a thousand Nigerians, most of whom were in Kumba division, where they comprised a quarter of the plantation workforce. By 1937 – when the total workforce on Kumba plantations had risen to over 4,000 – Nigerians still accounted for 15 per cent.⁷ Many such migrants were brought by canoe by Efik (Ibibio) from Calabar, who were paid by their passengers once they had found employment. In 1955 there were 5,732 Igbo and Ibibio on Victoria estates, and 1,540 on those in Kumba belonging to the Cameroons Development Corporation (which had taken over the property of German planters). Most of the Igbo came from the Owerri and Okigwi divisions of Owerri Province, which included some of the highest population densities in Eastern Nigeria; most of the rest came from around Afikpo. The Ibibio mostly came from a densely populated area in Uyo division. Accustomed to a cash economy, quick to react to labour markets and undeterred by distance, Igbo were generally predisposed to become migrant workers. But by the same token they were on the alert for other ways to make money. Cameroonian workers often complained that things left lying around vanished when Igbo were in the camps, and claimed that Igbo had introduced the practice of bribing headmen and overseers; they further accused Igbo of arrogance, disrespect towards older men, causing trouble at work and seducing the wives of local workers. The Igbo did not help matters by regarding Cameroonians as unsophisticated and backward.⁸

What really mattered, though, was the way in which the Igbo turned to advantage the economic backwardness of the Southern Cameroons. Even after World War II there was a marked contrast between them and the local population in terms of access to education as well as commercial aptitude and experience. Igbo made the most of this, and consolidated their position in trade and government in face of mounting hostility.⁹

The backwardness of the Southern Cameroons was largely due to the very fact of the British Mandate. While the French administered their mandate as if they would never leave, the British considered theirs a liability – a mere appendage to Nigeria. In 1944 the Colonial Secretary admitted to the House of Commons that the British Cameroons had been neglected, and attributed the lack of public or private investment to the uncertain political future of the territory. The British had scarcely improved the German system of roads and communications, and the second departure of German planters, in 1939, was a major setback to economic growth. By 1946 the territory had become a 'lost world', isolated from the French mandate, yet deriving no material advantage from its administrative incorporation in Nigeria. On the contrary, the efforts of indigenous merchants were frustrated by the near-monopoly of trade by foreign combines such as John Holt or the United Africa Company. The backwardness of the Southern Cameroons was not due to any

⁶ E. Isichei, *A History of the Igbo People* (London, 1976), 209.

⁷ R. R. Kuczynski, *The Cameroons and Togoland: a Demographic Study* (London, 1939), 278. This tabulates labourers from territories other than the British or French Cameroons; the basis for such statistics is discussed in *ibid.* 280–1.

⁸ Edwin Ardener, Shirley Ardener and W. A. Warmington, *Plantation and Village in the Cameroons* (London, 1960), 198–9, 105–6.

⁹ *Ibid.* 199.

inherent economic deficiencies, and there was no substance in the argument that the territory necessarily depended on aid from Nigeria.¹⁰

The effects of the Nigerian connexion were especially evident in education and government employment. When the British replaced the Germans, they restored the five government primary schools, at Victoria, Buea, Kumba, Mamfe and Bamenda, to the standard six level. Apart from these five schools, and the teacher-training centre at Kumba, all other schools in the territory were run either by Native Administrations or by missions. There were no institutions for secondary education until 1939, when the Roman Catholic Mill Hill Fathers opened St Joseph's College at Sasse, in Victoria division. Thus it was extremely hard for Cameroonians to pursue higher learning and catch up with their contemporaries in Nigeria. They were liable instead to be relegated to the meanest and dirtiest jobs, whether in the plantations, in Government offices or in business firms, while the more lucrative and respectable jobs tended to be held by Nigerians, particularly Igbo.¹¹

Up to the outbreak of World War II, very few Cameroonians found their way to Nigeria in search of secondary or higher education. Those who did acquired a grasp of English education and culture which enabled them to associate fully with Nigerians and to appreciate their strengths and weaknesses – especially those of the Igbo. Such Cameroonians were liable to find that even with a good education they were at a disadvantage: their path into the public service was blocked by Nigerians who had entrenched themselves in the days when there were no qualified Cameroonians. This point was only reinforced as Cameroonians after the war began to emerge from St Joseph's College: their difficulties in obtaining appointments in public service were attributed to obstruction and corrupt demands by senior Igbo clerks in government offices.¹²

To support this view, the principal of St Joseph's compiled in 1948 a list of those who had left the college in 1946–7 and were finding it hard to get a government job in the Cameroons. S. Ndely, from Bojongo (Victoria division), was an excellent shorthand typist with a grade II school certificate, yet despite many applications supported by references from the principal, he could not get a job locally and remained unemployed for ten months: in the end, he was taken on by the Secretariat in Enugu. S. Nyenti, with a grade III school certificate, had to wait nine months before finding work as a stenographer in Lagos. This was the irony: Cameroonians found it easier to get work outside the Cameroons than within it. This lent credence to their claim that the local administration was controlled by Igbo. D. Tiku, a Bayangi with a grade II school certificate, had his application to the Forestry Office turned down by the Igbo clerk in charge during the absence of his white superior. The post required the applicant to have either a grade I school certificate or an exemption from London matriculation. The clerk insisted on the first condition because he knew that Tiku satisfied only the second. Tiku eventually went to Ibadan for training in forestry, but after

¹⁰ Cameroons Federal Union, *Memorandum submitted to the Visiting Mission of the Trusteeship Council of the United Nations Organization, November 1949* (Lagos, 1949), 1, 10, 28.

¹¹ *Ibid.* 17–18.

¹² Senior District Officer, Victoria Division, to Resident, Cameroons Province, Buea, n.d. (1948). Cameroon Archives, Buea (CAB), PC/h(1948)1, 'Conditions of Settlement'.

eleven months of unemployment. The principal also enquired at the hospital about openings, but they could only offer the job of nurse, which any primary school-leaver could get. As for the United Africa Company, they said that they got all their employees from Nigeria, despite advice to the contrary from headquarters.¹³

Injustice of this kind was so glaring that the senior British administrator, the Resident, expressed sympathy with the Cameroonian cause. In 1948 he commented thus on the charge that attempts by Cameroonians to control Igbo immigration amounted to racial discrimination:

... It depends on what is meant by discrimination. It might be called discrimination if we in England were to impose an immigration law forbidding the entry of all Irishmen, but it would surely be understandable if the Irishmen were capturing all our trade, filling a very large proportion of our public offices, and to cap all, we had to go to Ireland to get all the training necessary for a job in the public service. It might be said that the shoe was on the other foot and that it was the Cameroons people who have been discriminated against in that they have only to go to Nigeria to get the education, or enter the jobs, but apart from any other considerations, how were they to get there? Communications between this Province and Nigeria have been ludicrously inadequate for years, and still are.

I would emphasise that the Cameroons people are not generally against strangers as such, and it is very much in their own, and our, interest that they should not be. But they do wish to have the power to stop undesirables entering, persons who recognise no local native authority and behave as if they were a law unto themselves. It is essential that they should have this power if they are to feel free of the danger of being swamped.¹⁴

There could have been no better summary of the relationship between the Cameroons and Nigeria.

Meanwhile, in order to ensure that the natives of the Cameroons were given every opportunity of obtaining employment in Government service, the Governor of the Eastern Provinces of Nigeria had directed that the Eastern Provinces school-leavers Registry (which functioned under the aegis of the selection committee) should register the names of all those passing out of St Joseph's College. The Governor further recognized that the poverty of communications with the Cameroons made it difficult for a selection committee located at Enugu to interview candidates from the Cameroons. He therefore proposed, with the concurrence of the selection committee, that a sub-committee be set up at Buea, which would both register applications from Cameroonians for appointment and also, after interviewing them, forward the applications, together with the sub-committee's views as to their suitability for appointment, to the selection committee at Enugu.¹⁵

This was obviously a weakness in the Administration's positive measures because the new arrangements still meant that the final decision had to be taken at Enugu and not in Buea. The preference for Igbo to Cameroonians in employment would continue in an atmosphere dominated by Igbo. Worse still, the selection committee in the Cameroons dealt only with

¹³ Principal, St Joseph's College, Sasse, to Fowler, 4 March 1948. CAB. *ibid.*

¹⁴ Resident, Cameroons Province, Buea, to Secretary, Eastern Provinces, Enugu, 29 June 1948. CAB, *ibid.*

¹⁵ Secretary, Eastern Provinces, to Resident, Cameroons Province, 13 May 1948, CAB, *ibid.*

appointments to the standard clerical and technical grades of Government service. The committee was not concerned with appointments to vacancies in commercial firms or in the unestablished grades of Government services, such as those of messengers and headmen. The Governor left it to the Resident of the Cameroons Province to make local arrangements to urge Provincial Departmental Officers to engage natives of the Province in the unestablished grades of Government Service. This could be affected similarly in the case of commercial firms. In any case, the Governor favoured a gradual adjustment and not a wholesale movement.¹⁶

The Government's inability to ensure equal opportunities for Cameroonians in Eastern Nigeria made the Cameroonians so desperate that they felt that their only hope of salvation lay in political separation from, at least, Eastern Nigeria. The need for separation was increased by the fact that even in the commonest posts like those of messengers and headmen, the Cameroonians had to go through Departmental Heads who were Igbo, and these Igbo preferred their countrymen to Cameroonians. Salvation would only come with an autonomous Cameroons region. While the Europeans wanted to reduce tensions in the larger interests of the territory, Cameroonian businessmen and politicians usually exploited all misunderstandings in their own private interests. They claimed that isolated cases of Igbo misbehaviour, real or merely alleged, were typical of Igbo in general. Cameroonians were all too ready to see malice, rather than mere accident, in cases such as that of an Igbo nurse in Victoria who in 1948 administered carbolic acid into the eye of S. A. Atabong, a Cameroonian.¹⁷ Then the hand of a man missing from the Bambuko area was found with a party of Igbo traders. There were references to mysterious disappearances in Bakweri country, which could not all have been the fault of Igbo.

In early January 1948, a Court Messenger from Muea bought fish from an Igbo at Tiko. He and all who ate any of the fish were taken ill enough to need attention from the dispensary. The Court Messenger in question was produced before the District Officer, and the former seemed none the worse. The D.O. explained, as best as he could, the nature of food poisoning, but he did not make a good impression on the Bakweri Native Authority.¹⁸ In the same year, quite unproven accusations were made that Igbo stole church bells in order to make counterfeit coin; they introduced corruption into public offices; they assaulted local women and made them sterile; in the medical department, they deliberately mistreated local patients; they desired to get the Cameroons into their control; they were violent people who conspired together to cause injury to local people; they sold poisoned food; they conspired together to assist each other to obtain public appointments; they profiteered and charged excessive prices to Cameroonians; they sold drugs, such as aspirin, quinine and M & B in adulterated form.¹⁹ In 1951, a wild rumour had it that an Igbo man had killed and eaten a girl at Missellele. Police investigations proved the rumour false, but tracing such a rumour to its source was practically impossible.²⁰ The police advised the Igbo that

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷ *Ibid.* 'Ibo Tribal Mania, 1948'.

¹⁸ D.O., Buea, to Resident, Cameroons Province, 22 Jan. 1948. CAB, *ibid.*

¹⁹ D.O., Victoria, to Resident, Cameroons Province, n.d. (March, 1948). CAB, *ibid.*

²⁰ Ibo Tribal Union, Buea, to Superintendent of Police, Buea, 25 Aug. 1951. CAB, S1 (1948), 'Ibo Union petitions'.

rumours of that kind, implying ritual murder, had been known to occur in many parts of the world where trade and business had been taken over by a race or tribe not indigenous to the locality. The Jews, in particular, had suffered for centuries from such a calumny. All the same, the police advised the Igbo to resist provocation and refrain from being themselves provocative.²¹

Anti-Igbo propaganda was so effective that passionate outbursts by speakers carried the day at meetings and made rational discussion difficult. The government urged responsible people to cease introducing unsubstantiated generalizations into discussions. But the underlying causes of such propaganda were not easily disposed of: according to one British official they included resentment of the *imperium in imperio* affected by the Igbo Tribal Union; lack of Igbo respect for local institutions; vague apprehension regarding Igbo motives in the Cameroons; jealousy of Igbo success; a feeling of inferiority aroused by the Igbo through their proud speech and ways.²² Thus rumours of 'atrocities', real or imaginary, usually spread like wildfire over the country, and Igbo everywhere were victims of verbal or physical attacks by frustrated Cameroonians.

The spread of anti-Igbo rumours in and after 1948 was partly due to the influx of Igbo plantation workers, traders and artisans which had followed the creation of the Cameroons Development Corporation in 1947. In January 1948 the Buea Native Authority attacked the character and behaviour of local Igbos and demanded their expulsion; it further charged that the government had deliberately encouraged Igbo recruitment for plantations. This the D.O., Buea, categorically denied. He felt that the people of Buea were constantly seeking reasons other than the true ones for the Igbo presence, which lay simply in their nature and economic circumstance.²³ The D.O., Bakweri, decided to bring that Native Authority under control by publishing a notice on 16 February 1948 in which he stressed that the administration had not, and would not, issue any order discriminating against Igbo or any other section of the community. He stressed that it was the duty of members and officers of the Native Authority and Native Courts to uphold the law, and he warned that if they did not do so they might be deprived of their officers.²⁴ The D.O. was reacting to the fact that early in February the Bakweri Native Authority had passed the following rules to control relations between natives and Igbo:

- (1) Nobody is allowed to sell his or her house to an Ibo, neither must anybody give his or her house for rentage to an Ibo.
- (2) No farm land must be sold to an Ibo or rented to an Ibo.
- (3) Nobody must allow an Ibo to enter any native farm or forest for purpose of finding sticks for building or for any other purposes.
- (4) Houses or farms already sold to any Ibo man shall be purchased by Native Authority who will afterwards resell same to some suitable person.
- (5) Nobody shall trade with Ibos for anything of value or not.
- (6) All landlords must ask their Ibo tenants to quit before 15 March 1948.

²¹ Superintendent of Police, Buea, to Ibo Tribal Union, Buea, 29 Aug. 1951. CAB, *ibid.*

²² D.O., Victoria, to Resident, Cameroons Province, n.d. (March 1948). CAB, PC/h (1948)1, 'Conditions of settlement'.

²³ D.O., Buea, to Resident, Cameroons Province, 22 Jan. 1948. CAB, *ibid.*

²⁴ Notice by D.O. in charge of Bakweri District, Buea, 6 Feb. 1948. CAB, *ibid.*

- (7) No Cameroon woman is allowed to communicate with the Ibos in any form.
- (8) Anybody disobeying these rules shall be liable to a fine of £5 or five months I.H.L.
- (9) Any Ibo native disobeying Rule (3) above will be liable to prosecution in the Native Court.
- (10) All Ibo Government Officials are exempted from Rule (5) above.²⁵

The Government believed that the anti-Igbo sentiment had been organized and encouraged in its early stages by two local politicians, Chief Manga Williams and Dr E. M. L. Endeley. Williams tried to restrain excesses and correct the more extravagant statements, but he found this difficult. Endeley, for his part, protested his helplessness in the situation, but the Senior D.O. for Victoria thought him not averse to allowing the growth of anti-Igbo feeling; the same official revealed in March that such feeling in Buea gathered new strength soon after the district had been visited by P. M. Kale, a local politician.²⁶ In Victoria, the chief cause of anti-Igbo tension was criticism in the Nigerian press of Manga Williams, who was a member of the Eastern House of Assembly. Since several newspapers were owned by Azikiwe's Associated Press, Williams was prejudiced against the Igbo in general.²⁷

A further cause of trouble in Victoria was the attempt by the Bakweri people to prevent the Igbo from entering the fishing trade. On 9 February 1948, a body calling itself the Cameroon Union asked the fishing heads of Mboko, Kongo, Mbome and Iseme to stop selling fish to any Igbo fish traders. The circular further directed the fishing heads to cease passing the Igbo through to any other near ports. In case the Igbo owned canoes of their own, the port ruler could arrange to obstruct the track in any way possible and suitable. Directives were given that anybody contravening the above instructions would be liable to a fine of £5. The quarrel over canoes and fishing ports was nothing but a trade war in which Cameroonians wanted to maintain a monopoly in the fishing industry. As usual, politicians like the members of the Cameroon Union always exploited such sentiments and urged the people into action.²⁸

In Tiko, the tension over housing, farm land, fishing, trade and women²⁹ was directly instigated by Manga Williams, and the Tiko people did not hide it when they told the Igbo:

There was no enemy between Bakweri people and Ibo people here in Tiko. The matter concerning the fish and the other woe, woe, troubles to the Ibo people in Tiko, we Bakweri people in Tiko are innocent of the matter. We are here in Tiko as watch boys for the solid law and instructions given to us. To make peace with you Ibo people in Tiko could waste us no minutes but, if we make peace with you here in Tiko, what about all Ibo people in all Cameroons branches? Therefore we do not want to hide you anything. That this law and instructions were given to all

²⁵ Bakweri, N. A., Buea, to Senior D.O., Victoria, 21 Feb. 1948. CAB, *ibid.*

²⁶ Senior D.O., Victoria Division, to Resident, Cameroons Province, n.d. (March 1948). CAB, *ibid.*

²⁷ Ibo Union, Buea, to Commissioner for the Cameroons, 25 Aug. 1953. CAB, S1 (1941)1, 'Ibo Tribal Union'.

²⁸ Cameroon Union, Victoria, to fishing heads of Mboko, Kongo Mbome and Iseme, 9 Feb. 1948. CAB, *ibid.*

²⁹ Notice by N.A., Tiko, 8 Feb. 1948. CAB, PC/h (1948)1, 'Conditions of settlement'.

Bakweri people by chief Manga Williams and chief Ndele. So therefore, if you Ibo people want to make peace, you better meet chief Manga at Victoria and therefore, he will give us permission to cancel the matter. When you meet him, if he says that he knows nothing in the matter, let him give you hand-writing note and then you come to us and we make peace easily.³⁰

Manga Williams' instructions were championed in Tiko not by the local Bakweri but by Bamenda grasslanders and French Cameroonians who were themselves immigrants in Tiko. They were jealous of Igbo commercial prosperity and thought that if the Igbo were out of the way they, the non-Bakwerian Cameroonians would be the new commercial masters of Tiko.³¹

In Mamfe division, the communal tensions were over rights to collect firewood,³² house-building permits,³³ and a fight between Dr J. E. C. Iwenofu, an Igbo, and a Cameroonian palm-wine seller.³⁴ The D.O. blamed S. A. George, a local politician and 'number one agitator' who seized any opportunity to stir up the Banyangs against the Igbo and was 'long overdue for punitive measures'.³⁵

The 'Igbo scare' became the main topic in party politics in the Southern Cameroons during and after the Eastern Nigerian crisis of 1953-4. Cameroonian members of the Eastern Provinces House of Assembly decided to break off their connection with Nigeria because they believed that, as a minority group within the assembly, they were unable to make their wishes respected, while the crisis was adversely affecting the Southern Cameroons. On 22-24 May 1953 a conference was held in Mamfe by the Assemblymen, Native Authorities, tribal organizations and chiefs. They addressed a petition to the Colonial Secretary which demanded a separate and autonomous legislature for the Trust Territory; this was taken to London by Dr Endeley, leader of the Cameroons bloc in the regional assembly. No immediate reply was received, but already things were moving very fast, politically, to the advantage of the Cameroons.

Hitherto, the Southern Cameroons had had no formal political party: such associations as existed were only pressure groups. But in June 1953 the Cameroons National Federation and the Kamerun United National Congress agreed to merge into one political party, the Kamerun National Congress (K.N.C.) led by Dr Endeley. The new party expelled N. N. Mbile because of his stand against the Cameroons bloc in the regional assembly; Mbile and his splinter group formed the Kamerun People's Party (K.P.P.).

The long-term result of the Eastern crisis was the Conference on Nigeria in Lancaster House, London, August 1953, at which the Southern Cameroons were represented by Endeley, Rev. J. C. Kangsen and S. A. George. Mbile went as a delegate of the N.C.N.C. while Mallam Abba Habib represented the Northern Cameroons. Endeley demanded regional auton-

³⁰ Jonah Dike, Tiko, to Ibo Federal Union, Victoria, 17 Feb. 1948. CAB, S1 (1941) 'Ibo Tribal Union'.

³¹ President, Federated Council, Victoria, to Senior D.O., Victoria, 6 April 1948. CAB, *ibid.*

³² Mamfe Ibo Union to Resident, Cameroons Province, 25 Jan. 1952. CAB, S1 (1948), 'Ibo Union petitions'.

³³ D.O., Mamfe, to Senior Resident, Cameroons Province, 9 March 1952. CAB, *ibid.*

³⁴ D.O., Mamfe, to Senior Resident, Cameroons Province, 10 Dec. 1950. CAB, Pdg (1950), 'Disturbances in Mamfe town'. ³⁵ *Ibid.*

omy or a separate legislature for the Southern Cameroons, while the Northern Cameroons preferred to remain within Northern Nigeria. As far as the Southern Cameroons was concerned, the Secretary of State made a categorical statement that if Endeley's K.N.C. won the elections, which were then pending as a result of the dissolution of the Eastern Nigerian House of Assembly, the creation of a Southern Cameroons legislature would be a foregone conclusion.³⁶

This statement stimulated a vigorous campaign in the Southern Cameroons when the elections were called. The K.N.C. opened the campaign by turning a misfortune into a political asset. A section of the crowd had stoned them at Kano airport on their way to London. Back home, Endeley and his team filled a landrover with stones and displayed them all over the country as the stones with which they had been attacked in Nigeria. In a country where Nigeria was synonymous with Igboland, it was said that the Igbos had stoned Dr Endeley. Everywhere, the cry of the crowds was 'we want a Cameroons House'.³⁷ Fearing an attack by way of reprisal, Igbo in Bamenda Province asked the Resident for protection.³⁸ No such attack took place, but the K.N.C. in Bamenda tried more subtle tactics. On 23 September the assistant branch secretary, J. N. Foncha, challenged the Igbo's use of a brass gong in making music. He claimed that the gong was a symbol of traditional authority, *kwifor*, in Bamenda; its use by the Igbo was an infringement of Bamenda laws and customs.³⁹ The Igbo were surprised to hear this because, before the K.N.C. was formed, they had used gongs without offence to anybody; they saw the K.N.C. protest not as a defence of tradition and custom but simply as a political manoeuvre.⁴⁰ Before things could get out of hand, the Resident intervened on the side of the K.N.C., advising the Igbo that as strangers they should not only respect native law and custom but avoid action which might be interpreted by local inhabitants as an attack on custom or a breach of the peace. He trusted that the Igbo Union would appreciate the situation and co-operate.⁴¹

The Igbo did not help matters by using their jobs in the service of their political views. The Mamfe community intended to welcome the return from London of the Cameroons delegates with demonstrations, but these could not be arranged as telegrams announcing their arrival were delayed for some days by the Postmaster, Mr Okeke, an Igbo. Letters which S. A. George wrote from London, of political significance to the Cameroons people in Mamfe, were not delivered until a few days before George's arrival in Mamfe.⁴²

Such behaviour only added fuel to the anti-Igbo gospel, which specially appealed to people who were every day coming face-to-face with the realities

³⁶ P. M. Kale, *Political Evolution in the Cameroons* (Buea, 1967), 42-3.

³⁷ *Nigerian Daily Times*, 19 July 1953.

³⁸ Ibo Union, Bamenda, to Resident, Bamenda Province, 7 Sept. 1953; Ibo Union, Buea, to Commissioner for Cameroons, 25 Aug. 1953. CAB, S1 (1941), 1, 'Ibo Tribal Union'.

³⁹ Foncha to Ibo Union, Bamenda, 23 Sept. 1953. CAB, *ibid.*

⁴⁰ Ibo State Union, Bamenda, to Asst. Secretary, K.N.C., Bamenda, 20 Oct. 1953. CAB, *ibid.*

⁴¹ Resident, Bamenda, to Ibo Union, Bamenda, 14 April 1954. CAB, *ibid.*

⁴² S. A. George to Divisional Surveyor, Posts and Telegraphs Dept., Enugu, 7 Oct. 1953. CAB, S1 (1948), 'Ibo Union petitions'.

of Igbo political, social, economic and administrative domination. The result was that when the elections were held, the anti-Nigerian K.N.C. won twelve seats while the pro-Nigerian K.P.P. won the only other one.⁴³ In his opening address to the Southern Cameroons House of Assembly on 26 October 1954, the Commissioner for the Cameroons bore in mind the prevailing anti-Igbo tone of the election. The K.N.C. victory had greatly alarmed the Igbo settlers, and the Commissioner sought to reassure them as to their future in the now autonomous Southern Cameroons. The territory, he said, could not afford any internal dissensions, jealousies and hostilities between one tribe and another or between 'persons settled here and persons born here'.⁴⁴

Having achieved a quasi-regional status for the Southern Cameroons, the K.N.C. enjoyed the confidence of a cross-section of the population, including traditional rulers. The rival party, the K.P.P., suffered tremendous setbacks because it was misinterpreted as being in favour of the Cameroons remaining 'enslaved' to Eastern Nigeria. This was aggravated by the fact that the K.P.P. was the ally of the N.C.N.C. which was labelled as an Igbo-inspired party, just when the Igbo were very unpopular with the Southern Cameroonians.⁴⁵ However, the K.N.C. did not enjoy its popularity for long because, in early 1955, this party concluded an alliance with the Action Group of Western Nigeria. Endeley justified this in terms of political strategy within the central legislature in Lagos, even though he had recently defeated the K.P.P. precisely because it was in alliance with the N.C.N.C. One of his senior colleagues, J. N. Foncha, held to the view that the solution to the Cameroons' problems in Nigeria lay not in alliances of any sort but in complete withdrawal. Thus in March 1955 Foncha went into opposition, forming the Kamerun National Democratic Party (K.N.D.P.).⁴⁶

In the 1957 elections to the Southern Cameroons House of Assembly, when the K.N.C. had switched to supporting the Nigeria connection, the K.N.D.P. exploited the 'Igbo scare' on the level of fantasy. Illiterate masses were made to believe that the Igbo were the only ethnic group that Cameroonians would meet in Nigeria, and that the crimes attributed to the Igbo would increase if the Cameroons remained part of Nigeria. Out of thirteen contested seats, the K.N.D.P. won five, the K.N.C. won six, and the K.P.P. won two.⁴⁷ As might be expected, these results reflected a variety of personal, regional and ethnic rivalries. It is, for example, striking that the K.N.D.P. won four of its five seats in the Grasslands, where it played heavily on the belief that the K.N.C. government represented the interests of the Bakweri and the more developed coastal areas.⁴⁸ Nonetheless, it was also clear that any party which deviated from an anti-Igbo stance was bound to lose votes.

Fresh elections were held on 24 January 1959. This time the K.N.D.P. won 14 out of 26 seats and so took control of government.⁴⁹ Again, one must

⁴³ *Nigerian Daily Times*, 11 Nov. 1955.

⁴⁴ 'Address by Brigadier E. J. Gibbons, C.B.E., Commissioner of the Cameroons, as President of the Southern Cameroons House of Assembly at its inaugural meeting in Buea, 26 Oct. 1954', 3-4. CAB, S1 (1941), 'Ibo Tribal Union'.

⁴⁵ Kale, *Political Evolution*, 43.

⁴⁶ United Nations Visiting Mission to Trust Territories in West Africa, 1958, *Report on the Trust Territory of the Cameroons under British Administration* (T/1426/Add.1), 14.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.* 38.

⁴⁸ *West Africa*, 4 May 1957, 411.

⁴⁹ U.N., *Report*, 6.

be careful not to exaggerate the role of anti-Igbo feeling. The failure of the K.N.C. was certainly due in part to other factors. For one thing, it lacked grassroots support, since it was essentially a congress of tribal and improvement unions: when K.N.C. leaders – such as S. T. Muna in Bamenda West – defected from the party, so did their local followings.⁵⁰ Besides, there was no electoral pact between the K.N.C. and the K.P.P.: they lost Tiko to the K.D.N.P. by putting up two candidates against it, while in Wum North the K.N.C. vote was split between the official candidate and an independent.⁵¹ Yet the K.N.D.P. undoubtedly exploited anti-Igbo feeling to the full, as in the Grasslands area of Kom. Here the K.N.C. government had sought to enforce contour farming, in the interests of soil conservation, and the women of Kom revolted against this in 1958–9. The K.N.D.P. persuaded them that the government had sold the land to Igbo, who had in turn demanded that contour farming be practised as a prelude to their taking over the land.⁵²

In 1960, the French mandate gained independence as the Republic of Cameroun, and the United Nations was anxious to end the British mandate as soon as possible. It did not consider that the 1959 elections had been conclusive in regard to the future of the Southern Cameroons, but hoped that a general agreement might be reached within the House of Assembly. Since such agreement was not forthcoming, the U.N. decided that early in 1961 a plebiscite should be held to resolve the question. The electorate in both parts of the British Cameroons was to be asked to choose between two paths to independence, either by joining the Federation of Nigeria, or by joining the Republic of Cameroun.⁵³ By this time, the K.N.C. and K.P.P. had been reunited, forming the Cameroon People's National Convention, under Endeley. This campaigned to preserve links with Nigeria, on a basis of regional autonomy, and stressed the value of the cultural heritage from Britain. The K.N.D.P. advertised the importance of escaping from eternal subordination to Nigeria and establishing instead a Cameroonian national identity by joining the Republic. This aim was certainly not based on much knowledge of the French territory, let alone French history: there was a naive belief that customs and institutions derived from the British could persist, which quite ignored the French preference for centralization and cultural assimilation. But 'far off hills look green', and most Cameroonians were easily persuaded that the new devil – the French Cameroons – could only be better than the old – Nigeria. Besides, Foncha's K.N.D.P. made the most of its time in office to influence voting through political patronage and arm-twisting. In the event, the Nigerian option attracted 97,741 votes in the Southern Cameroons; the Cameroun option won 233,571 votes. Thus throughout the period of party politics most Southern Cameroonians consistently stood out against any relationship with Nigeria, and as a result the Southern Cameroons became part of the Federal Republic of Cameroun on 1 October 1961.⁵⁴ In this story, the 'Igbo scare' can be seen as a river

⁵⁰ Kale, *Political Evolution*, 42–3; *West Africa*, 4 May 1947, 411; U.N., *Report*, 6.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*

⁵² The Fon of Kom to Commissioner, Southern Cameroons (Premier's copy), n.d. (1958). CAB, PC/C 1958/1, Mme disturbances, Wum District.

⁵³ *Southern Cameroons Gazette*, Buea, 27 Jan. 1961 (vol. 7, no. 4), 3–5.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.* 18 March 1961 (vol. 7, no. 14), 88.

reinforced by many tributaries whose waters were stained by the colour of the local mud.

SOMMAIRE

La peur de la domination de la tribu Ibo constitua l'une des raisons majeures pour la décision du Sud-Cameroun Britannique à voter en 1961 pour quitter le Nigéria complètement et de s'unir avec la République du Cameroun. Dès les années 1920, après que la Grande-Bretagne avait obtenu un mandat international sur un part de l'ancienne colonie allemande, elle le gouvernait comme apanage du Nigéria, et le développement, que ce soit économique ou culturel, était très tardif. Les indigènes faisaient concurrence à grande peine aux immigrants du Nigéria, surtout les Ibos, dont la résilience et l'ingéniosité dans le commerce, alliés à leur manque de modestie dans le succès, provoquaient l'envie. Les politiciens camerounais contribuaient aux stéréotypes ethniques en incitant des rumeurs fantasques. Certes, des autres rivalités importaient aussi, mais dans les élections de 1954, 1957 et 1959 le mécontentement avec les liaisons au Nigéria fut clairement associé aux sentiments anti-Ibo.

POLICE REPORT ON THE OFFICIAL INVESTIGATION INTO THE MILITARY COUP OF 15TH JANUARY 1966

The following paragraphs contained an incomplete Police Report on the official investigation into the events of 15 January 1966, titled "Military rebellion of 15th January 1966". It was prepared by Police Special Branch Interrogation unit based on interviews with soldiers, other ranks and some officers who had been arrested after the 15th January coup. None of the soldiers and officers involved had come to formal trial in a court-martial, which was one of the factors responsible for the events leading to the "counter-coup" of 29th July 1966

The report, evidently in its draft form, was incomplete and said to be released to a highly restricted circulation of certain persons in government and outside the country in early August 1966, and it eventually leaked. The second part of the report, which allegedly implicated other persons connected to the 15th January coup was never officially released although it is widely believed to exist.

The original document was obtained and brought into public domain by Dr. Nowamagbe Omoigui, who can be reached at his email: nowa@prodigy.net

1. Due to unforeseen circumstance it has not been possible, so far, to inform the

nation fully of events which took place in the Federation on 15th January 1966 at Lagos, Ibadan, and Kaduna, events which were directly responsible for further military action on the 29th July 1966.

2. It will be appreciated that events of this nature require prolonged, painstaking investigation. It is realized that the absence of legitimate information on this subject has produced a flood of undesirable rumours and speculation. It is, however, pointed out that without thorough investigation, the wisdom of any premature releases, unsupported by fact, was questionable.

3. Investigations have not yet been completed but it is now possible to put the nation, and the world, in possession of the facts so far collected. The civilian involvement and influence in the whole affair is not as far as possible, included in this report.

4. It has been established that sometime during August 1965, a small group of army officers, dissatisfied with political developments within the federation, began to plot in collaboration with some civilians, the overthrow of what was then the Government of the Federation of Nigeria. The plan which eventually emerged from their deliberations was that on a date not yet decided at the time, the following action would be taken by troops from selected

units, led by the ringleaders of the plot:

a) The arrest of leading politicians at Lagos, Ibadan, Kaduna, Enugu and Benin. The plan stipulated that wherever resistance was encountered, the individuals concerned were to be killed.

b) The occupation of key points such as radio and TV stations, telephone exchange and other public utilities, police headquarters and signal installations, by carefully selected troops who were not, however, to be informed in advance of the true nature of their operations.

c) The movement of troops and armoured fighting vehicles to Jebba and Makurdi to hold the Benue and Niger Bridges with a view to preventing the movement of any troops, opposed to the plotters' aims, to and from the North.

d) The assassination of all senior army officers known to be in a position to foil, successfully, the conspirators' efforts to topple the governments of the federation.

e) The eventual take-over of the machinery of government by the rebels.

5. Although the original plan stipulated that the action intended by the plotters should take place, simultaneously, in all the regional capitals, no arrangements were made to implement these intentions in

Benin and Enugu.

6. The date on which the plot was to be put into execution was decided by several factors. These include the return of the Premier of Northern Nigeria from Mecca and the Commonwealth Prime Ministers' conference held at Lagos between the 11th and 13th January 1966. An additional factor was the possibility that details of the plotters intentions might have leaked out, necessitating early implementation of the plot. In this manner, the night of 14th to 15th January was finally selected.

7. The action which was well planned and conducted like a military operation was, in its first stages efficiently carried out.

8. Immediately before "H" hour, which has been set for 2am on the 15th January, a number of junior officers were taken into the confidence of the ringleaders of the plot. It is known that a number of these were reluctant to comply with the wishes of the plotters. Confirmed information indicates that it was made clear to these junior officers that those who were not with the conspirators would be regarded as being opposed to them and might suffer death as a consequence.

9. Non-commissioned ranks involved in the night's activities at Lagos, Kaduna and Ibadan, were given no previous information of the true nature of the action in which they were about to be engaged.

10. The activities of the rebels, commencing at 2am on 15th January 66, resulted in the deaths of the following personalities:

ATLAGOS

- a. Alhaji Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa, Prime Minister of the Federation of Nigeria.
- b. Chief F. S. Okotie-Eboh, Finance Minister of the Federation.
- c. Brigadier Z. Mai-Malari, Commander of the 2nd Brigade NA
- d. Colonel K. Mohammed, Chief of Staff Nigerian Army
- e. Lieut-Colonel A. C. Unegbe, Quartermaster General.
- f. Lieut-Colonel J.T. Pam, Adjutant General, Nigerian Army
- g. Lieut-Colonel A. Largema, Commanding Officer 4th Battalion Ibadan

ATIBADAN

- h. S. L. Akintola, Premier of Western Nigeria

ATKADUNA

- i. Alhaji Sir Ahmadu Bello, the Sarduna of Sokoto and Premier of Northern Nigeria
- j. Brigadier S. Ademulegun, Commander of the 1st Brigade NA
- k. Colonel R. A. Shodeinde, Deputy Commandant, Nigerian Defence Academy
- l. Ahmed Dan Musa, Senior Assistant Secretary (Security) to the North Regional Government
- m. Sergeant Duromola

Oyegoke of the Nigerian Army

n. The senior wife of Sir Ahmadu Bello

o. The wife of Brigadier Ademulegun

11. In addition to the foregoing, four members of the Nigeria Police, one junior NCO of the Nigerian Army, and an estimated number of six civilians lost their lives during the night's events. One major of the Nigerian Army was accidentally shot and killed at Ibadan on the 17th January 66, bringing the total loss of life to twenty-seven.

12. Apart from the aforementioned killings, a number of political leaders and civil servants were arrested by the plotters and detained in military establishments at Lagos and Kaduna. These included:

- a. Sir Kashim Ibrahim - at the time Governor of Northern Nigeria
- b. Alhaji Hassan Lemu - Principal Private Secretary to the Premier of Northern Nigeria.
- c. Aba Kadangare Gobara - Assistant Principal Private Secretary to the Premier of Northern Nigeria.
- d. B. A. Fani-Kayode - at the time Deputy Premier of Western Nigeria.

DETAILS OF THE EVENTS ARE AS FOLLOWS:

13. In August 1965, three officers, Major Okafor, Major

Ifeajuna and Captain Oji who were already dissatisfied with political developments in the Federation and the impact of these developments on the Army, held series of discussions between them about the matter and set about the task of searching for other officers who held views similar to their own and who could, eventually, be trusted to join them in the enterprise of staging a military coup d'état.

14. In September 1965, Major I. H. Chukwuka of Nigerian Army Headquarters Lagos was persuaded to join the group of conspirators, followed in October 1965 by Major C. I. Anuforo, also of the Army headquarters. Major C. K. Nzeogwu was brought in around that time through the efforts of Major Anuforo, an old friend of both Majors Nzeogwu and Okafor. Major Nzeogwu in turn secured the support for the plan of Major A. Ademoyega who had worked with him in the Nigerian Army Training College Kaduna.

15. By early November the recruiting activities of the group were completed and an inner circle of conspirators emerged, consisting of the following officers:

Major CK Nzeogwu

Major A. Ademoyega

Major EA Ifeajuna

Major CI Anuforo

Major IH Chukwuka

Major D. Okafor

Captain O. Oji

Planning for the execution of

the plot started in earnest in early November 1965 at a meeting of the inner circle which took place in Major Ifeajuna's house in Lagos.

16. The plan which eventually emerged from their deliberations was broadly as follows:

a. The arrest of VIPs at Kaduna, Ibadan, Lagos, Enugu and



Late Maj CK Nzeogwu

Benin. The plan stipulated wherever resistance to arrest was encountered, the individuals concerned were to be killed

b. The occupation of vulnerable points such as Radio and TV stations, telephone exchange, police signals installations, airfields and civilian administrative establishments, by carefully selected troops who were not, however, to be informed in advance of the purpose of their operations.

c. The movement of troops to Jebba and Makurdi to hold the Niger and Benue bridges

against any movement of troops opposed to the plotters' aims, to and from the North.

d. The killing of all senior army officers who were in a position to foil successfully the conspirators' efforts to topple the Governments of the Federation and who resided in the areas of operations.

e. The eventual take-over of the machinery of Government by the Army.

17. Amongst the civilian VIPs scheduled for arrest, the following have been named:

a. The Prime Minister of the Federation

b. The Federal Finance Minister

c. The Premiers of Northern, Western, Midwestern and Eastern Nigeria.

18. Additional personalities scheduled to be arrested in Lagos were the following:

a. K. O. Mbadiwe

b. Jaja Wachuku

c. Inua Wada

d. Shehu Shagari

e. T. O. Elias

f. Ayo Rosiji

g. M. A. Majekodunmi

h. Mathew Mbu

i. R. A. O. Akinjide

j. Waziri Ibrahim

19. Other ranking politicians were to be placed in house arrest pending a decision as to their disposal and eventual fate.

20. Events have shown that other political figures including the Deputy Premier of Western

Nigeria, the Finance Minister and the Governor of Northern Nigeria were scheduled to be arrested.

21. The conspirators further decided that the following senior army officers represented a threat to their plans and must be killed during the first hours of the rebellion:

Brigadier Z. Mai-Malari - Lagos

Brigadier S. Ademulegun - Kaduna

Colonel K. Mohammed - Lagos

Colonel R. A. Shodeinde - Kaduna

Lt. Col. A. Largema - Ibadan

Lt. Col. A. C. Unegbe - Lagos

Lt. Col. J. T. Pam - Lagos

NOTE: Lt. Col. Largema was the CO of 4th Battalion NA stationed at Ibadan. On 15th January 1966, however, this officer was on temporary duty at Lagos, staying at the Ikoyi Hotel

22. For the actual execution of the plan, three commanders were nominated, namely:

a. Northern Nigeria; Major C.K. Nzeogwu

b. Lagos Area; Major E. A. Ifeajuna

c. Western Nigeria; Captain E. N. Nwobosi

23. The latter officer was not a member of the inner circle and was not approached until either the 13th or 14th January 1966. He was, however, well known to the conspirators who were certain that when the time came he could be relied on to

cooperate.

24. The execution of the plan was to take place in three areas only, i.e. Kaduna, Ibadan and the Lagos area, although many of the participants believed the insurrection to be nation-wide. It is a matter of established fact that no violent action took place in either Benin City or Enugu. It has been suggested that these areas were spared because the plotters found it impossible to recruit reliable co-conspirators in these regions. None of the officers has indicated under interrogation that any efforts to recruit collaborators in either Benin or Enugu were made. Indeed, subsequent action of some of the leading officers



Late Major EA Ifeajuna

indicated collaboration with the then Premier of Eastern region.

25. For the purposes of this report, the execution of the plan is dealt with in three main sections, namely Lagos Area, Ibadan and Kaduna. Each section is divided into incidents, showing the

identities of officers and men involved.

LAGOS AREA:

26. The execution of the plan commenced by the calling of a meeting late on 14th January 1966 of the Lagos members of the inner circle and, for the first time, of junior officers previously selected to take an active part. A number of those present had attended a cocktail party that very evening in the house of Brigadier Mai-Malari in Ikoyi. The following attended this meeting which was held in the Apapa House of Major Ifeajuna:

a. Major EA Ifeajuna

b. Major CI Anuforo

c. Major D Okafor

d. Major A. Ademoyega

e. Major IH Chukwuka

f. Captain O Oji

g. Captain GS Adeleke

h. Lt. G. Ezedigbo

i. Lt. BO Oyewole

j. 2/Lt. ES Nweke

k. 2/Lt. BO Ikejiofor

l. 2/Lt. NS Wokocha

m. 2/Lt. Igweze

27. Major Ifeajuna addressed the meeting on the subject of the deteriorating situation in Western Nigeria to which, he contended, the politicians had failed to find a solution. He added that as a result the entire country was heading toward chaos and disaster. He next acquainted the junior officers with the inner circle's plans and asked them if they were

prepared to assist to put an end to this state of affairs. Major Ifeajuna claims that all present pledged their support for his plans with the exception of Captain Adeleke who was, however, later persuaded to join. It was made clear to these junior officers that those who were not with the conspirators would be regarded as being opposed to them and might suffer death as a consequence.

28. When, at the end of the meeting, it was clear that all present were in support of the rebellion, tasks and targets were issued as follows:

a. Abduction of the Prime Minister and the Federal Finance Minister; Major Ifeajuna, 2/Lt. B. Oyewole, 2/Lt. Ezedigbo

b. Killing of Colonel Mohammed and Lt. Col. Unegbe; Major CI Anuforo, 2/Lt C. Ngwuluka

c. Killing of Brigadier Mai-Malari; Major D. Okafor, Capt. O. Oji, 2/Lt. C. Igweze

d. Killing of Lt. Col. Pam; Major IH Chukuka, 2/Lt. G. Onyefuru

e. Occupation of the Control Room at FT Police HQ Lion Building; 2/Lt NS Wokocha

f. Occupation of P & T Telephone Exchange: Lt. PM Okocha, 2/Lt. CC Anyafulu

g. Occupation of N.E.T. Building: 2/Lt DS Nweke

But there was apparent last-minute change of the plans as will be shown later in this paper.

29. Troops selected for these various tasks were to be drawn

from the following units (all stationed or accommodated at Apapa and Dodan Barracks, Ikoyi):

a. No. 1 Signal Squadron

b. Camp - HQ 2 Brigade NA

c. Lagos Garrison Organization

d. The Federal Guard Unit

30. The Federal Guard Officers Mess at Ikoyi was named as the rallying point for all teams on completion of their tasks.

31. All other officers and other ranks to be involved, either consciously or unconsciously in the operations were called out for alleged Internal Security operations between midnight and 0100 hours to allow time for the issue of arms and ammunition and the provision of the necessary transport. With the exception of other ranks of the Federal Guard, they were all ordered to report to Headquarters of No. 2 Brigade NA in battle order, with their arms. Ammunition was issued to them by Lt. Okaka, assisted by Major Ifeajuna, RSM Ogbu of Camp 2 Bde and others.

32. Officers and men moved off to their various assignments at around 0200 hours as planned.

ABDUCTION AND ASSASSINATION OF SIR ABUBAKAR TAFAWA BALEWA

33. The party charged with the abduction of the Prime Minister (PM) left HQ 2 Bde at approximately 0200 hours. The following have been identified as members of that group:

Officers:

a. Major EA Ifeajuna (in command)

b. 2/Lt. G. Ezedigbo (Federal Guard Unit)

c. 2/Lt. Oyewole (2 Brigade Transport Company)

No. 1 Signal Squadron:

NA 84254 Cpl C. Madumelu

NA 18149591 L/Cpl. O. Achi

NA 18159447 S/Sgt. A. Ogbogara

NA 18150401 Sgt. L. Onyia

NA 500147 Sgt. BS Odunze

NA 18150392 Sgt. F Impete

NA 18150400 Sgt. INdukaife

NA 1856 Sgm. S. Onwuli

NA 18149817 Cpl. P. Okoh

NA 18149084 Cpl. U Eduok

NA 18150345 Cpl. Z. Chukwu

NA 18150206 L/Cpl FI Okonkwo

NA 3775 Sgm. FN Chukwu

NA 18150443 L/Cpl RC Amadi

NA 18159121 WO II J Onyeacha

Camp - Hq 2 Brigade NA:

NA 3339 Pte NA Evulobi

NA 18150137 L/Cpl S. Kanu

NA 502724 WO II L. Okoye

NA 124643 WO I (RSM) J. Ogbu

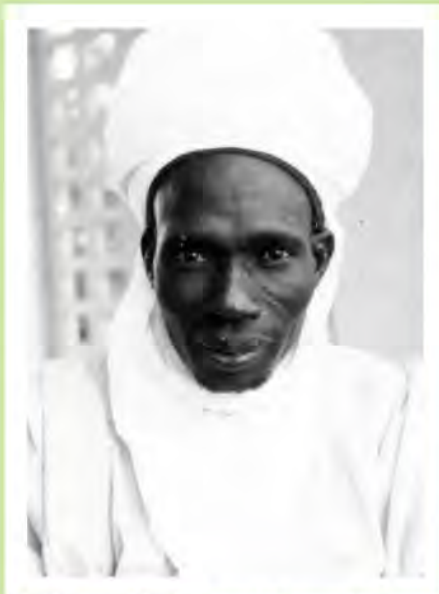
Army Headquarters (LGO):

NA 504299 Sgt. J. Nwakpura

NA 503865 Sgt. B. Iberesi

NA 149820 Sgt. E. Okonkwo

NOTE: The above named were not all, of necessity, directly



Late Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa

involved in the abduction of the Prime Minister. A number of them operated on the premises of the Federal Finance Minister, adjacent to the residence of the Prime Minister

34. The small convoy reached the Onikan roundabout at approximately 0230 hours and halted near the PM's residence. Major Ifeajuna ordered all troops to leave their vehicles and divided them into three groups with targets as shown:

PRIME MINISTER:

Major EA Ifeajuna - in command

Sgt. B. Iberesi

Sgt. J. Nwakupura

Sgt. BS Odunze

Cpl. P. Okoh

Cpl C. Madumelu

Sgmn FN Chukwu

Sgmn. S. Onwuli

2/Lt. Oyewole

FEDERAL MINISTER OF FINANCE:

2/Lt. G. Ezedigbo - in command

WOI(RSM) J. Ogbu

L/Cpl FIOkonkwo

Cpl. Z. Chukwu

Cpl. U Eduok

Sgt. F Impete

S/Sgt. A. Ogbogara

Sgt. INdukaife

WO II L. Okoye

ON GUARD OVER ASSING VEHICLES AND APPROACH ROADS:

WO II J Onyeacha - in command

L/Cpl RC Amadi

Pte NA Evulobi

L/Cpl S. Kanu

Sgt. E. Okonkwo

35. The latter group was given the task of stopping and turning back all vehicles approaching Onikan road. There is no record concerning their instructions as to what action they were to take in the event of any of the drivers refusing to obey the order to turn back.

36. The Major knocked on the gate and was answered by a policeman who was on guard inside. The Major identified himself as an Army Officer whereupon the PC (Police Constable) granted them access. The Major asked the PC how many men were on guard with him and was told that there were six. The Major then ordered the PC to show where they could be found. The PC

agreed whereupon the Major seized his rifle and passed it to one of his men. The PC then led the group to round up the remaining members of the Police guard. At the back of the house, ie. at the creek side, they found a PC armed with a rifle and accompanied by a Police dog. The Major ordered the PC to surrender his rifle, which he refused to do. He was then hit in the face by Sgt. Odunze whereupon he capitulated and surrendered his firearm. Major Ifeajuna ordered Sgt Odunze and Cpl. Okoh to stand guard over the PC and his dog with orders to shoot both if they made an attempt to abscond or raise the alarm. All the other members were disarmed and taken to the main gate where they remained guarded by Sgt Iberesi and 2 others. They were all informed that they would be shot if they attempted to escape or raise the alarm.

37. Major Ifeajuna and few of his men then approached the back entrance to the Prime Minister's residence having secured the police orderly, and the stewards under arrest, and broke into the lounge and thence to the Prime Minister's bedroom. A voice from the inside asked who was there. The Major replied by kicking the door open, entering the room and pointing his gun at the Prime Minister and thereafter led out the PM wearing a white robe with white trousers and slippers. The PM was then led away by Major Ifeajuna along Awolowo Road where Ifeajuna had parked his car adjacent to

the Onikan swimming pool.

**ABDUCTION AND
ASSASSINATION OF F.S.
OKOTIE EBOH**

38. On arrival at the Onikan roundabout, at approximately 0230 hrs on 15th January 1966, Major Ifeajuna divided his force into three groups as shown in para 34 of this report. Major Ifeajuna and his group proceeded towards the PM's residence and 2/Lt Ezedigbo took his men to the compound of the Finance Minister. When they arrived at the front gate, they found this locked and were compelled to gain access by jumping over the wall. Inside they found a number of civilian guards, about 5, who were armed with bows and arrows. These offered no resistance and were disarmed and placed under guard. At least one policeman was encountered in the compound. He too was disarmed and escorted to the 3-Ton truck by RSM J. Ogbu.

39. 2/Lt Ezedigbo then attempted to open the front door but found this also to be locked. He broke one of the panes of glass in the door with his SMG but even failed to open the door which he finally broke down by kicking it with his boot. He then entered accompanied by the following other ranks:

WO II L Okoye

Sgt. I Ndukaife

Sgt. E. Okonkwo

Cpl. U. Eduok

Sgt. F. Impete

Before entering 2/Lt Ezedigbo ordered his men to walk quietly

and to make no noise, a rather superfluous caution considering the noise which must have been made when the door was broken open. They mounted the stairs to the first floor. Having arrived there, the 2/Lt posted one man on the balcony and 3 on the landing.

40. The officer then shouted twice "Okotie-Eboh", come out". When this met with no



Late F. S. Okotie Eboh

response he entered a bedroom where he found the Minister dressed only in a loin cloth. He ordered the Minister to precede him down the stairs, and the Minister was escorted to the 3-Ton lorry. Rumors that the Minister was beaten and otherwise ill-treated on the way to the vehicle have been stoutly denied by all who took part in the operation.

41. Whilst the Finance Minister was being loaded into the 3-Tonner, the PM was escorted from his house and placed into Major Ifeajuna's car. 2/Lt Ezedigbo joined Ifeajuna whilst the ORs (other ranks) re-

entered their respective vehicles. The convoy then moved off to the Federal Guard Officers' Mess, stopping en route at a point in Ikoyi where Major Ifeajuna and 2/Lt. Ezedigbo killed Brig. Mai-Malari. (editors comment: Maimalari had escaped from the team that had been sent to kill him at home)

**ARREST AND
ASSASSINATION OF
COLONEL KURU
MOHAMMED AND LT.
COL. A. UNEGBE**

42. Meanwhile Major CI Anuforo, assisted by 2/Lt. C. Ngwuluka and the following other ranks:

NA 173629 WO II B. Okugbe - No. 1 Signal Sqn

NA 18149383 Sgt. J Oparah - No. 1 Signal Sqn

NA 1641 Cpl. C. Egwim - No. 1 Signal Sqn

NA 18149792 Cpl. E. Nwoke - No. 1 Signal Sqn

NA 18150530 L/Cpl. J Nwankpa - No. 1 Signal Sqn

NA 18151259 Pte C. Unegbu - Military Hospital, Yaba

Proceeded in the two private cars of Anuforo and Ngwuluka to No. 1, Park Lane Apapa, the residence of Colonel K. Mohammed. This was then being guarded by unarmed nursing orderlies of a Field Ambulance stationed in Apapa.

43. On arrival Major Anuforo ordered all his party to leave the cars, which had stopped some distance from the house. They then advanced towards the house led by Major Anuforo.

They were challenged by Pte L. Onyegbule, then on sentry-go. Major Anuforo told the sentry to "shut up" and to put up his hands. The Major then gave orders that the sentry and the other 3 members of the guard be banded together in one place in the custody of Pte. C. Unegbu, who although a member of a medical unit, was then bearing arms.

44. Major Anuforo then went to the front door of the house and knocked. It would appear that he received an answer, because he was heard shouting "You first come out and see who is knocking". With the Major at this stage was WO II B. Okugbe. When he received no further answer to his knocking, Anuforo ordered his men to cock their weapons. He then kicked open the door and entered accompanied by Cpl. E. Nwoke, WO II Okugbe and Cpl Egwim.

45. The house was searched until the Colonel was found, in night attire, in his bedroom. The Colonel was forced out of the house by Major Anuforo and the other ranks who had accompanied him, and put into Anuforo's car. It is believed that before being put into the car, the Colonel's wrists were tied with a rifle sling which was still in place when later, his body was discovered along the Abeokuta road.

46. Before leaving, Major Anuforo instructed the Colonel's guard to return to their unit and not to discuss what they had seen with anyone. Sgt. J Oparah and Cpl.

E. Nwoke could not get into the car of Major Anuforo because of the presence of the Colonel and were ordered to follow on foot to the house of Lt. Col. Unegbe, situated on Point road, Apapa, not very far away.

47. On arrival at Lt. Col. Unegbe's house, Major Anuforo entered the house alone. They heard SMG fire inside the compound and were later ordered to bring out the dead body of the Lt. Col.

48. Whilst the men were inside



Late Lt. Col. Yakubu Pam

collecting Lt. Col. Unegbe's body, Col. Mohammed was compelled to leave the car by Major Anuforo. The latter told the Colonel to say his prayers as he was going to be shot. The Colonel did not plead for mercy or remonstrate in any other manner, but quietly prayed until he was shot in the back by Major Anuforo, using his SMG.

49. Colonel Mohammed's corpse was stowed into the boot of Major Anuforo's car while the body of Lt. Col. Unegbe

was placed on the floor in the back of the car. Anuforo and his men then entered the vehicle which was driven straight to the Federal Guard Officers' Mess. At the Mess, the two bodies were unloaded on the ground.

ASSASSINATION OF LT. COL. PAM

50. Major Chukuka assisted by 2/Lt G Onyefuru and the other ranks:

NA 160152 Sgt. NN Ugongene - No. 1 Signal Squadron

NA 18150196 Sgt. H. Okibe - No. 1 Signal Squadron

NA 154544 Sgt. B. Anyanwu - Camp - HQ 2 Bde NA

NA 403298 Sgt. L. Egbukichi - Army HQ (LGO)

NA 18150416 Sgt. P. Iwueke - HQ 2 Bde NA

After the arrest of Lt. Col. JY Pam and was being guarded inside a Land Rover in the Mess premises, Majors Chukuka and Anuforo held a brief discussion after which both Majors entered the Land Rover. The driver was ordered to proceed to Ikoyi.

51. At a point inside Ikoyi the Land Rover was stopped and both Majors descended. Major Anuforo ordered Lt. Col. Pam to leave the vehicle, which he did. Major Anuforo then spoke to him and told him that he was going to be killed and would do well to say his prayers first. Lt. Col. Pam pleaded but Major Anuforo remained adamant, stating that he was carrying out orders. Then without warning Major Anuforo fired a burst from his SMG into Lt. Col.

Pam's body killing him on the spot.

52. Major Anuforo then ordered the NCOs in the Land Rover to come down and load the dead body into the vehicle. The men, who were shocked and frightened by the killing were reluctant to comply with this order and refused to leave the vehicle until Major Anuforo pointed his SMG at them and threatened to kill them unless they did as they were told. They then obeyed and loaded the corpse. The party then drove back to the Federal Guard Officers Mess where the body was off-loaded and placed alongside the bodies of Col. Mohammed and Lt. Col. Unegbe.

ASSASSINATION OF BRIG. MAI-MALARI

53. The assassination of Brigadier Z. Mai-Malari as originally conceived in the conspirators Master plan failed.

54. Major DO Okafor and Captain Oji were present at HQ 2 Bde when troops were being mustered and issued with arms and ammunition. When these arrangements had been completed these two officers entered Major Okafor's personal car accompanied by the following ORs from No. 1 Signal Squadron:

NA 500611 L/Cpl B Okotto

NA 18150074 L/Cpl P Esekwe

55. They drove direct to the Federal Guard Unit in Dodan Barracks, Ikoyi, where, in the meantime, Lt. Ezedigbo and 2/Lt. Igweze had roused additional troops and arranged

for the issue of arms and ammunition. By the time the troops were ready for the alleged IS operations, Major Okafor and Captain Oji had arrived at the barracks and were at the Unit guardroom. Major Okafor ordered that troops mount into 2 Federal Guard Land Rovers detailed for the operation by Ezedigbo

56. Federal Guard personnel detailed for this operation were the following:

NA 3785 Sgt. SA Umch

NA 18150997 Sgt. N. Ibundu

NA 18149870 L/Cpl N. Noji

NA 3995 L/Cpl HH Okeke

NA 18149870 L/Cpl P. Nnah

NA 1706 Pte. J. Ogu

NA 18149723 Pte. S. Eke

NA 18141571 Pte. I. Onoja

NA 18148787 Pte. JF Enunehe

NA 18149970 Pte. J Abaye

NA 3695 Pte. CS Dede

NA 18151261 Pte. S. Adekunle

57. The following vehicles were used:

Land Rover NA 773 - driven by Pte. I Onoja

Land Rover NA 957 - driven by L/Cpl N. Noji

58. The party drove direct to the house of Brigadier Z. Mai-Malari at 11 Thompson Avenue, Ikoyi. This is a corner house and situated at the point where Brown road runs into Thompson Avenue. On arrival at their destination, the troops were dismounted and divided into three sections commanded as shown:

No. 1 Section - Captain Oji

No. 2 Section - 2/Lt C Igweze

No. 3 Section - Sgt. SA Umch (in reserve)

59. The reserve section under Sgt. Umch was ordered to take post in a dark place opposite the house. The three officers, followed by their men then entered the compound which was guarded by NCOs and men of the 2 Battalion NA. Major Okafor ordered the Sentry to call the Guard Commander whom he informed that the situation was bad and that he, Okafor, had come to take over the guard. He instructed the Guard Commander to assemble his men and to take them back to his unit. The Guard Commander, according to some of the ORs interrogated, replied that he could not obey this order as he had received no instructions to that effect. Major Okafor and Captain Oji overruled the Guard Commander's objections and entered the compound

60. Whilst Major Okafor was pre-occupied with the guard the telephone in the downstairs lounge of the Brigadier's house started to ring. Some of the men present, including 2/Lt. Igweze, have stated that the Brigadier came downstairs to answer the telephone. No sooner had he picked up the receiver than a burst of SMG fire was heard in the compound. This was Captain Oji firing at a member of the Brigadier's Guard, a L/Cpl of 2 battalion. The L/Cpl was killed and his body later placed into Major Okafor's Land Rover. At the

same time, L/Cpl Paul Nwekwe of 2 Brigade Signal Troop who was on guard in the front of the main gate to the compound, was hit in the neck by a bullet, thought to be a ricochet.

61. Brigadier Mai-Malari, alerted to the presence of Major Okafor's force in his compound by Captain Oji's burst of fire dropped the telephone and, followed by his wife, was observed running into the boy's quarters. From there he escaped into the road, and it is thought, tried to make his way to the Federal Guard Barracks.

62. According to the ORs interrogated, Major Okafor flew into a rage when he discovered that the Brigadier had escaped and bitterly blamed the men of the Federal Guard for not shooting the Brigadier when they saw him running towards the boy's quarters. He then ordered all present that the Brigadier must be shot on sight.

63. Major Okafor then jumped into the Land Rover driven by L/Cpl Noji. He informed 2/Lt Igweze that he was going to get "that man" and to arrange for more troops to come to the Brigadier's House. He drove around the area for some time but failed to find the Brigadier. By the time he returned to 11 Thompson Avenue, Major Ademoyega and Captain Adeleke had arrived there in a land Rover driven by L/Cpl D. Omeru. Major Ademoyega had already informed Captain Oji that the Brigadier had been killed and that he had seen his body at the Federal Guard.



Late Brig. Mai-Malari

Captain Oji was overheard telling Okafor that "the Jack had been killed". It is presumed that by "the Jack" Oji meant the Brigadier. Major Okafor then informed the troops with him that Brigadier Maimalari had been killed by men from another unit.

64. The time, by then, was nearly 0400 hrs captain Oji was ordered by Major Okafor to proceed to 2nd Battalion in Ikeja to check the situation there. The Captain left in land Rover NA 773 accompanied by Sgt. H. Irundu, L/Cpl H Okeke, Pte. S. Adekunle and Pte. I Onoja.

65. As stated elsewhere in this report, Major Ifeajuna and his convoy, after the abduction of the PM and the Finance Minister, drove towards the Federal Guards Officers mess where he made a brief stop and then proceeded toward Ikoyi Hotel, still with the PM in the car. At a point in the Golf course, adjacent to a petrol station Brigadier Maimalari

was walking towards Dodan Barracks when he saw Major Ifeajuna's car. The Brigadier recognized his Brigade Major Ifeajuna and shouted and beckoned him to stop. Then Ifeajuna stopped the car and accompanied by 2/Lt Ezedigbo went towards Brig. Maimalari and killed him.

66. After the Brigadier had been killed, his body was loaded into the 3-Tonner and driven to the Federal Guard Officers' Mess.

ASSASSINATION OF LT. COL. LARGEMA

67. Although not initially allotted to Major Ifeajuna as a target for assassination, Major Ifeajuna proceeded to Ikoyi Hotel to kill Lt. Col. Largema. On arrival at the hotel Major Ifeajuna told the receptionist on duty that he had an urgent message for Lt. Col. Largema of Room 115. The time was between 0330 and 0400. He then asked the hotel receptionist to supply him with the master key which can open all doors in the hotel but was told that this was not available. He then ordered the receptionist to lead him to the room in which Lt. Col. Largema was staying, warning the receptionist on the way that he would be shot if he refused to comply with whatever he might be ordered to do.

68. On their arrival on the first floor Major Ifeajuna, accompanied by 2/Lt Ezedigbo instructed the hotel receptionist to knock on the door of Lt. Col. Largema and to inform him that

he was wanted on the telephone. It should be pointed out here that rooms in this hotel have no telephones. There are situated in small alcoves in the corridors. In the case of Room 115, the telephone alcove is only a few paces away.

69. Lt. Col Largema responded and came out dressed in pyjamas and slightly dazed by sleep. In the meantime, the two armed soldiers had stepped back into the corner near the lifts from where they could not be observed by Lt. Col. Largema when he came out of his door. The Lt. Col. then picked up the receiver, which was off the hook. At this moment both the soldiers near the lift opened fire with their SMG. Lt. Col. Largema fell down and died.

70. The killers went downstairs and called the third man to come up. Between the three of them they then carried the dead body down the stairs and deposited it on the floor. They then called yet another soldier from the Mercedes car who helped the other three to carry the body to the car. The whole party then drove off.

71. When Major Ifeajuna and party returned to the Federal Guards Officers' Mess he learnt that the GOC was in town and was organizing 2nd Battalion NA at Ikeja to attack the rebels. He was then joined by Major Okafor and they drove off together in Major Ifeajuna's car. At the Yaba Military Hospital they dropped 2/Lt Ezedigbo who had been wounded in the encounter with Brigadier Mai-Malari. The time was about

0400 hrs. Major Ifeajuna drove away on to the Abeokuta road. On the way, they stopped and Ifeajuna asked the PM out of the car whence he shot and killed him. When he and Okafor became certain that the PM was dead they left the body in the bush at a point beyond Otta on the Lagos to Abeokuta road. They then opened the boot of the car and dropped the body of Lt. Col. Largema near that of the PM. They then drove on to Abeokuta. On the way after Abeokuta two other soldiers in the car were dropped and told to find their way back to Lagos whilst Ifeajuna and Okafor proceeded to Enugu. They arrived Enugu at about 1415 hours and proceeded to the Premier's Lodge where they held discussion with Dr. MI Okpara, then Premier of Eastern region, after which they separated and went into hiding. Ifeajuna eventually escaped to Ghana where he was received by the former President Kwame Nkrumah who sent him to Winneba to stay with SG Ikoku.

72. At the Federal Guard Officers' Mess the corpses of Brigadier Mai-Malari, Col. Mohammed, Lt. Col. Pam and Lt. Col. Unegbe were loaded into a 3-tonner lorry in which was sitting Chief Okotie-Eboh still alive. The time was then about 0330 hours.

73. By this time Major A. Ademoyega and Major CI Anuforo were present on the Mess premises. Major Ifeajuna having departed, these two officers took command of his men and vehicles. They mounted into Major Anuforo's

Peugeot car accompanied by 2/Lt Igweze. Major Ademoyega entered the landrover.

74. On the instructions of Major Anuforo, the little convoy moved off with Anuforo leading. They traversed Lagos and went along Abeokuta road. At a given point, unidentifiable by the men interrogated, Major Anuforo stopped the convoy and he, 2/Lt Igweze and Major Ademoyega left their vehicles. They came to the tailboard of the 3-Ton truck and detailed a number of men to take position in front and to the rear of the convoy with instructions to stop and turn back all approaching traffic.

75. Major Anuforo then ordered the four corpses to be unloaded onto the road. The bodies were then carried into the bush on the left-hand side of the road. Major Anuforo then observed FS Okotie-Eboh still seated in the truck and asked the question: "Who is that man"?, which leads to the belief that, until then, Anuforo was unaware of the presence of Okotie-Eboh in the truck. The Finance Minister replied, "I am Okotie-Eboh". Major Anuforo then ordered the Minister to step down. The latter complied, whereupon Major Anuforo informed him that he was going to be shot. The Minister commenced to plead for his life. This met with little or no response from Anuforo who is reported as having confined himself to stating that he was acting under orders. The Minister was then forced to go into the bush, pushed along by

Major Anuforo and Major Ademoyega and followed by 2/Lt Igweze and Sgt. Ndukaife to the spot where the bodies of the 4 senior officers had been deposited. Arriving there, without hesitation, Major Anuforo killed Okotie-Eboh with a short burst from his SMG.

77. Major Anuforo then returned to the road followed by the others but leaving 2/Lt Igweze, Cpl. Egwim, L/Cpl Nwankpa and Cpl. Nweke on guard over the five bodies.

78. The convoy drove off and returned later, accompanied by 3 Ferret scout cars which had been obtained from 2 reconnaissance Squadron at Abeokuta. Four spades were brought out from the landrover and used to dig graves for the burial of the corpses. The graves were dug by Cpl. C. Egwim, Cpl Z Chukwu, L/Cpl J Nwankpa and private N.A. Evulobi. When this task had been completed, they all boarded their respective vehicles and drove off to Lagos.

OCCUPATION OF P&T TELEPHONE EXCHANGE, N.E.T., AND LION BUILDING

79. These three cases have been treated jointly as they are of lesser importance and because the officers and men involved left Apapa together in the same vehicle

80. Although it is probable that the officers concerned in the occupation of these vulnerable points were fully aware of the purpose of their activities of

that night, they have all denied this. It is certain that none of the ORs involved received any advance information on this subject.

P&T AUTOMATIC TELEPHONE EXCHANGE

81. After the distribution of arms and ammunition at HQ 2 Brigade, 2/Lt PN Okocha and 2/Lt OC Anyafulu were allotted a Land Rover and 3 ORs and instructed to proceed to the P&T Exchange by Major A. Ademoyega and to wait there until he, Ademoyega, joined them

82. They drove there and, after waiting for a very short time, Major Ademoyega arrived in another Land Rover accompanied by other officers and men. The Major went straight to the main door and knocked. The door was opened by one of the employees and Major Ademoyega, 2/Lt Okocha and 2/Lt Anyafulu entered, accompanied by the ORs. The Major sent the 2/Lieutenants upstairs with orders to bring down all the workers from the Exchange, whilst the 3 soldiers were ordered to guard the three entrance doors of the building.

83. When all the workers were assembled, Major Ademoyega addressed them and ordered them not to pass any calls. He reassured them that there was no danger and advised them not to panic. He told them that he was leaving the two 2/Lts. and the soldiers at the Exchange to ensure that his orders were obeyed. After speaking to the officer in charge of the

exchange, Major Ademoyega instructed the 2/Lts. not to molest any of the workers leaving instructions that they must not leave there until he, Ademoyega, returned to collect them.

84. Neither of these officers have admitted that they took any steps to ensure that the automatic exchange would cease to function. An automatic exchange does not depend upon any human agency to continue functioning and it must, therefore, be accepted that one of these officers interfered with the installation.

85. At 0500 hours 2/Lt Okocha complained that he was unwell and left in the Land Rover that had brought them there. 2/Lt Anyafulu and the 3 ORs remained in the exchange until about 0645 hours. Seeing no sign of Major Ademoyega, Anyafulu became worried. The workers of the day shift began to arrive but were prevented from entering by the soldiers. He then decided to return to his unit. He gave the soldiers some money to enable them to travel back to Apapa by bus. He too returned to Apapa in a commercial bus and remained in his office until arrested.

NIGERIAN EXTERNAL TELECOMMUNICATIONS (N.E.T)

86. After the distribution of arms and ammunition at HQ 2 Brigade, Major A. Ademoyega ordered the following officers and ORs to enter with him into a

Land Rover driven by L/Cpl Umoru:

Captain GS Adeleke

2/Lt NS Wokocha

2/Lt ES Nweke

NA 18149089 Sgt. E. Ogbu - Army HQ (LGO)

NA 18150419 Cpl. HNwegu - 1 Signal Squadron

NA 504344 Cpl. B Nwuogu - Army HQ (LGO)

NA 18150320 L/Cpl R Ejimkonye - 1 Signal Squadron

NA 504221 Sgt. F Agonsi - 1 Signal Squadron

NA 18151015 Sgt. F. Eke - 1 Signal Squadron

NA 18150647 Cpl. JC Iroegbulam - 1 Signal Squadron

NA 1810641 Cpl. Esonu - 1 Signal Squadron

NA 18150599 Cpl. D. Oharuzike - 1 Signal Squadron

87. From Apapa the party drove straight to Lion Building where 2/Lt ES Nweke, Sgt. E Ogbu, Cpl. H Nwegu, Cpl B Nwuogu and L/Cpl B Ejimkonye left the vehicle and entered the building. Major Ademoyega spoke to the officer in charge and ordered him to cease receiving or transmitting all messages. He introduced 2/Lt Nweke as the officer who would see to it that his orders were obeyed. Major Ademoyega and Capt. Adeleke then drove away.

88. 2/Lt. Nweke posted his men in strategic positions to prevent anyone entering or leaving the building and remained inside the building with L/Cpl

Ejimkonye to ensure that no messages were received or transmitted. The party remained there until 0820 hours when, in the absence of any further instructions, 2/Lt Nweke and his men traveled to the Federal Guard Barracks in Ikoyi by taxi. On arrival, there they were arrested.

89. There is no doubt that 2/Lt Nweke was fully aware of the fact that his occupation of the NET was connected with the rebellion of which he was informed at the meeting of officers late on 14th January 1966 in Major Ifeajuna's house in Apapa.

FEDERAL TERRITORY

POLICE

HEADQUARTERS, LION BUILDING, LAGOS

90. As shown in paragraph 85 of this report, Major Ademoyega, accompanied by 2/Lts Wokocha and Nweke left HQ 2 Brigade at Approximately 0200 Hours in a Land Rover driven by LCpl Umoru, which also contained 9 ORs

91. They arrived at Lion Building around 0220 hours where Major Ademoyega, 2/Lt Wokocha, Sgt. F Agonsi, Sgt. F. Eke, Cpl Iroegbulam, Cpl S. Esonu and Cpl. D. Ohazurike left the vehicles and entered the building. Cpls Ohazurike and Esonu were posted downstairs at the security desk. Major Ademoyega spoke to the policemen on duty there and told them that they were engaged on military operations. He ordered them not to answer the telephone nor transmit any telephone messages. The two

corporals were instructed to ensure that the Police obeyed the Major's orders.

92. Major Ademoyega, 2/Lt Wokocha and the others then proceeded upstairs to the Police Control Room. Here they found 4 PCs and one WPC on duty. A Senior Police Officer (rank not identified) was also on duty there. Major Ademoyega spoke to the Police and ordered them not to receive or transmit any telephone or radio messages. He informed the SPO that they were engaged in military operations and that the soldiers were there to protect the Police.

93. At approximately 0320 hours. The GOC, Major General Aguiyi-Ironsi arrived at Lion Building in a Jaguar car. He entered the lobby holding a pistol in his hand and asked the two soldiers on duty what they were doing there. They replied that they did not know why they were there and that they had been brought by Major Ademoyega. They also told the GOC that 2/Lt. Wokocha and some others were upstairs. The GOC then ordered Cpl. Esonu to go up and to bring down the 2/Lt. Esonu complied but could not find the control room. He came down again and informed the GOC of his failure.

94. The GOC, after having asked the men to which unit they belonged, then ordered them to return to their barracks immediately. He added that he did not know what was happening but that he was turning out 2 Battalion to attack the men then engaged on unlawful operations in Lagos.

After this, the GOC left.

95. Cpl. Ohazurike then ordered Esonu to go upstairs again, accompanied by a PC, to find 2/Lt Wokocha and to tell him of the visit of the GOC. Esonu complied and passed the message to 2/Lt Wokocha. The latter then decided that it would be wisest to comply with the GOC's orders. He collected all his men and went to the Ministry of Defence where he succeeded in obtaining transport to take the entire team back to Apapa, where they arrived around 0430 hours.

IBADAN - WESTERN NIGERIA

ABDUCTION OF R.A. FANI-KAYODE AND ASSASSINATION OF S.L. AKINTOLA

96. As has already been demonstrated, Captain E. Nwobosi, OC 2 Field Battery NNA, was taken into the confidence of the conspirators either on 13th or 14th Jan 66, whilst he was attending a Brigade Training Conference at Apapa. During the afternoon of 14 January 1966, he was given a set of written instructions by Major Ifeajuna. It is probable that these instructions included the arrest of the Premier and Deputy Premier of the West and an order to bring these VIPs to the Federal Guard Officer's Mess. The instruction also probably included an order to make arrangements for a 105 mm Howitzer to be brought to Lagos after the operation. This written instruction has not been recovered and was probably destroyed by Capt. Nwobosi

after his arrest.

97. Capt. Nwobosi was further instructed by Major Ifeajuna to stand by his telephone in Abeokuta to await a message giving the all clear and "H" hour.

98. Capt. Nwobosi returned to Abeokuta, where he arrived around 1800 hrs. Since the battery which he commanded was in the process of being formed and had not, as yet, been supplied with vehicles, Capt. Nwobosi went to 2 Recce



Late S. L. Akintola

Squadron, also stationed at Abeokuta, where he spoke to Capt. Remawa and 2/Lt. Orok. He gave them a message purporting to have come from Major Obienu, CO 2 Recce Sqn, instructing these two officers to supply him, Nwobosi, with one 3-Ton Truck and a Land Rover. Capt. Remawa agreed and arrangements were made for the vehicles to report to Nwobosi at midnight, with drivers. Later that evening, Capt. Nwobosi received a

telephone call from Major Ifeajuna giving him the all clear and giving "H" hour as 0200 hours.

100. Around midnight, Capt. Nwobosi, woke up 2/Lt. A. A. O. Egbikor of his unit and Sgt. T. Ibolegbu, the acting Battery Sergeant Major (BSM). He ordered the latter to turn out 25 men for IS operations and to tell the Battery Quartermaster Sergeant (BQMS), Ambrose Chukwu, to prepare all the Unit's stock of small arms and ammunition for immediate issue to the men. Although Capt. Nwobosi claims that he gave no intimation to anyone about the night's operations, the interrogation of the ORs involved has made it clear that around 1930 hours he instructed certain key NCOs to stand-by for IS operations.

101. After the men had been roused, they were issued with arms and ammunition by the BQMS. A total of 15 SLRs and 12 Sterling SMGs were issued. The two officers drew SLRs. When issued, each SLR magazine contained 20 rounds of ammunition, whilst each SMG magazine contained 28 rounds.

102. After the issue of arms, the men now marched to the parade ground where they were addressed by Capt. Nwobosi who informed them that they were proceeding to Ibadan for I.S operations. The men were then ordered to enter bus. When this was completed the vehicles contained the following personnel:

(1) Land Rover

Capt: E.Nwobosi
NA 504197 BQMSA. Chukwu
NA 2630 Gnr. D. Odiachi
NA 3330 Gnr. I. Ajao
NA Gnr. S. Adefi
NA 5117 Lbdr E. Uloh
NA 5479 Gnr. R. Nwabuisi
NA 5145 Gnr. B. Akau
Driver: NA 2215 Tpr. A. Itodo
(2 Recce Sqn)
(2) 3-Ton Truck
2/Lt. A.A.O. Egbikor
NA 502193 Sgt. T. Ebelegbu
{acting BSM)
NA 18147640 Sgt. M.E. Ogaga
NA 4175 Gnr. G. Njoku
NA 4266 Gnr. B. Ifezue
NA 18144875 Lbdr. A. Aghar
NA 5792 Gnr. (Illegible)
NA 3208 Gnr. J. Echenim
NA 4195 Gnr. O. Onyekwe
NA 4337 Gnr. S. Ukelenye
NA 18151782 Gnr. B. Mba
NA 5498 Gnr. R. Gbongbo
NA 3094 Gnr. D. Ugbemoiko
NA 5789 Gnr. O. Dasheet
NA 5675 Gnr. J. Gwaske
NA 4338 Gnr. s. Anukam

103. When all were seated, the convoy moved off to Ibadan. Whilst still in Abeokuta, Capt. Nwobosi stopped to pick up a pregnant woman in labour and take her to the nearest hospital. After this incident, the convoy continued on its way uninterrupted, reaching Ibadan around 0200 hours as planned.

104. They drove straight to the

P&T automatic telephone exchange in Agodi, where Capt. Nwobosi and 2/Lt. Egbikor ordered all the employees to leave the building, believing that this would stop all telephone communication in and out of Ibadan. In the event, this was not the case, as the automatic exchange continued to function and telephone communication continued unimpaired throughout the night.

105. From the P&T the force drove to the Eleyele ECN Power Station. Here the employees were ordered to stop the generators and to leave the building. A number of the employees prevailed on Capt. Nwobosi to give them a lift into the town. He obliged and dropped them near Dugbe Market, on his way to the house of R.A. Fani-Kayode.

106. Arrived at the Deputy Premier's residence, the 3-Tonner remained outside and the Land Rover drove into the compound. Of two policemen on guard at the gate, one escaped and the other was overpowered and put into the Land Rover. A number of persons believed to have been thugs were seen in the compound, but these absconded when they caught sight of the armed soldiers.

107. All the men were ordered to take up defensive positions around the house. Capt. Nwobosi then shouted "Fani-Kayode come down you are for lawful arrest by the army". A voice from upstairs replied affirmatively to the Captain's

summons, but nothing stirred. Nwobosi repeated his call once or twice and eventually fired a round from his SLR into the ground. When this failed to produce any reaction from Fani-Kayode, the Captain ordered the following to accompany him into the house:

2/Lt. A.A.O. Egbikor

BQMSA. Chukwu

Gnr. I. Ajao

Gnr. S. Adefi

Sgt. T. Ibelegbu

108. To gain entrance, Capt. Nwobosi was compelled to break a glass panel in the door with his SLR. He reached in, turned the key and opened the door. The small party then entered and mounted the stairs where they found Fani-Kayode in a bedroom. He raised his hands above his head and said, "I surrender". Capt. Nwobosi replied "you have wasted a lot of time - we could have shot you. This is a lawful arrest by the army". Fani-Kayode was then escorted downstairs and put into the Land Rover after his hands had been tied together, with a rifle sling. From upstairs a woman's voice was heard shouting "Don't kill him".

109. All the men were then assembled and mounted into their respective vehicles. They drove straight to Premier's Lodge, directed by Fani-Kayode. When they arrived, they had to overpower the Police guard consisting of 1 Corporal and 5 PCs. These were put into the 3-Tonner under guard. The Land Rover then

drove in and was parked facing the main entrance porch. At this time, the security lights were burning and the lodge emergency generator was running.

110. The men were disposed around the building in strategic positions whilst Capt. Nwobosi went to the generator room to switch off the lights. Whilst he was there according to the Land Rover driver, Tpr. A. Itodo, a shot was fired. It was believed that this was the shot fired by Capt. Nwobosi, which killed the generator attendant. His body was later found with a bullet wound in the back of the head.

111. It is known that by the time S.L. Akintola had been informed by the wife of R.A. Fani-Kayode of what had happened by telephone. Akintola had returned from Kaduna only a short time before the arrival of Nwobosi and his men. He had been to the North to greet the Sardauna when the latter arrived from Mecca. Akintola must have been further alerted by the commotion caused by the overpowering of the Police guard and the killing of the generator attendant.

112. All dispositions having been taken, Capt. Nwobosi stood in the middle of the courtyard and shouted "Akintola come down - you are for lawful arrest by the army on orders from HQ 2 Brigade". A voice from upstairs, presumably that of Akintola, replied "Yes, I am coming" Nothing further happened.

Capt. Nwobosi repeated his summons a number of times without reaction from Akintola. He then fired from his SLR one round at the building. When this produced no result, the Captain ordered the following to accompany him into the lodge:

2/Lt. A.A.O. Egbikor

BQMSA. Chukwu

Gnr. S. Adefi

Gnr. I. Ajao

Gnr. B. Akau

Gnr. J. Gwaske

LIBdr E. Uloh

113. To gain entrance, Captain Nwobosi was compelled to force the main door to the lodge. They all entered and mounted the stairs. On the first floor, they searched a number of rooms without encountering anyone, until they came to S.L. Akintola's bedroom which was locked. When Nwobosi was about to force this door, Akintola opened fire from inside the room with an SMG, shooting through the closed door. This first burst of fire immediately wounded Gnr. S. Adefi in the hand, 2/Lt. Egbikor in the head and Capt. Nwobosi on the left cheek. None of the injuries were sufficiently serious to impede them. Nwobosi and his men immediately returned the fire whilst retreating down the stairs. They then left the house in a hurry and sought cover amongst the flowerbeds facing the back building.

114. Two of the men, L/Bdr. Uloh and, Gnr. Ajao remained upstairs and sought refuge in

one of the other rooms. Akintola came to the room covering the entrance porch and continued to fire at his assailants with his SMG without, however, hitting anyone. Capt. Nwobosi ordered his men to return the fire which they did, massively. Akintola continued firing until he ran out of ammunition.

115. Around this time R.A. Fani-Kayode was heard shouting from the Land Rover to Akintola urging him to surrender. Akintola, now defenceless, decided to surrender and was next seen coming out of the front room, by Gnr. Ajao. When Akintola saw Ajao and Uloh he raised his hand in surrender and went downstairs. Capt. Nwobosi in the meantime, was heard shouting repeatedly "bring him out, bring him out".

116. Capt. Nwobosi then ordered 2/Lt. Egbikor and BQMSA. Chukwu to shoot the Premier. They opened fire on Akintola with their SLRs, joined, shortly afterwards, by Nwobosi himself. S.L. Akintola fell down dead or dying with several bullets in his body.

117. After the killing of Akintola, Capt. Nwobosi assembled his men, released the captured policemen and drove off. This time he was joined in the Land Rover by 2/Lt. Egbikor. They stopped at a roundabout near the Central Police Station, where Capt. Nwobosi ordered Sgt. T. Ibelegbu to proceed independently to Abeokuta with orders to collect a 105 mm

Howitzer from the battery gun park together with a team of 12 gunners, and to drive to 2 Battalion, Ikeja. There, Ibelegbu and his party were to await the arrival of Capt. Nwobosi.

118. On the way out of Ibadan, R.A. Fani-Kayode begged Capt. Nwobosi to be released. The Captain refused this request and informed Fani-Kayode that he had orders to bring him to the Federal Guard Officers' Mess in Lagos.

119. The party drove direct to Dodan Barracks where they arrived around 0700 hours, having left Ibadan at approximately 0400 hours. On their arrival, they were all arrested.

120. The party travelling in the 3-Tonner with the 105 mm Howitzer was arrested on arrival in 2 Battalion lines, Ikeja.

KADUNA, NORTHERN REGION

121. Major C.K. Nzeogwu of the Nigerian Military Training College (NMTC) at Kaduna was appointed by the "inner circle" as the commander of the rebellion in the North. The manner in which this was to be organised appears to have been left entirely to him.

122. The record does not show that any officers, other than Major Nzeogwu, in the North were taken into the confidence of the inner circle. It is, however, probable that some time before the rebellion Major Nzeogwu obtained the co-operation of Major T.

Onwatuegwu and Captain G. Ude, both of the NMTC.

123. Whereas in the West and in the Lagos area military movements by night were not unusual as a result of the disturbed conditions then prevailing, this was not the case at Kaduna. It was, therefore, necessary that a cover be provided for the proposed rebellious activities, at the same time creating a reason for bringing troops out of barracks by night without alerting the senior officers of 1 Brigade to Nzeogwu's intentions.

124. It has been established that Military night exercises in the Kaduna area, organized by the NMTC, then under the command of Major Nzeogwu commenced in early December 1965, leading up to Exercise Damissa on 13th and 14th January 1966. By then the population of Kaduna and the Police were accustomed to troop movements after dark.

125. The master plan of the inner circle made provision for the arrest of a number of leading political personalities who were not to be killed unless they offered resistance. This may well have been true as far as the West, Mid-West and the East were concerned. In view of Major Nzeogwu's activities at the Premier's Lodge in Kaduna, however, it is thought that this officer had no intention of abiding by these decisions but was determined, from the start, to kill the Premier of the North at any cost.

126. The details of exercise DAMISSA are not relevant to

this report. Suffice it to say that the night exercise of 13th January 1966 took place in the area of the Ministers' quarters in Kaduna, whereas that of 14th January was held in the bush some 5 or 6 miles outside Kaduna along the Zaria road.

Units involved

127. On 14 Jan 66 troops from the following units took part in Exercise DAMISSA:

3rd Battalion NA "C" Company
N.M.T.C.

No. 1 Field Squadron NAE

No. 2 Field Squadron NAE

1 Brigade Transport Company
NASC

1st Field Battery NAA

Arms and Ammunition

128. Troops proceeding on military training exercises by night or by day were normally issued with their arms, either without ammunition or with blanks.

129. As far as can be established, this practice was first deviated from on 13th January 1966 when, at approximately 0900 hours Major Nzeogwu handed the Acting RQMS of the NMTC, Ssgt. J. Daramola, a list of live ammunition required for Exercise DAMISSA. This NCO handed the list to Cpl. E. Aiyikere, the arms storeman, with instructions to draw this ammunition from the NMTC Magazine at Kawo. This was done and the ammunition was issued in bulk at approximately 1730 hours on 14th January 1966 by Ssgt. Daramola and CMS

Oko (also of NMTC).

130. This list of ammunition issued is not available but it has, however, been established that at least 6 x 84 mm projectiles for the Carl Gustav Anti-Tank gun were issued to Sgt. Yakubu Adebisi, an instructor in the Tactical Wing of the NMTC. These were loaded into a Land Rover whilst the bulk of the small Arms Ammunition drawn was loaded into a 3-Tonner driven by NA18266054 Pte. Clement Agbe of 1 Bde. Transport Coy. This driver subsequently transported the ammunition to the DAMISSA exercise area.

Briefing

131. Exercise DAMISSA terminated at approximately 0130 hours on 15th January 1966. Around that time all officers engaged in the exercise with the exception of the officers of 1st Field Battery NAA, were called by Major Nzeogwu to attend an "O" Group in the bush at which, they believed, the success or otherwise of the exercise was to be discussed. Identified as present at this discussion are the following:

Major C.K. Nzeogwu NMTC

Major T. Onwatuogwu NMTC

Captain G. Ude NMTC

2/Lt. S. R. Omeruah 3rd Bn
NA - "C" Coy

2/Lt. D.K. Waribor

Capt. B. Gbulie; at the time in command of 1st and 2nd Field Squadron NAE

2/Lt. Ileabachi

2/Lt. Kpera; 1st Field Sqn NAE

2/Lt. P. Ogoegbunam Ibik

Lieut. E. Okafor

2/Lt. Ezedima; 2nd Field Sqn
NAE

2/Lt. H.O.D. Eghagha

132. The officers of 1st Field Battery NAA were not called to the "O" Group for reasons which are not altogether clear. No direct use in connection with the rebellion was made of this Battery that night.

133. When all the officers were assembled, Major Nzeogwu addressed them on the subject of the rapidly deteriorating political and security situation in the Federation. He claimed that a stage had been reached at which the politicians should be told to quit. To accomplish this, he announced, the army had decided to take over power by force of arms. He compared the incomes of the politicians with those of Nigerian workers and urged the officers to support the rebellion. He further announced that the revolt was taking place simultaneously in all regional capitals and at Lagos and that, therefore, they need fear no repercussions as a result of the activities in which they were about to participate that night. It would appear that none of those present raised a dissenting voice. In fact, their subsequent actions showed, in most cases, enthusiastic support for the plan.

134. Major Nzeogwu then proceeded to issue set tasks to each officer present. Events have shown that, subsequently, last minute changes in these plans were made. The tasks

allotted have been established as follows:

Occupation of Vulnerable Points

135. The officer in over-all charge of this part of the operation was Capt. B. Gbulie. He claimed to have distributed tasks as shown below on the spur of the moment:

Ammunition Service Depot (ASD); 2/Lt. Ileabachi

P&T Telephone Exchange; 2/Lt. P. Ogoegbunam Ibik

N.B.C. House; 2/Lt. Kpera

BCNN Radio & TV Station; 2/Lt. Ezedima

State House; 2/Lt. Okafor

Road Blocks on Kachia Road near PMF Barracks; 2/Lt. Eghagha

136. In addition, Capt. Gbulie was instructed to rouse the following officers to inform them of what was taking place and to ask for support:

Capt. P. Anakwe - 1 Bde Staff
Capt. "A"

Major A.A. Keshi - Brigade
Major

Capt. L. Dillibe - 1 Bde Staff
Capt. "Q"

Lieut. J.C. Ojukwu - 1 Recce
Squadron NA

Lieut. Ikeachor

Lieut. Mohammed Eandiya

Capt. Gbulie has stated under interrogation that he complied with this order and caused these officers to foregather at HQ 1 Bde where he informed them of the situation.

137. As far as has been

established, the following officers were then detailed for tasks as shown:

A) Assassination of Alh Sir Ahmadu Bello

Major C.K. Nzeogwu

2/Lt. K.D. Waribor

2/Lt. S.E. Omeruah

Capt. G. Ude

B) Assassination of Brigadier S. Ademulegun

Major T. Onwatuegwu

C) Assassination of Colonel R.A. Shodeinde:

2/Lt. K.D. Waribor

D) Abduction of Sir Kashim Ibrahim

Major T. Onwatuegwu

E) Abduction of Makaman Bida - Regional Finance Minister

Major C.K. Nzeogwu

138. After the officers had been briefed they were sent to join their men and to proceed immediately with the execution of the tasks allotted to them. It is not clear whether or not Major Nzeogwu instructed the officers to inform their men of what was afoot. It is certain that the men of 3rd Battalion who were to be used for the attack of the Premier's Lodge were not briefed. It is equally certain that Capt. Gbulie addressed all the men of the Engineers under his command and spoke to them



The Late Sir Ahmadu Bello, Sardauna of Sokoto

along the lines in which Major Nzeogwu had briefed the officers.

139. Immediately after the "O" Group, senior NCOs of all units represented were sent to the



The spot where the body of the late Sardauna was found

3~Tonner containing the ammunition and order to draw ammunition for their men. In the case of the "C" company this raised a problem. The men

believed the exercise to be finished and a number of them queried the reason why they should be issued with live ammunition. This was explained to them by 2/Lt. Waribor who told them that they were proceeding on Internal Security Operations.

140. After the issue of ammunition had been completed, the entire force left the exercise area and proceeded to its allotted targets.

141. The following officers and ORs have been identified as having been involved in the attack on the Premier's Lodge: -

Officers:

Major C.K. Nzeogwu - NMTC

2/Lt. K.D. Waribor - "C" Coy, 3rd BNNA

2/Lt. S.E. Omeruah - "

Capt. G. Ude

Other ranks:

NA 18147406 Sgt. Husa Kanga - NMTC

NA 18149900 Sgt Yakubu Adebisi - NMTC

Sgt Duromola Oyegoke. NMTC

NA 5888 Pte. Ogbole Agwu - 3rd Bn NA

NA 2405 Pte Bello Mbulla - 3rd Bn NA

NA 18151763 L/Cpl. Samuel Amajo - 3rd Bn NA

NA 18151319 L/Cpl Danyo Mbulla - 3rd Bn NA

NA 5684 Pte. Abu Odiedier -

3rd Bn NA

NA 18148998 Pte. Lekoja
Gidan-Jibrin - 3rd Bn NA

NA 163287 Cpl. Bako
Lamundo - 3rd Bn NA

NA 5860 Pte. Joseph Wadu
Goji - 3rd Bn NA

NA 1982 Pte. Alexander Agbe -
3rd Bn NA

NA 18151864 Pte Lagwin
Goshit - 3rd Bn NA

NA 18266006 Pte Augustine
Oguche Agbo - 3rd Bn NA

NA 634212 Pte Effiong
Atkinson - 3rd Bn NA

NA 18147284 Cpl. Tunana
Bangir - 3rd Bn NA

NA 18149368 Cpl. Abibo Elf -
3rd Bn NA

NA 18151873 Pte. Uguman
Monogi - 3rd Bn NA

NA 1562 Pte Felako Kwa - 3rd
Bn NA

NA 18149363
Cpl. Reuben
Nwagwugwu -
3rd Bn NA

NA 502542
Cpl. Yakubu
Kaje - 3rd Bn
NA

NA 505092
L/Cpl. Mamis
Hundu - 3rd Bn
NA

NA 18151861
L / C p l
T h a d d e n s
T h a m y i l
Tsenyil - 3rd
Bn NA

NA 18148269 L/Cpl IssnaIm

Tayapa - 3rd Bn NA

NA 18148272 L/Cpl Ali
Shendam - 3rd Bn NA

NA 18151771 Pte. Usuman
Gabure - 3rd Bn NA

NA 18149613 Pte Emmanuel
Ekwueme - 3rd Bn NA

NA 4887 Pte Erastus Nakito -
3rd Bn NA

NA 3659 Pte Jonathan Anahiri -
3rd Bn NA

142. When this force left the DAMISSA exercise area, it was led by Major Nzeogwu who was travelling in a Land Rover accompanied by a driver and two OR's. He was followed by another Land Rover containing Sgts. Adebisi, Manga and Oyegoke who were armed with two 84mm Carl Gustav Anti-Tank Guns and 6 projectiles.

143. Following this were a number of other vehicles, Land

Coy 3rd BN NA.

144. On arrival at the main gate to the compound, Major Nzeogwu found 4 PCs on guard in front of the gate. They were the following:

No.8301 L/Cpl. Musa Nimzo

No. 10674 PC. Akpan Anduka

No. 18913 PC Hagai Lai

No. 18920 PC Peter Attah

145. Major Nzeogwu, who was armed with a sterling SMG, ordered the constables to face the wall. Attah complied with this order but the three others refused. Without further ado, Major Nzeogwu immediately opened fire on them with his SMG killing all three on the spot.

146. Immediately after the killing of the policemen, Major Nzeogwu ordered the two men with the guns and the 3 NMTC

Sergeants to follow him into the compound, bringing with them the Carl Gustav guns and the projectiles for these weapons.

1 4 7 . Immediately inside the compound, Major Nzeogwu stationed the Carl Gustavs some 10 yards

apart facing the lodge. The gunners were Sgts. Oyegeke and Manga, whilst Sgt. Adebisi



The official residence of the late Sardauna completely gutted by fire following the shelling on the building by the coupists

Rovers and 3-Tonner containing 2/Lts. Waribor and Omeruah and troops from "C"

acted as ammunition number. As soon as both guns had been loaded, Major Nzeogwu ordered the NCOs to open fire at the Lodge. Both fired their projectiles bursting inside the ground floor rooms of the building. Sgt. Adebisi stated that he then ran towards Sgt. Manga to help this NCO reload. Whilst he was with Manga he heard Major Nzeogwu shouting repeatedly "Fire you bastard, fire". Immediately after this both Manga and Adebisi heard a burst of SMG fire. They turned around and observed Sgt. Oyegoke slumped on the ground bleeding from multiple wounds. It was clear to both that their colleague had been killed by Major Nzeogwu either for refusing to obey or because he attempted to run away.

143. After the killing of Oyegoke, Major Nzeogwu ordered Sgt. Adebisi to take over Oyegoke's gun and to continue firing at the house. Both Adebisi and Manga, frightened by Oyegoke's killing, continued to fire as ordered. They used a total of 5 projectiles. As a result, the building caught fire.

149. Whilst all this was happening, 2/Lts. Waribor and Omeruah had arrived with the men from 3rdBN who were rapidly deployed around the outer perimeter wall of the lodge. Although these men heard the bursting of the Carl Gustav projectiles, the SMG and SLR fire and the screaming of women and children inside the compound, they were in no position to observe what was happening.

150. 2/Lt. Waribor, whilst deploying his men, instructed them to shoot anyone they observed attempting to leave the compound. A number of civilians, including women, however, were seen running and crying and Major Nzeogwu firing at them with his SMG.

151. NA 502342 Cpl. Yakubu Kaje of 3rdBN NA reports that, at a given moment, he observed a civilian coming out of the Lodge armed with a sword. The corporal and the men with him stopped the civilian and ordered him to drop the sword. At this moment, according to the corporal, Major Nzeogwu arrived on the scene and asked the civilian, in Hausa, for the whereabouts of the "master of the house". The man replied that he did not know, whereupon Major Nzeogwu threatened to kill him unless he led him to his master. The man then agreed and led Major Nzeogwu to the back of the building. A short while afterwards, the corporal states, he heard a number of shots fired. Assuming that Kaje is telling the truth, it is probable that the Sardauna of Sokoto died at that moment.

152. Cpl. Kaje has further reported that when the firing ceased, Major Nzeogwu came from the compound and was met at the gate by 2/Lt. Waribor, who asked the Major: "Did you get the man?", to which Nzeogwu answered, "Yes". When Major Nzeogwu left the compound, he stated for all to hear, exultantly, "I have been successful, he is dead".

153. It has not been possible to establish the circumstances in which the senior wife of the deceased Premier was killed. The same applies to the death of one Zarumi, the Premier's personal body-guard. It is presumed that they died at the same time as the Premier.

154. With regards to the killing of Ahmed Ben Musa, Senior Assistant Secretary (Security) in front of the Lodge, none of the men interrogated has admitted to having witnessed this. Ahmed Ben Musa was shot dead in his car by a number of unidentified soldiers, having arrived at the Premier's Lodge after being alerted by the police. Presumably the soldiers had ordered Musa to drive away but he could not do so for some unexplained reason. They then killed him.

ASSASSINATION OF BRIGADIER S. ADEMULEGUN

155. The following have been identified as having been involved in the killing of this senior officer and his wife at No.1, Kashim Ibrahim Road, Kaduna at approximately 0200 hours on 15th January 1966: -

Major Timothy Onwatuogwu (NMTC)

NA 18265005 Spr. Yakubu Dungo 2 Fd. Sgn. NA

NA 18266079 L/Cpl . Lawrence Akuma 2 Fd. Sgn. NAE

Spr. Raphael Olatunde 2 Fd. Sgn. NAE

James Aluta 2 Fd. Sgn. NAE

Emmanuel Udo 2 Fd. Sgn.

NAE

Simon Agi 2 Fd. Sgn. NAE

Felix O. {Snu} 2 Fd. Sgn. NAE
{now NMTC}

L/Cpl. Muli {Snu} 2 Fd. Sgn.
NAE {now NMTC}

NMT Cp1. Yakubu Bako 1 Fd.
Sgn. NAE

Spr. Mathew Asanya 1 Fd. Sgn.
NAE

Joseph Odion 1 Fd. Sgn. NAE

Spr. Henry Valia 1 Fd. Sgn.
NAE

NA 18149929 Pte. Geoffrey
Eborendu 1 Bde. Tpt Coy
NASC

156. After the briefing at the DAMISSA "O" Group by Major Nzeogwu at 0130 hours of 15th January 1966, Major Onwatuegwu entered a Land Rover driven by No. NA 18149929 Pte. G. Eberandu of Bde. Tpt. Coy. With the exception of L/Cpl. Lawrence Akuma all the men mentioned were made to enter this vehicle and another Land Rover.

157. Before leaving the exercise area these men drew ammunition from the 3-Tonner already referred to in this report. They had already been briefed as what was expected from them that night by Capt. Gbulie, the OC. The two vehicles then moved off to the junction of the Lagos Zaria roads where they stopped. Here the men from one of the Land Rovers were transferred to a 3-Tonner whilst the empty Land Rover containing only the driver and L/Cpl. Muli was despatched to the Air Force

Base by Major Onwatuegwu.

158. When L/Cpl. Muli returned, the convoy, now



Late Brig. Samuel Ademulegun

consisting of 2 Land Rovers and one 3-Tonner, proceeded to the residence of Brigadier Ademulegun. At some distance from the house, variously estimated at between 100 and 400 yards, all three vehicles stopped. Major Onwatuegwu ordered a section of men under L/Cpl. Muli to accompany him towards the house.

159. The Brigadier's house was guarded by L/Cpl. Lawrence Akuma and three sappers of 2 Field Squadron NAE. When the Major and his party arrived, L/Cpl. Akuma and the two sappers were on the veranda of the house whilst one sapper was patrolling the grounds. The latter challenged Major Onwatuegwu when he approached. He was disarmed and escorted to the house where he was made to join the guard commander and the other two

members of the guard. They were all placed in the custody of a number of soldiers.

160. Major Onwatuegwu, accompanied by a number of soldiers entered the house. A short while after this, the guard heard several shots fired upstairs after which the Major and his men returned. The guard were placed into the 3-Tonner truck and driven to HQ 1 Brigade where they remained until released in the morning.

ASSASSINATION OF COLONEL R.A. SHODEINDE

161. The only persons positively identified as having been involved in the murder of this senior officer are the following:-

- (1) Major C.K. Nzeogwu - NMTC
- (2) Major T. Onwatuegwu - NMTC
- (3) Lieut. G.E. Nwokedi - NMTC

162. It will be recalled that at the briefing by Major Nzeogwu, it was 2/Lt. Waribor who was allotted the task of killing the Colonel, after the attack on the Premier's Lodge 2/Lt. Waribor has stated that after the completion of his task at the Premier's Lodge, he was ordered by Major Nzeogwu to effect the arrest of Makaman Bida before proceeding to Col. Shodeinde's residence. He was unable to do so, because he did not know the address of the Colonel, and therefore, returned to Brigade Headquarters.



Late Col. R.A. Shodeinde

163. Mrs. Shodeinde has stated that at approximately 0300 hours on January 15, 1966 she heard the sound of three vehicles stopping in front of her house. Immediately afterwards she heard a voice which she identified as that of Major Nzeogwu, calling her husband's name. The Colonel was fast asleep. She left her bed and switched on the lights. As she did so, the men outside started to shoot at the doors and windows of the house and she was immediately wounded in the left hand. The door then flew open and about ten soldiers rushed into the room. Amongst these she identified Major Nzeogwu, Major Onwatuwegwu and Lieut. Nwokedi.

164. By this time the Colonel was awake and sitting up in bed. Mrs. Shodeinde started to cry and beg for her life. Nzeogwu assured her that they had not come to kill her but her husband the Colonel. When she continued shouting, the other soldiers shot at her legs,

wounding her several times.

165. Major Nzeogwu and the others then commenced firing at the Colonel whilst still in bed, who fell down dead or dying by the side of the bed. Mrs. Shodeinde then fled from the room and ran for shelter to the servant's quarters where she remained until the attackers left.

ABDUCTION OF SIR KASHIM IBRAHIM - GOVERNOR OF NORTHERN NIGERIA

166. This abduction was accomplished by the persons involved in the assassination of Brigadier S. Ademulegun. Their names are, therefore, not repeated here.

167. After killing the Brigadier, Major Onwatuwegwu ordered his men to re-enter their vehicles and drove straight to the Governor's residence. On arrival, a number of men were deployed around the house whilst the Major entered accompanied by a number of unidentified soldiers.

168. The house was then being guarded by the following Police Constables:-

No. 11258 PC Benson Sihindatiya

No. 185 Yohana Garkawa

No. 1391 Johnson Lamurde

No. 18909 Warzar

169. At approximately 0245 hours Major Onwatuwegwu and his party reached the residence, according to PC Lamurde. The Major was then in the Land Rover. The first Land Rover

containing some 7 men stopped. The man jumped out and overpowered the PC on duty. The Major then entered the building.

170. Whilst the Major and his party were inside, the military personnel who remained outside the building heard a burst of SMG fire. It is certain that this burst of SMG fire killed PC Yohana Garkawa. PC Sihindatiya was disarmed by 4 soldiers and dragged to the police guard room where he saw the dead body of PC Garkawa. The soldiers pointed at the body and said, "Do you see your brother?". They then instructed him to lead them to the bedroom of the Governor. When he stated that he did not know where the Governor was sleeping they threatened to kill him. By that time, however, the Governor had been found by other soldiers reaching the residence. He was brought out and made to enter the 3-Tonner and was driven to HQ 1 Brigade.

171. Simultaneously with the Governor, his two ADC's Messrs. Noman Dikwa and Garba Lango, were abducted and driven to 1 Bde HQ in the Land Rover containing Major Onwatuwegwu.

ABDUCTION OF MAKAMAN BIDA - NORTH REGIONAL FINANCE MINISTER

172. This attempted abduction (or assassination) failed because the Minister was not in his house that night, having traveled to Bida, his home town, the previous day. The

incident is, however, worth reporting, because during the search of the Minister's residence one man, Ahmadu Pategi, a Government driver, was killed by Lieut. Waribor who mistook him for the Minister.

173. Among those taking an active part in this incident the following have been identified:

2/Lt. Waribor - NMTC

(other names are illegible)

174. After the completion of the operation at the Premier's Lodge, 2/Lt. Waribor met Major Nzeogwu near the main entrance to the Lodge. The Major had been wounded during the attack and had bloodstains on the right side of his face and his shirt. The Major ordered Waribor to take his platoon to the house of Makaman Bida, to arrest the Minister and to take him to Brigade Headquarters.

175. Waribor complied with the order, and drove straight to the Minister's house. On arrival, he deployed his men around the house and called in a loud voice upon the Minister to surrender. This brought no reaction so he forced open the door with the intention of searching the house. At this moment Major Nzeogwu arrived. The Major ordered Waribor to search the ground floor whilst he, accompanied by a number of men from 3rd Brigade NA went upstairs.

176. Waribor's search downstairs proved fruitless. He collected about 3 house servants and questioned them

as to the whereabouts of their master. They claimed that the Minister had traveled to Bida and was returning in the morning. Whilst he was questioning the servants outside the house, Waribor observed a man running from the house with his face covered. Believing this to be the Minister, Waribor fired at the man and killed him. He then went to the body, and after removing the cloth from the man's face, found that he was mistaken. It was later established that the body was that of Ahmadu Pategi, a Government driver attached to the Minister.

177. Major Nzeogwu, having failed to find the Minister upstairs then came down and enquired from Waribor why he had fired his SMG. Waribor explained after which Nzeogwu ordered him to accompany him to the house of Colonel Shodeinde, who according to the plan was to be killed that night. The Major then drove off before Waribor had a chance to assemble his men and to mount into the vehicles. Since Waribor did not know Col. Shodeinde's address and the Major had departed without him, he had no choice but to return to Brigade Headquarters.

OCCUPATION OF OTHER VULNERABLE POINTS

178. This was carried out by the officers named in paragraph 135 of this report without producing any incident of interest to this enquiry. 2/Lt. H.O.D. Eghagha whose task it was to set up a road block on the

Kachia Road near the Police Mobile Force Barracks was instructed to prevent the PMF from travelling into Kaduna. This, it is thought, implied that he and his men were to attack the PMF should they move out in strength. It has been established, however, that 2/Lt. Eghagha instructed his men not to molest the PMF as these were too few in number to affect materially the rebellious operations of that night. It is a fact that the majority of the Northern PMF were, at that time, serving in Western Nigeria.

THE NIGERIAN AIR FORCE

179. Although not directly involved in any of the incidents reported on in this document, there is no doubt that the Nigerian Air Force played a comparatively important role in the rebellion under the command of 2/Lt. Godfrey Ikechukwu Amuchienwa of the Military Training and Security Squadron NAF at Kaduna.

NOTE: At this point the (incomplete) report ends.

THE FORGOTTEN DOCUMENTS OF THE NIGERIAN CIVIL WAR

By Odia Ofeimun



The most comprehensive and almost cover-all organization of the documents of the Nigerian Civil War remains AHM Kirk-Greene's *CRISIS AND CONFLICT IN NIGERIA, A Documentary Sourcebook 1966-1970* Volume 1, and Volume 2, published by Oxford University Press London, New York and Ibadan in 1971. Volume One, according to the blurb, "describes the prelude to the war and the succession of coups from that of 15 January 1966 which initially brought a military regime to power in Nigeria".

The volume takes the story up to July 1967 when the war began. Volume Two covers July 1967 to January 1970, that is, between the beginning of hostilities, and when, as testified by the last entry in the volume, General Yakubu Gowon made a Victory

broadcast, *The Dawn of National Reconciliation*, on January 15, 1970. No other collection of civil war documents, to my knowledge, exists that compares with these two volumes. And none, as far as I know, has attempted to update or complement the publications so as to include or make public, other documents that are absent from Kirk-Greene's yeoman's job. Yet, as my title pointedly insists, there have been some truly 'forgotten' documents of the Nigerian Civil War which ought to be added and without which much of the history being narrated will continue to suffer gaps that empower enormous misinterpretations, if not falsehoods.

In my view, the most forgotten documents of the Nigerian civil war, which deserved to be, but were not included in the original compilation by Kirk-Greene - are two. The first is the much talked-about, but never seen, *Ifeajuna Manuscript*. It was written by Major Emmanuel Ifeajuna, the leader of the January 15, 1966 Coup that opened the floodgates to other untoward events leading to the civil war. The author poured it all down in the "white hot heat" of the first few weeks after the failed adventure that ushered in the era of military regimes in Nigeria's history. Not, as many would have wished, the story of how the five majors carried out the coup. It is more of an

apologia, a statement of why they carried out the coup, and what they meant to achieve by it. It is still unpublished so many decades after it was written. The Manuscript had begun to circulate, very early, in what may now be seen as samizdat editions. They passed from hand to hand in photocopies, in an underground career that seemed fated to last forever until 1985 when retired General Olusegun Obasanjo, after his first coming as Head of State, quoted generously from it in his biography of his friend, Major Chukuma Kaduna Nzeogwu, the man who, although not the leader of the coup, became its historical avatar and spokesperson. Indeed, Nzeogwu's media interviews in the first 48 hours after the coup have remained the benchmark for praising or damning it. Ifeajuna's testimony fell into the hands of the military authorities quite early and has been in limbo. Few Nigerians know about its existence. So many who know about it have been wondering why the manuscript has not seen the light of day.

The other document, the second most forgotten of the Nigerian Civil War, has had more luck than the Ifeajuna Manuscript. It happens to be the transcript of the famous meeting of May 6th and 7th 1967, held at Enugu, between Lt. Colonel Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu, the Military Governor of Eastern Region, and Chief

Obafemi Awolowo, Leader of the Yoruba and an old political opponent of the leaders of the Eastern Region. Awolowo attended the meeting at the head of a delegation of peace hunters in a bid to avert a shooting war after the pogrom against Easterners which presaged the counter-coup of July 29, 1966. The transcripts of the meeting, never publicly known to have existed, entered public discourse formally when a speech by Chief Obafemi Awolowo delivered on the first day of the meeting was published in a book, *Path to Nigerian Greatness*, edited by MCK Ajuluchuku, the Director for Research and Publicity of the Unity Party of Nigeria, in 1980. The speech seemed too much of a teaser. So, it remained, until it was followed by Awo on the Nigerian Civil War, edited by Bari Adedeji Salau in 1981, with a Foreword by the same MCK Ajuluchuku. The book went beyond the bit and snippet allowed in the earlier publication by accommodating the full transcripts of the two-day meeting. Not much was made of it by the media until it went out of print. Partly for this reason and because of the limited number in circulation, the transcripts never entered recurrent discussions of the Nigerian civil war. The good thing is that, if only for the benefit of those who missed it before, the book has been reprinted. It was among twelve other books by Obafemi Awolowo re-launched by the African Press Ltd of Ibadan at

the Nigerian Institute of International Affairs, Lagos, in March 2007. Important to note is that among other speeches made by Awolowo, before during and after, on the Nigerian Civil War, the transcripts are intact.

They reveal who said what between Chief Obafemi Awolowo, his Excellency Lt. Col. Emeka Odumegwu Ojukwu, Sir Francis Ibiam, Chiefs Jereton Mariere, C.C. Mojekwu, JIG Onyia, Professors Eni Njoku, Samuel Aluko and Dr. Anezi Okoro, who attended the meeting. Unlike the *Ifeajuna Manuscript*, still in limbo, the transcripts are in respectable print and may be treated as public property or at least addressed as a feature of the public space.

I regard both documents as the most forgotten documents of the civil war because they have hardly been mentioned in public discourses in ways that recognize the gravity of their actual contents. Or better to say, they have been mentioned, only in passing, in articles written for major Nigerian newspapers and magazines since the 70s, or parried on television, but only in figurative understatements by people who, for being able to do so, have appeared highly privileged. The privilege, grounded in the fact that they remained unpublished, may have been partially debunked by the publications I have mentioned, but their impact on the discussions have not gone beyond the hyped references to

them, and the innuendos and insinuations arising from secessionist propaganda during the civil war. The core of the propaganda, which reverberated at the Christopher Okigbo International Conference at Harvard University in September 2007, is that Awolowo promised that if the Igbos were allowed, by acts of commission or omission, to secede, he would take the Western Region out of Nigeria. In a sort of Goebellian stunt, many ex-Biafrans including high flying academics, intellectuals and publicists who should know better, write about it as if they do not know that the shooting war ended in 1970. What Awolowo is supposed to have discussed with Ojukwu before the shooting war has been turned into an issue for post-war propaganda even more unrestrained than in the days of the shooting war. The propaganda of the war has been dutifully regurgitated by a Minister of the Federal Republic, Mrs Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, twice on loan to the Federal Government of Nigerian from the World Bank, in the book, *Achebe: Teacher of Light* (Africa World Press, Inc, 2003) co-authored with Tijan M. Sallah. They write: "The Igbos had made the secessionist move with the promise from Chief Obafemi Awolowo in the Southwest that the Yoruba would follow suit. The plan was if the southeast and southwest broke away from the Nigerian federal union, the federal government would not

be able to fight a war on two fronts. Awolowo, however, failed to honour his pledge, and the secession proved a nightmare for the Igbos. Awolowo in fact became the Minister of finance of the federal government during the civil war.” (p.90).

Forty years after the civil war, you would expect that some formal, academic decorum would be brought into play to sift mere folklore and propaganda from genuine history. But not so for those who do not care about the consequences of the falsehoods that they trade. They continue to pump myths that treat their own people as cannon fodder in their elite search for visibility, meal tickets and upward mobility in the Nigerian spoils system. Rather than lower the frenzy of war-time 'huge lies' that were crafted for the purpose of shoring up combat morale, they increase the tempo. I mean: postwar reconstruction should normally forge the necessity for returnees from the war to accede to normal life rather than lose their everyday good sense in contemplation of events that never happened or pursuing enemies who were never there. Better, it ought to be expected, for those who must apportion blame and exact responsibility, to work at a dogged sifting of fact from fiction, relieving the innocent of life-threatening charges, in the manner of the Jews who, after the Second World War sought to establish who were responsible for the pogroms before they pressed

implacable charges. Unfortunately, 40 years does not seem to have been enough in the Nigerian case. Those who organized the pogrom are lionized as patriots by champions of the Biafran cause. Those who sought lasting answers away from blind rampage are demonized as villains. The rest of us are all left mired in the ghastly incomprehension that led to the war. Those for whom the civil war was not a lived, but a narrated experience, are made to re-experience it as nightmare, showing how much of an effort of mind needs to be made to strip the past of sheer mush. As it happens, every such effort continues to be waylaid by the sheerness of war propaganda that has been turned into post-war authoritative history. It is often offered by participants in the war who, like Dim Emeka Odumegwu Ojukwu himself, will not give up civil war reflexes that ruined millions.

In an interview in Boston on July 9, 2001, Ojukwu told a questioner: “We've said this over and over again, so many times, and people don't understand: they don't want to actually. If you remember, I released Awolowo from jail. Even that, some people are beginning to contest as well. Awo was in jail in Calabar. Gowon knows and the whole of the federal establishment knows that at no point was Gowon in charge of the East. The East took orders from me. Now, how could Gowon have released Awolowo who was in

Calabar?

Because the fact that I released him, it created quite a lot of rapport between Awo and myself, and I know that before he went back to Ikenne, I set up a hotline between Ikenne and my bedroom in Enugu. He tried, like an elder statesman to find a solution. Awolowo is a funny one. Don't forget that the political purpose of the coup, the Ifeajuna coup that began all this, was to hand power over to Awo. We young men respect him a great deal. He was a hero. I thought he was a hero and certainly I received him when I was governor. We talked and he was very vehement when he saw our complaints and he said that if the Igbos were forced out by Nigeria that he would take the Yorubas out also. I don't know what anybody makes of that statement but it is simple. Whether he did or didn't, it is too late. There is nothing you can do about it. So, he said this and I must have made some appropriate responses too. But it didn't quite work out the way that we both thought. Awolowo, evidently, had a constant review of the Yoruba situation and took different path.

That's it. I don't blame him for it. I have never done”. This was quoted in Rudolf Ogoo Okonkwo's article, reporting the Okigbo International Conference, on page 102 of the *GUARDIAN*, Monday, October 1, 2007. Quite an interesting one for anyone who wishes to appreciate the folkloric dimensions that misled many who listened to Radio Biafra or have followed the

writes that: "...most progressive Nigerians, even before him, saw 'Biafra' as a movement, an egalitarian philosophy to put Nigeria in order, a Nigeria where no tribe is considered superior to the others forever... It was the same Biafran spirit which led Chief Awolowo to declare publicly that if the Eastern Region was pushed out of Nigeria, then the Western Region would follow suit. When Ojukwu moved too fast recklessly in his ostrich strategy, the same Chief Awolowo led a delegation of Western and some Midwestern leaders to Enugu on 6th May, 1967 and pleaded with Ojukwu not to secede, reminding him that the Western Region was not militarily ready to follow suit in view of the weaknesses of the Western Command of the Nigerian Army and the dominant position of the Northern troops in the West. Ojukwu turned a deaf ear to this advice maybe because of his wrong concept" (p.141).

Anyone wishing to, or refusing to, take Ojukwu's word for it may do worse than read what I am calling the forgotten documents. I am of the view that there are immovable grounds for refusing to take Ojukwu's word on faith. Or, may be, faith would be excusable if one has not read the transcripts of the Enugu meeting in addition to the mileage of information provided by many post-civil war narrations since Alexander A. Madiebo's opener, *The Nigerian Revolution and the*

Biafran War. What seems to be unknown to hagiographers of the civil war is that the meeting about which they have told so much was actually documented.

The transcripts of the meeting are no longer secrets. They have been in the open for more three decades, providing a basis for recasting the seduction of the propaganda which pictured the meeting as a secret one with participants being the only ones who could vouch for what was or was not said. Arguably, dependence on sheer memory, living in a folklorist's paradise, may well have enabled all and sundry to feel free to mis-describe what transpired, to build an industry of deliberate falsification, leaving common everyday information to be whispered about as to their earth-shaking impact, as if a loud comment on them would bring the sky down. Indeed, it can be imagined how the old propaganda lines about what happened at the Enugu meeting helped to shore up morale on the secessionist side during the civil war while, on the Federal side, absolute silence or 'rogue' mis-use and abuse of their supposed truth-value, powered official indifference, somersaults and snide reviews, in speech and action. Since there are many on both sides of the civil war who have had rationales for not letting the whole truth survive, it may be seen as quite convenient to have found a man like Awolowo, too much of a thorn in the flesh of many, as a necessary scapegoat. It explains why no proper

history of the Nigerian Civil War is to be found which looks with dispassion at the issues and without contrived gaps. Few, without the benefit of the light that the two forgotten documents bring to bear on the issues, have been able to interrogate the purveyors of the falsehoods - the big men who did not know the truth but have had to say something authoritative about it; or those who know it but have had reasons, personal and public, for not vouchsafing it. Besides, there exists a gaggle of revisionists and post-war hackers who do not want the truth to be known because it hurts their pride as inheritors of the falsehoods. They prefer, through a brazen parroting of unfounded folklore, to swindle generations that, as a result, have become unavailable for the building of genuine nation-sense that can accommodate all Nigerians. So, over-powering has been their impact that logically impossible and groundless historical scenarios, deserving of contempt by all rational people, are trussed up and served as staple. I believe that given such poor historical accounting, the benign, intelligent, form of amnesia that, after a civil war, helps people to deal with the reality, has been repressed by voluble folklore.

Therefore, let me make a clean breast of it: my one great rationale for wanting to see the documents 'outed' is to help shore up nation-sense among Nigerians by rupturing the culture of falsehoods and

silences that have exercised undue hegemony over the issues. I take it as part of a necessary revolt against all the shenanigans of national coyness and the culture of unspoken taboos that have beclouded and ruined national discourse. What primes this revolt is, first and foremost, the thought of what could have happened if the forgotten documents had seen the light of day at the right time. How easy, for instance, would it have been to stamp the January 15, 1966 Coup as being merely an Igbo Coup if it was known that the original five majors who planned and executed it were minded releasing Awolowo from Calabar Prison and to make him their leader - as the *Ifeajuna Manuscript* vouchsafed in the first few weeks of the coup before the testimonies that came after? What factors - ethnic frigidity, ideological insipidity or plain sloppy dithering could it have been that frustrated the coup-maker's idealistic exercise since they were not even pushing for direct seizure of power? I concede that knowing this may not have completely erased the ethnic and regionalist motivations and overlays grafted by later events. But it could have slowed down the wild harmattan fire of dissension that soon engulfed the initial salutary reception of the coup. Were the truth known early enough, it could have obviated many of the sad and untoward insinuations, and the grisly events to which they led, before during and since the civil

war. At the worst, it could have changed, if not the course of Nigeria's history, at least, the manner of assessing that history and therefore the tendency for much civic behaviour to derive from mere myths and fictional engagements.

To say this, I admit, is to make a very big claim! It suggests that the problems of nation-building in Nigeria would have been either solved, ameliorated or their nature changed rather dramatically if these documents had come alive when they were most needed. This claim curries sensation. It casts me, who can make it, in rather un-fanciful light in the sense of putting an onerous responsibility on me to explain how come the manuscripts were not made public when they should have had the implied impact. And what role I have played in their seeing or not seeing the light of day! This was actually what was demanded by a writer in *The Sun* newspapers in 2007 who argued that only I had claimed in public to know about the existence of the *Ifeajuna* manuscript and only President Olusegun Obasanjo by quoting generously from it in his book, *Nzeogwu*, had proved that he, among the well-placed, knew about and could rely on the document. The writer had threatened that if President Obasanjo would not release the documents, I owed a responsibility to do so.

I wish to be upfront with it: that what has been known about the documents in Nigeria's public space largely surfaced as a result of decisions I had taken at

one time or the other. As Bari Salau points out in his own preface to *Awo* on the Nigerian civil war, I was active in turning the Enugu transcripts into public property. I should add that I was later responsible for the outings that the *Ifeajuna Manuscript* had, whether in Obasanjo's book or in newspaper wrangles in the past two decades. Almost ritually, I drew attention to the forgotten documents in my newspaper columns as Chairman of the Editorial Board of the now defunct *Tempo* magazine and in interviews granted to other print media and television houses. During the struggle over the annulment of the June 12, 1993 elections, I placed enormous weight on the evidence of the manuscripts in attempting to correct some of what I regarded as the fictions of Nigeria's history. All the while, I found myself in a quandary however because I based my arguments on documents that were not public property.

They were like mystery documents that I seemed to be pulling out of my fez cap to mesmerize those who were not as privileged as I was. All the effort I had made did not appear sufficient or proficient enough to relieve me of the obligation to complete the circle of their full conversion into public property. It has been quite bothersome to see that the issues they contain remain ever heated and on the boil. They are issues that have stood in the way of due and necessary cooperation between Nigerians

from different parts of the country. I happen to know that in some quarters, merely to mention knowledge of the existence of the documents is viewed as raking and scratching the wounds of the civil war.

It is a preference, it seems, for the murky half-truths and outrightly contrived lies, much of them horrid residues of war propaganda, that have mauled our public space and ruined civic projects so irremediably since the war. Yet so insistent are the issues, so inexorable in everyday political discussions, so decisive in the sentiments expressed across regional and ethnic lines, that to continue to let them fester in limbo is to be guilty of something close to intellectual treason.

To meet the challenge of the propaganda, it has become necessary, in my view, to provide a natural history of the documents, first, as a performance in genealogies, to audit the processes through which the documents passed in order to arrive at where they are. I consider this important so that those who may wish to dispute their veracity can do so with fuller knowledge of their odyssey. I am minded distinguishing between offending the sensitivities of those who shore up the myth of we never make mistakes, and others who simply wish for bygones to be bygones. As against bygoners, I think a country is unfortunate and ill-served when it carries a pernicious history on her back that has been garnished by rumor peddlers and fiction-

mongers who may or may not derive any benefits from traducing the truth but have been too committed to a line that makes looking the truth in the face unappealing. To keep silent, or to shelve a corrective, in the face of such traducers, is almost churlish. It is certainly not enough to break the silence by outing the forgotten documents. The way to begin to discharge the responsibility is to narrate how I came to know about and have followed the career of the two documents.

To begin with, it was in Ruth First's book, *Barrel of a Gun*, that I first encountered hints about the existence of the Ifeajuna Manuscript. Ruth First was one of the most daring of the instant historians who took on the writing of post-independence Africa as the continent began to be mauled by those whom Ali Mazrui would describe as the militariat and who operated on an ethic that Wole Soyinka has described as the divine right of the gun. She, who was so determined to uncover the roots of the violence that was overtaking African politics, was fated to die later through a parcel bomb sent by dirty jobbers of her native Apartheid South Africa. Her narrative took on the insidious goings on behind the scenes in several coups across Africa at a time when the issues, participants and sites were still hazy. It was like looking ahead to a future that a free South Africa needed to avoid. In a way, it prepared me to pay attention to the footnote to line 16 of JP Clark's

poem, 'Return Home' in his collection, *Casualties*, published in 1970. In the footnote, JP wrote: "A number of papers. Major Ifeajuna left with me on the night of our arrival at Ikeja the manuscript of his account of the coup, which after due editing was rejected by the publishers as early as May 1966 because it was a nut without the kernel".

This footnote made him post-facto accessory to the coup as he could have been charged by one later-day military dictator down the road. But how did the manuscripts get to be handed over to JP? Which publishers rejected the manuscript? This was left to the grind of the rumour mill for decades. Nothing more authoritative on what happened came from JP Clark until twenty years later when in his Nigerian National Order of Merit Award lecture of December 5, 2001, serialized in the Guardian between 10th and 14th December 2001, he filled in a few more gaps. He said: "My main encounter with the military, however, was played off stage many years before that. In *Casualties*, my account in poetry of the Nigerian Civil War, so much misunderstood by my Ibo readers and their friends in quotes, I said at the time that I came so close to the events of 15 January 1966 that I was taken in for interrogation. Shinkafi was the officer, all professional, but very polite. Major Emmanuel Ifeajuna had given me his account of the coup to edit and arrange publication. The authorities thought I had it then in my

custody”. JP does not quite say how the authorities knew. Or how that they knew where he kept it.

My first inkling of what happened, regarding the Ifeajuna Manuscript, came to me as a result of a quirk in my biography that made me write a poem, The Poet Lied, which pitched me into the maw of an unwitting controversy on the wrong side of JP Clark. The Poet Lied, was part-response to the Nigerian crisis and civil war dealing with a segment of the political class, all those, including writers, politicians, religious leaders and soldiers - who were in a position to change the images and symbols by which we interpreted our lives but who flunked their roles during the civil war. JP Clark was riled by the poetic imputations, convinced that, as the poet agrees but not the poem, he was the one, or among the ones, satirized. He importuned my publishers, also his own publishers, Longman UK, to withdraw the collection from the market. Or face dire consequences! It was in the course of negotiating with the publishers, between the UK office and the Nigerian branch, how not to withdraw the manuscript from the market that I ran into stories of how one manuscript proffered by JP Clark had brought so much trouble to them two decades earlier. From bits and snippets in informal conversations, here and there, I got to know more about the Ifeajuna Manuscript which JP Clark sent to them to publish. As I gathered, the

Longman office in Nigeria had sent the manuscript to Longman UK where it was seen as being too hot to handle. The multi-national, doing good business in Nigeria, did not want to antagonize a military dictatorship that had just come to power. The UK office therefore sent the manuscript to the Nigerian High commission office in London to find out if the manuscript would pass something of a civility test. The new High Commissioner to Britain happened to be Brigadier Ogundipe who had only just survived the counter coup of July 29, 1966 and had escaped to London. He was easily the most senior officer in the Nigerian Army and should rightly have become Head of State if it depended on seniority. Having just avoided untoward consequences for being so prominent, was he in a position to accede to the request? Brigadier Ogundipe simply caused the manuscript to be sent home to the authorities in Lagos. Zealously, the authorities marched on the Longman office in Ikeja and arrested the executives who had sent the manuscripts to the UK for publication. JP Clark, who brought the manuscript, could not be reached. Or so the Longman executives reported. But the military authorities knew what to do. As JP Clark would have it in his lecture: “An interesting development from my visit to the then Special Branch of the Nigeria Police Force at Force Headquarters was that my late friend, Aminu Abdulahi, fresh

from assignments in London and Nairobi, moved in from his cousin, M.D. Yusufu, to live with me for a year and keep an eye on me. I have never discussed the matter with our inimitable master spy-catcher of those days. Some years later, he gave me the good advice that the state does not mind what a writer scribbles about it as long as he does not go on to put his words into action.

As for the manuscript: “I have often wondered over the years what became of this manuscript that I kept at one time in a baby's cot. When the publisher Longman chickened out of the project, I handed it over to a brother-in-law of Ifeajuna's to take home to his wife, Rose. I found portions of it later reproduced in General Olusegun Obasanjo's biography of Major Chukwuma Nzeogwu”

JP rounds out his narrative thus: “My purpose of letting you into all this is to help fill in a few details left out in the history of military intervention in Nigeria. Major Emmanuel Ifeajuna is made the villain, while Major Chukuma Nzeogwu is the hero. The portraits are not that black and white and far apart. They both killed their superior officers and a number of key political leaders in the country in a common cause. So where lies the difference? Where the distinction? I have always found it difficult to understand why one is made out a villain and the other a hero”.

“After the events of the

momentous day broke upon us all, and Major Ifeajuna was reported to have fled to Ghana, Major General Aguiyi Ironsi wanted to have him back as he had Major Kaduna Nzeogwu, Chris Okigbo was given the letter to take to President Kwame Nkrumah. But he needed company, someone who shared influential literary friends with him in Accra, but more importantly, someone who could add his voice to persuade Ifeajuna to come home and assume responsibility for his action. We knew the dangers of our assignment. 'JP, I can't bear a pin prick', Chris had laughed. Yet, when war came, he was to take up arms and die for a new cause. Chris had in fact driven Emman, disguised as a girl, from Ibadan to the then Dahomey border, after he found his way back from Enugu a defeated man".

JP Clark does not say that he was in that party but readers of Soyinka's memoirs *YOU MUST SET FORTH AT DAWN*, would find on page 286-287 of the Nigerian edition, the following: "JP, I always suspected, did have a first-hand knowledge, albeit vague, of the very first coup d'état of 1966. With Christopher Okigbo, he had accompanied one of the principals Major Emmanuel Ifeajuna across the border, the latter in female disguise. JP turned back at the border while Christopher crossed over to the Republic of Benin (then Dahomey) taking charge of Ifeajuna who was by then

virtually an emotional wreck, haunted Christopher related by images of bloodstreams cascading from his dying victims, his superior officers, none of whom was a stranger to him". Soyinka adds: "JP brought back with him the manuscript of Ifeajuna's account of the coup, hurriedly put together during this period of hiding by that young major and former athlete he was one of the four who set a joint 6'6 record in high jump at the Commonwealth Games in Vancouver, 1956. Knowledge of the existence of the manuscript set off a wild hunt by Gowon's Military Intelligence, desperate for an authentic, first-hand account of those who had plotted the '66 coup, who had done the killings, what civilians, especially politicians, had prior knowledge or had collaborated in the putsch. For a while JP Clark was deemed a security risk. So were his publishers, Longmans, whose editors at one time or the other held the explosive manuscript in their possession, debating the wisdom of releasing its contents into the market".

JP's account in his National Merit Award lecture unpacks the mystery further. He writes: "We took two trips to Accra by air, the first was a full meeting with Ifeajuna, the second to give his host government time to arrange for evacuation, while he wrote up the defence he would have given at his court-martial in Lagos. We just made it back before Ghana, too, fell to the military. I still wonder what

effect the example of Nigeria had upon them. Nkrumah for all his revolutionary fervour, did not know what to do with Major Ifeajuna. He, therefore sent him to his army for debriefing, and they advised the president against giving him the airplane he asked for to return to Lagos to finish his operation.

JP continues: "The man could not understand what had happened in Nigeria, Ifeajuna, told us. So, he packed off his unexpected guest to Winneba to be with his compatriots, SG. Ikoku and Dr. Bankole Akpata. With both these ideologues, our stay with Ifeajuna became one running seminar. What became clear was that it was not the Nigerian Army that seized power on January 15, 1966. It was a faction of it, racing against another to secure power for the political alliance of their choice. This group was for UPGA. It beat the other one to the gun, the faction in full support of the governing NNA alliance. That Ifeajuna said, explained the pattern of targets and killings".

JP Clark said he had asked Ifeajuna at Accra: "Did the General know about your plan?"

"Well, not really, I was just a Brigade Major, and you don't always get that close to a General. But I remember on some of those briefings on the situation in the West, when I said it couldn't go on forever like that, he growled that we junior officers should not go and start anything foolish".

"And the President away on his

Caribbean cruise”

But you know the politicians were all wooing the army” he said, “Our plan was to bring Chief Awolowo out of jail in Calabar to head our government and break up the country into more states to make for a true federation”.

I have taken the pains to be over-generous with these quotes because they provide an interesting preface to Chinua Achebe's take on it. As narrated by Ezenwa Ohaeto, Achebe's biographer, the Ifeajuna manuscript was one of those which came to Citadel Press, the wartime outfit that Christopher Okigbo suggested that they set up. Achebe had said: “...well, you set it up, you know about it, and I'll join. He said, You'll be chairman and I'll be Managing Director, so the Citadel Press was formed. The name came from the idea of the fortress you flee from a foreign land, in danger, and return home to your citadel”.

Christopher Okigbo avidly solicited manuscripts for the publishing house. As Ohaeto writes: “Okigbo also brought another manuscript to Citadel Press which was from Emmanuel Ifeajuna, one of the plotters of the 15 January 1966 coup. The manuscript was Ifeajuna's story of the coup and he gave it to Okigbo who enthusiastically passed it on to Achebe after reading it. It was a work that Achebe considered important so he also read it immediately. But he discovered that there were flaws in the story. He criticized it for two

reasons: It seemed to me to be self-serving. Emmanuel was attempting a story in which he was a centre and everybody else was marginal. So, he was the star of the thing. I did not know what they did or did not but reading his account in the manuscript, I thought that the author was painting himself as a hero”.

“The other reason was quite serious, as Achebe explains: '.... within the story itself there were contradictions'. Achebe told Okigbo that it was not a reliable and honest account of what happened. As an example, he cited Ifeajuna's description of the coup plotters at their first meeting in a man's chalet in a catering guest house. The plotters are coming into the chalet late in the night and Ifeajuna describes the room as being in darkness since they are keen not to arouse suspicion. They all assemble and Ifeajuna claims that he stood up and addressed them while watching their faces and noting their reactions. Since it is supposed to be dark, Achebe regarded that description as dubious. Okigbo laughed and remarked that Ifeajuna was probably being lyrical. Some days after that conversation, Okigbo came to Achebe and told him that Chukwuma Kaduna Nzeogwu had asked him: 'I hear you and Achebe are going to publish Emma's lies?'. That comment by Nzeogwu, a principal actor in the January coup, confirmed that the manuscript was unreliable.'

Times were to turn disastrous for many of those actors before

the end of 1967. In later years, Achebe reflected that he might have made a different decision if he had known what lay ahead for Ifeajuna, Okigbo and Nzeogwu. He added, however, that even if the manuscript had been accepted by Citadel Press, it would not have been published, because the publishing house was destroyed at the same time as these three men when the war moved closer”.

There are reasons to believe that the Citadel encounter was not the first in which Chinua Achebe was rejecting the document. The relationship between Christopher Okigbo and Chinua Achebe was at all times during this period so close that it is not conceivable that Okigbo could have failed to brief him about the dynamite that JP brought from Ifeajuna. Besides, as Editorial Adviser to Heinemann, Achebe was sufficiently close to the publishing mill and the burgeoning literati not to have heard about the manuscript. Arguably, it is unlikely that Chinua Achebe was seeing the manuscript for the first time in Biafra. He was too much in the same circles with Okigbo in his many schemes and with JP Clark at the University of Lagos, not to have been aware of the document that Okigbo and JP Clark brought with Ifeajuna from Accra. However, whenever it was that Chinua Achebe saw the manuscript, the issue is whether his editorial judgment had anything to do with the document not seeing the light of day.

What is known of it from his biographer's narration does not make Achebe culpable. Achebe's position on the manuscript could still be faulted however on the grounds that even an unreliable story told by a major actor in an event of such earth-shaking proportions in the history of a young nation-state, deserved to be known. How many stories of the civil war today are without the self-serving disposition of their narrators? Talking about unreliability, Chinua Achebe may have been reading the manuscript from what he knew of Ifeajuna's famed capacity for not standing, in his college days, by what he had done, as even JP, his finest defender has narrated. Or, perhaps, there were things those great writers did not tell themselves even in their closeness. For instance, JP. Clark is reported by Ohaeto to have exclaimed after reading the advance copy of Achebe's *A Man of the People*: 'Chinua, I know you are a prophet. Everything in this book has happened except a military coup'. There is no way of knowing, until their memoirs, whether either of them was aware of the rumour, soon entrenched by later events, that Nnamdi Azikiwe had been sounded out by Igbo officers, Ojukwu specifically, on carrying out a coup during the 1964 election crisis. Azikiwe had refused. That rumour is in the same class as the other one: that, tipped off by Ifeajuna before the January 15, 1966 coup, Zik went on a health cruise in the Caribbean under

the auspices of Haiti's Papa Doc, an old schoolmate. All the same, if Chinua Achebe did not know about the rumour, he certainly was well placed enough to have known that Nnamdi Azikiwe had refused to call on Balewa to form a Government in 1964 because the election was rigged. Azikiwe had written a long speech, published in an early edition of his newspaper, the *West African Pilot*, explaining why he would not call on the Prime Minister, Tafawa Balewa, to form a government. And then another emergency edition was published later in the day in which he wrote another speech calling on the Prime Minister to form a government. The Great Zik had virtually been put under house arrest by the British Commander of the Nigerian Army, Welby Everard. Discovering that the army would not obey their commander in chief, Zik capitulated. His capitulation was facilitated by the whispering campaign that it was only two medical opinions that were required to prove him unfit to take a decision. As Dudley footnoted in his *Introduction to Nigerian Politics*, "The President gave way when he realized there was a move to declare him medically incapable of continuing in office". (p.312) As I have argued in newspaper articles, this was the very first coup in Nigeria's post-independence history. It was the Rubicon crossed after which every Nigerian political

party had to build and flex a military muzzle in anticipation of a long-expected blow up.

This is the point in the narrative where questions are usually raised about the Awolowo factor: whether he was privy to what the coup makers planned to do with him. Easily dismissed but not scorched is that the soldiers had good reasons for wanting Awolowo above all other living politicians in the country at that time. There was a FREE AWO movement into which even political opponents had plugged for relevance. Since Awolowo began to suffer the series of house arrests and detentions, before the eventual jail term was confirmed by the Supreme Court, his voice, which consistently defended the poor and the underprivileged had been missing in national affairs. Younger radicals remembered Awolowo's opposition to the Anglo-Nigerian Defence Pact, his consistent defence of the rule of law, his unflagging pursuit of social welfare policies against the economics of waste which characterized the capitalist road that Nigeria was taking, and the general slowness in responding to the struggle in the rest of Africa to eliminate colonialism and set Africa free. The Hansards of the Federal House of representatives in Lagos reveal the valiant efforts that Awolowo had made to change the street-beggar economy that Nigeria ran, his opposition to undiluted private enterprise, and his general resistance to the various

attempts, to sell a newspaper gag law, a preventive detention act, and the general de-federalization of the country. Anyone knowing these would not be surprised that the younger radicals in the country were on Awolowo's side. Awolowo himself had brought in many young radical elements like SG Ikoku, Bola Ige, Samuel Aluko, Oluwasanmi, Bankole Akpata and others to his side who were generally viewed as socialists involved in creating a better future for the country. This is what Ojukwu means when he says that Awolowo was a hero. The circle of young radicals was enthused by the presence of Segun Awolowo, just returned from law studies in Britain, who was fresh air in the circles in which Awolowo was seen as a brand to be emulated. Segun's death in a motor accident during his trials won his father the sympathy of this younger generation. The most well-known poets in Nigeria, Wole Soyinka, Christopher Okigbo and JP Clark wrote poems at that time that have served as witnesses to travails of the man and his times. The poets belonged to a small circle of radical intellectuals in the country who knew one another in the University College Ibadan (UCI) and shared a common, energized, notion of a country that would move the world. In spite of the ethnic fractionalization that was a permanent feature of life in Nigeria's public space, the young Turks of the period were parleying across occupational

and ethnic lines. It is not clear how much they shared in a political sense. The question may be asked: how many of them were notionally privy to the idea of a coup – the one supposedly being planned by Awolowo or, later, the one that was supposed to be in the offing after Ojukwu sounded out Nnamdi Azikiwe about one during the election crisis in 1964?

What may be argued with some certainty is that many of them could see that there was a plot to expose and destroy the Action Group, the ruling party in the Western Region. The plot had begun with the declaration of a state of emergency in the Region, the setting up of the Coker Commission of Enquiry to prove corruption in the management of AG's company, the NIPC, so that the Federal government could seize the assets of the company; and then the institution of a treasonable felony trial to settle the question of the party's survival once and for all. Later, the plot covered the establishment of the Banjo Commission to prove the failure of free education, Awolowo's most sensational contribution to development in the country and the star performance that made his party so impregnable in the West. In spite of, or because of, the underhand methods that were being used to drown out Awolowo, anyone who cared to look could tell that he was more sinned against than sinning. In particular, regarding the 1962 treasonable felony trial, involving him and 27 others,

any objective observer could have seen that what Awolowo had done apart from organizing a political party was being a thorn in the flesh of the independence government. In the face of the evident plans to destroy his party so that the coalition partners could chop up its remains, he had vowed that he and his party would make the West ungovernable rather than let the region be taken outside the electoral process. His party began to train people to make sure that no undemocratic victories would befall the region.

The party sent apparatchiks to Ghana to train. So, the accusation during the treasonable felony trial, that they were sending guerillas for training in Ghana was correct in so far as it was not stretched to imply that it was pursuant to carrying out a coup against the government of the Federation. What is generally ignored by the narrators of this segment of Nigeria's story, in spite of the admission of its truth by critical participants, is that every Nigerian political party at that time was training toughs for armed struggle.

It may be a secret to those who never bothered to look at what was happening outside the newspapers. This is backhandedly confirmed by Tanko Yakasai in his recent autobiography where he retails an added dimension that NEPU pro-insurgents were in league with a Camerounian political party in sending activists for training in Eastern Europe. This should of course be understood

against the background of the struggle in the North between NPC's thugs - 'Jam'iyyar Mahaukata', 'Sons of madmen'- who wore wooden or 'akushi' hats, described in Allan Feinstein's *African Revolutionary* as having "semi-official sanction to fight against southern dominance". They "subsequently extended their terrorism to a group of NEPU adherents' so that 'NEPU retaliated with a "Positive Action Wing" (PAW) who wore 'calabash helmets' and were determined to resist the NPC's routine assaults that saw candidates of the opposition jailed or killed, their houses and farms destroyed and, in the case of opposition parties from the south, whole city wide or region-wide riots organized to distance them from power. NEPU went beyond a PAW response to the Mahaukata. The party, as Tanko Yankasai authoritatively reveals, already had experience in the training of guerillas for the Camerounian Sawaba Party (p.209).

In relation to the South, the NPC idea was actually quite fundamentalist because it was primed by the conception of a National Army as a catchment of thugs for realizing partisan ends. The truth of this can now be checked against the testimonies of several NPC stalwarts. They had sent several of their young men into the Nigerian Army to prepare for the day when the military would be needed to settle political scores. Evidently, the parties in coalition at the

Federal level were neither true to one another nor to themselves. They saw the destruction of the Action Group differently. They who were busy organizing insurgents against other parties and using even the state apparatus to realize partisan goals needed to hide their activities by accusing the opposition of treason.

According to Dudley, the NCNC wished that the Action Group be destroyed so that they, the only member of the coalition that had a foothold in the West, would inherit the West and then confront the North with a Southern solidarity. After Awolowo was jailed in 1962, NCNC strategists actually tried to swallow up the West by forming a coalition with the Akintola faction of the AG which had become the Nigerian National Democratic Party (NNDP). They did not reckon with the ingenuity of that doughty fighter, the Are Ona Kankanfo himself. He saw the score quickly. He preferred an alliance with the senior partner in the coalition, the NPC. It was only after failing with the NNDP that the NCNC came back to the AG, this time, in search of a foothold rather than a routing. The Action Group leader, in prison, advised his followers to coast along until it became obvious that the NCNC was more interested in power at the centre and would not like to lose the perks from the coalition in the Federal House. By the time the Western Regional election of 1965 was rigged, the Action Group had formalized

an organizational prong that enabled the members, at large, to fulfill the old promise by their leader: rather than for the West to be taken over by undemocratic means, the region would be made ungovernable. This was proficiently achieved with the Wetie riots - dousing opponents with petrol to aid match flare - that gave the sobriquet of the 'Wild Wild West' to the region.

Of course, at the point of the region-wide riots, it was clear that the two coalition partners, working together for the destruction of the AG would have to re-strategize. Although sharing power at the Federal level, they nevertheless worked against each other everywhere else. The NPC had planned to use its men in the national army for a coup that would clear the nation of the insurgents in the West and in the Middle Belt, especially in Tiv land, where there was an active guerilla war against the government. Meanwhile, by 1964, the UMBC had joined with NEPU to carry out a Northern liberation of sorts before facing the Federal behemoth. They all however joined the United Progressive Grand Alliance, UPGA, whose game, with the NCNC as the core-party, was to go for broke. There seemed to be a consensus across the country, and in every political party, that the crisis could only be resolved through violence. All the political parties were primed for it.

In a country, so wired for armed struggle, there was bound to be

very little room for the truth to have dominion. What had to be done through the law courts, as the Action Group would discover, was very much a charade. Awolowo was convicted on the ground that he was so over-weaningly ambitious that although he was not specifically found guilty, his fingerprints could be read on all the events that were to culminate in a coup. The judges, to prove the vaulting nature of the ambitions, took judicial notice of the dreams that Awolowo had recorded in a notebook which he called *Flashes of Inspiration*. It must be one of the unique court cases in history in which a man was jailed for what he said he saw in a dream rather than what he actually did. Nigeria had simply become a country seeded by and overcome by paranoia, an atmosphere of psychological block, making it difficult to look at opponents with any objectivity. The tendency was to accept every charge as true, the more heinous the better, if directed at someone about whom something good is not supposed to be said. So the charge of treasonable felony was swallowed hook and line without the minimum application of gumption. As it turned out, and as Obasanjo has told the story, Chukwuma Nzeogwu was the intelligence officer who was attached to the efforts to unravel the veracity of the charges in the Coker Commission and Treasonable Felony trial. He was obviously privy to the discovery made by

the Coker Commission that Awolowo kept a good account: that he had more money before he became a Premier of western Region than he had in his account after eight years of living in his own house, not in the state house, and spending his own money on entertainment. Even when Kwame Nkrumah visited Nigeria on a state visit, the Ghanaian President stayed in Awolowo's house at Oke Ado in Ibadan. Not in any state house. Thus, there is every reason to assume that Nzeogwu had enough information about the man's distance from the common run of politicians in the country for Awolowo to be raised above the slough of general discussions and brickbats.

What cannot be established is whether the coup makers ever made an attempt to contact Awolowo in jail. From Ifeajuna's account, the coup makers were quite dubious about Awolowo's support. They had therefore decided that if they released him and he failed to be their leader, they would lock him up in the state house and issue decrees in his name. Quite glaring in the so-called master plan is that the coup makers were horridly naïve and permutative. So much so that about the senior officers Ifeajuna writes: "some of our senior officers who were likely to fight on the side of the regime were to be arrested while action took place. We also had to watch the concentration of senior officials. Only those who resisted arrest or fired at troops

were to be fired at. When action was completed and a new regime was set up, they were to be released and given appointments, but not necessarily related to what posts they held before the event. We were to present our General with a 'fait accompli'. We were to apologize to him for our actions and request him to join us and take over the plans. If he was not prepared to join us, we would request that he should leave us alone to complete it. And in that case, we were to appeal to the officer next in line to come to our help" (70). This sounds like the view of an officer and gentleman who expected the behaviour of others to be determined by his view of human nature rather than by the exigencies on the ground. Ifeajuna as much as lends credence to the charge that Nnamdi Azikiwe was tipped off to go on a health cruise so that he would not be around during the action. He writes: "We were to act before the ex-President returned from his trip to Europe and his carousing cruise to the Caribbean. This, for two reasons. Firstly, we were certain that he would put up a fight against us. Not that this mattered: but as the head of state he could easily call in foreign troops. In his absence only the Prime Minister could do so. And so, the number of persons to invite foreign troops was reduced from two to one. Second reason was that, if he returned, we had to deal with him. But the task of clearing his residence at the state house

would require more troops than we could conveniently muster.”

So, did he nudge the President to exit while they plotted? He wrote:

“We considered that two VIPs would be of importance to us in controlling the nation. If our General agreed to come with us, then he could rest in charge of the army or he could be head of state. He was acceptable to most officers and men. We would have to appeal to him. We knew that without him it would be difficult to hold the country.

“We also believed that Chief Obafemi Awolowo had become recognized as the rallying point of our nation. If we attempted any set-up without him, we could quite easily end up opposed by the relatively progressive political parties. For him therefore we had the post of executive president or Prime Minister depending on the reaction of our General. But we were also afraid that he could refuse to accept power handed over to him by us. There was the possibility of this highly principled man refusing to come out of jail to assume the highest post in the land. I took care of this. We were to go to him and explain the facts and appeal to him. We planned to bring him into Lagos by air before noon on 15 January. If he refused to leave jail, he was to be ordered to do so. As a prisoner, he had no choice. We were to transfer him to the State House and if he still refused, we were to hold him here and inform him that this was his

new goal house! Meanwhile we planned to get the elders of the state to help us get him to agree. If in the end he refused, he was to be held and decrees were to be issued in his name”.

Surely, part of the naivety of the coup makers, or the mis-interpretation of their wishes by their failed coup-leader, is that they hoped to set up a cabinet of civil servants and abolish the Federal system of government. “We had made a selection of fifteen civil servants from all over the country, all of them available on call in the federal civil service. We planned to abolish the federal system of government and get back to the military system. The country was to be broken up into fifteen provinces. In each province, there was to be a military governor and a head of administration. The regions were to start winding up themselves by handing over at once minor functions to the new provinces. On the other hand, major functions of the regions were at once to be taken over by the government in Lagos”. That is, in effect, they would get out of prison a man who went to jail for seeking to entrench Federalism and ask him to run a military system, more or less a unitary system. Although the immediate creation of provinces would have mollified Awolowo and many of those who later joined in the revenge coup, there was evident naivety, if not suicidal predisposition in coup makers' waffling on the question of Federalism or Unitarism.

At any rate, according to

information vouchsafed after the coup, they had to act to upstage the plans of the Northern People's Congress (NPC) which was to have sent soldiers to the Western Region on January 17, 1966 to deal with the insurgents in the Western Region. When Western Premier Akintola left the NPC leader, Sir Ahmadu Bello on the 14th of January and jetted homewards to Ibadan, he was certain that the deal was fool-proof until the Five Majors of January 15, 1966 struck. Let's grant the benefit of the doubt: that Awolowo would have been released immediately on January 15, 1966 but for those who hijacked the coup from the five majors. Or was it simply taken over from, or handed over by, the five majors? As the narrative goes, the officer detailed to fly Awolowo to Lagos from Calabar already had his brief. But it never happened. Ojukwu, in effective control of Kano had already scuttled any plan that could take off from what could have become a Kano front. After he was made military Governor of the East, he had urgent matters to attend to which could not have put Awolowo on the agenda. So there is no point disputing his claim that he signed a warrant for the release of the prisoner. It was clearly not agreed that the warrant should be executed. Imaginably, a government that moved quickly to enact a Unitary Decree could not have been in a hurry to release a sworn Federalist from jail. The question is: if Ojukwu signed

the warrant, how did the effectuation of the warrant wait for so long until it coincided with the order given by Lt. Col Yakubu Gowon at the head of the revenge coup, for Awolowo to be released? This is an important question because Awolowo was not released until seven months after the first coup of the year. The historic task fell upon the revenge coup makers who had toppled General Aguiyi Ironsi after a rigorously organized pogrom against the Igbo, with a number of other Southerners added to the kill. It was certainly to gain a wider base than their Northern security ambitions allowed that the release of Awolowo from Calabar Prison was announced. It leaves a sneaking feeling that Ojukwu's powers over the Eastern Region, to which all Igbo in the Nigerian diaspora had to return in search of a safe haven, had not yet become so all-pervasive as to be able to countermand a swiftly executed decision by Federal authority's intent on releasing Awolowo from jail. Nor would it have been politic for Ojukwu, even if he had the power, to attempt to prevent Awolowo from being released after a Federal order to that effect. It would have amounted to holding Awolowo hostage. Could it be said then that in order not to fall into the role of hostage taker, Lt. Colonel Odumegwu Ojukwu, as Military Governor of the Eastern Region carried out an order initiated by a Federal Military Government that he had so flagrantly repudiated? Whatever is the case, it was the

release that enabled Awolowo to participate in the discussions to resolve the crisis through sundry Leaders of Thought Meetings up till Awolowo's peace-hunt to Enugu before the first shot in the Civil war was fired.

It may well be added that it was Awolowo's participation in Gowon's administration that enabled him to get a copy of the Ifeajuna manuscript. A copy was sent to him by a well-wisher who thought he should know about the plans that the January 15, 1966 coup makers had had in store for him. It was in similar fashion that he got a copy of the transcripts of the Enugu meeting after the tapes were said to have been captured at the fall of Enugu and the takeover of the Eastern Nigerian Broadcasting service by Federal Forces. Awolowo had the two documents in safe keeping when I became his Private (Political) Secretary in June 1978. They were among the many papers, not part of the main body of his library, which he had to bring out for my education to help my work as his "involved and committed researcher", as he requested for in his newspaper advert for the job. I read the documents as part of many such efforts to induct me into the job. I was authorized to make copies for a number of party officials and stalwarts as a means of education in preparation for the battles that the newly formed Unity Party of Nigeria was expected to face in the Second Republic. So let me put it this way: that I read the full text of

the Ifeajuna manuscript within three months of my new job. The other document, the transcript of his meeting with Ojukwu, was a typescript that had to be cyclostyled in order for many more copies to be made in preparation for the controversies that we expected to confront in the course of the 1979 election. Although there were quite a few brickbats during that election, not much came that required the appeal to the documents. But Awolowo always wanted to have the documents made public. He hadn't thought of releasing them before the election because he did not want to draw attention to the false charges at the treasonable felony trials. We did not think the period of election was the best period to do so especially one which he thought to be critical for a man of seventy who may never have another chance. The dubious value of letting the world know that coup-makers had latched upon him as the saviour they were looking for could have had a double-edged impact with a capacity for damage that may not have been easy to control. After the election, however, there was no more need for such caution. That was when Ebenezer Babatope who had always rooted for it as a job for his friend Arthur Nwankwo of Fourth Dimension, publisher of his own Coups and the Barracks Revolt, was authorized to send a copy to the Fourth Dimension for publication. Unfortunately, as Babatope reported it later, Arthur Nwankwo said Ifeajuna's family was not in

favour of the publication. Thereafter, little was done to bring the document to public attention. And, that was how the matter died. Except that I, who had been instrumental to having Awolowo bring out the document could not forget what I had read. Whenever I was confronted by a Nigerian argument which required using the materials from the manuscript to clear the ground, I used it. Especially in my rather longish articles for *The News* magazine during the June 12 Struggle, from 1993 to 1999, I took special notice of the arguments in the manuscripts in my responses to those who deployed old fictions to seek to undermine the geo-ethnic reality at work in the annulment of the election.

Actually, after I stopped being Chief Awolowo's private Secretary, Kole Omotoso who frequently shared what he has called my 'lived-in library' at Seriki Aro in Ikeja while he was writing his book *Just Before Dawn*, brought the manuscript of Obasanjo's *Nzeogwu* to my attention. It was a rather flimsy affair which he said he had been given by Professor Jide Osuntokun of the University of Lagos for a pre-publication assessment. I read through it at one sitting and told him it was a disgrace for Obasanjo, a former Head of State, to be offering such a flimsy fare about the best celebrated soldier in the history of coup-making in Nigeria. As the closest friend to *Nzeogwu*, virtually sharing the same bed with him on the night before the January 15 coup, he was

expected to know enough about him to fill a full-length book. If he had nothing to write, I said, he should go after the letters that they once exchanged, the articles written in whatever magazine at school or wherever, and whatever snippets they could get from all the history books about the man. I proposed that he should at least avail himself of the reasons given by Emmanuel Ifeajuna in the manuscript that has been going from hand to hand without finding a publisher. At the mention of Ifeajuna's manuscript, Kole Omotoso insisted that I had to talk to Jide Osuntokun myself. So, I followed him to the Staff quarters in the University of Lagos where I told the Professor without too much preamble what I had told Kole. I also told him that I had a copy of the manuscript in safe-keeping, but that I would not give it to him. If Obasanjo was serious about the manuscript, I said, he knew where to find one; that is, if he didn't already have a copy. In the end, although I cannot now tell where he found the copy that he quoted from, and fairly generously in the published text, I am only too glad that he caused all those letters to be published which are today some of the source materials for anyone interested in assessing *Nzeogwu*'s personality and character. Of course, the book, *Nzeogwu*, landed Obasanjo in a controversy that led to his being openly criticized in public by his former deputy, retired Major General Shehu Musa

Yar'adua. The lands he had acquired in some parts of the North were threatened with seizure as a punitive measure for his writing about the soldier whom many Northerners considered a villain.

In a sense, I would say that I have Obasanjo to thank for the confidence I have had in talking about the Ifeajuna manuscript. Obasanjo's use of the manuscript proved it that the copy that I had kept away was not fake. Whether its content was reliable or not, the point is that the soldier who wrote it had put enough of himself, true or false, into it for Nigerians to know what he wished that we know about the coup that he led. What he wished may have been false but it was unthinkable for a country not to want to know what a man who had done so much to transform its history had to say. It has nothing to do with the sensitivities of his family. In any case, forty years after, all the millions murked up by the January 15 coup that paved the way for all the succeeding military interventions in Nigeria's history, deserve to know what he had to say for himself and his colleagues. Of interest is that in spite of the famed unreliability of Ifeajuna, none of the narratives written about the Nigerian crisis by the principal protagonists Alexander Madiebo, Ademoyega, Ben Ghulie, and Hilary Njoku have differed in any substantial sense apart from turns of phrases, from the core of what Ifeajuna wrote in the white-hot heat of the moment that followed the

coup. The contentious issue over their choice of Awolowo has been repeated by the participants in the core group that set out to change the government before they were overtaken by Ironsi, and the echelon that surrounded Ojukwu in Kano who would not allow Nzeogwu to make use of troops in that city to march on Lagos as he had planned to do after he discovered that the coup was botched in the South. It is a matter for historical counterfactuals what the history of Nigeria would have been like if Nzeogwu had not capitulated but had mustered enough will and force to organize a Northern Army that would march upon Lagos from Kaduna. His collapse into the maw of the ethnic mush that had overtaken the coup was the Nigerian equivalent of the seppuku which he was obliged to commit if he were a Samurai in the Japanese army. What happened to the coup makers thereafter including the fact that those who benefited from the coup were unwilling to put them on trial is part of the story that must also have made it difficult to publish Ifeajuna's manuscript.

For that matter, what Nzeogwu called "Emman's lies" did not have to be true to see the light of day. There was a good enough reason to know that although Ifeajuna was Igbo-speaking and many said he was close enough to Azikiwe to tip him off about the impending coup, he took a scathing swipe at the former President of Nigeria in a manner that was itself some

"history" worthy of the record. Nzeogwu's opinion of Ifeajuna's incompetence in carrying out the coup is undubitably right on the mark. But it does not invalidate what Ifeajuna had to say. In fact, from hindsight, it can be claimed that what Nzeogwu said on coup day about their intentions was largely corroborated by Ifeajuna's manuscript. That it should have taken so long for it to make its debut between covers is to say the least a national tragedy. The tragedy, it must be said, was egged by the fact that those who hijacked the coup from the five majors did not want the story out because they obviously did not want to identify with the views expressed in it. For the more ethnically inclined ones, the very idea that true sons of the Igbo carried out a coup and wanted to hand it over to Awolowo, a man they regarded as an enemy of their ethnic group, was simply the height of the absurd. To the makers of the July 29 Revenge coup, it would have scuttled their much-haggled presumption that it was an Igbo coup. Either way, the manuscript had not a chance.

The other forgotten document of the civil had a better chance but its absence from circulation for a long time, was no less a tragedy. It was supposedly captured among other tapes of the Biafran Broadcasting Corporation when Enugu fell to Federal troops. The tapes were transcribed with glee, according to Awolowo, by those who thought it would finally nail him for the

agreement he reached with Ojukwu to have the Western Region secede with the East as Radio Biafra never stopped insisting. As it turned out no such thing, is to be found in the tapes. Rather Awolowo was making a passionate plea for the continuance of Nigeria as a single political entity. He repeated some of his bitterest criticisms of the North and Northern leaders but he believed that it was possible to manage the differences between Nigerians if ethnic groups and regions enjoyed more autonomy. This was simply a parrot cry of his which, as those familiar with his campaigns and his books, especially *Thoughts on Nigerian Constitution* and *The People's Republic*, would know, required a common welfare policy in education, health, and employment, to unite all the ethnic groups. He was too old he said to abandon all the dreams he had had for his country. Nor would he like to come to the East with a passport. His solution, which obviously did not get down well with Ojukwu was for Ojukwu to agree for the Eastern Region to come to a national conference and to support the creation of states as a basis for a Federal system free of the hegemony that the North had over the rest of the country; and all the regions in the country had over the minorities. If Ojukwu agreed, he believed, he had enough influence with the minorities of the Middle Belt and in the South to urge a shared positioning with the East and

the West for a common stand in opposition to hegemonists in the North who would not want states created. It turned out that Ojukwu did not want states to be created. That was the sticking point.

It must have seemed to the Easterners who had been so overdosed by myths about Awolowo's hatred of the East that he was merely trying out the old animosities in the garb of a pacifier trying to win, by other means, the battles he had always pursued in Nigerian politics. The bottomline is that Ojukwu and Awolowo did not reach an agreement. Their positions in spite of the parliamentary language in which they were couched were fundamentally at variance. Not to forget: it used to be taken as apocryphal by all, except core Awoists, that Ojukwu actually came to see him in the guest house on the last night after the day's plenary. He wanted a one on one with Awolowo. Understandably, Awolowo refused a one on one. Soyinka has now retailed in his autobiography, *YOU MUST SET FORTH AT DAWN*, (131-132) what Awolowo told him:

"The 1967 eve of secession delegation of national public figures authorized by Yakubu Gowon, to dialogue with Eastern leadership had been led by Obafemi Awolowo, and the formal, well-publicised meeting between the two sides lasted nearly all day. The Easterners listed their grievances and demands, spoke with all apparent seriousness, and saw their guests off to their

chalets. Late that same night however, Awolowo was disturbed by a knock on the door.

It was the Eastern leader, Ojukwu, himself. He admitted that he had waited till late into the night so as to be able to speak to Awolowo in strictest privacy. Sure, said Awolowo, but he also insisted that at least one or two persons join him. That was agreed, and Awolowo called up the adjoining chalet, woke up the Police commissioner for the Western Region, Olufunwa, and a close political aide.

Accompanying Ojukwu was a small team that included a Professor of History from the University of Ibadan who had fled, like other Easterners, to their beleaguered state. Years afterwards, during the struggle against the Abacha dictatorship, the same don introduced himself to me at a meeting in the United States in 1996, and revealed his participation at the nocturnal meeting of thirty years earlier. His account was a consistent and detailed confirmation of what Awolowo confided in me that afternoon.

Odumegwu Ojukwu's mission was unambiguous, Awolowo said to me. "The young man had come to inform me that the East had decided on secession, and that there was no going back. All that was left was the announcement of a date. He said, "Sir, I have not come to argue, but to inform you. It has been decided".

"It was clear that any discussion

was futile", Awolowo continued, "After all, we had done nothing but talk all day. Ojukwu confessed that he had agreed to meet the delegation at all only out of respect for my person. Biafra had already taken a decision".

"I was not surprised", the Chief admitted. "I did one thing, though, I made one request of him in fact, I insisted on it. I said to Ojukwu at least, let us in the West - I, specifically - have a minimum of two weeks' notice before you announce the decision. And he promised. Yes, he promised me that much".

I hesitated, but could not resist asking: "Why two weeks? You told him you needed two weeks - to do what?"

Awolowo gave one of his enigmatic smiles, "You know Olufunwa, the Police Commissioner?"

I nodded Yes.

"Well, apart from me, he is the only one who knows the answer to that question. And he's not likely to tell you either".

I did not press him.

Hardly had Awolowo's delegation settled back into Federal territory than Ojukwu declared an Independent State of Biafra. The date was May 30, 1967. A short while after, Chief Awolowo accepted to serve as Commissioner of Finance under Yakubu Gowon.

The Federal Government had however made a pre-emptive move. On May 27, Gowon abolished all four regions and split the nation into twelve new

states. This achieved the goal of dangling before the entities that were newly carved out from the East, the attraction of their own autonomous governance, with all the resources of the oil soaked Niger delta. Between the two strokes, loyalties in the former Eastern Region were split. War appeared inevitable”

Soyinka's narration does not include the parting shot that Ojukwu gave the next morning as he followed Awolowo to the tarmac to say goodbye. Shaking the Chief with both hands, Ojukwu said in Yoruba “Baba, atilo” ‘Old one, we've gone’. (as Awolowo reported it to his followers). As he took off from Enugu Airport with his fellow peace hunters, Awolowo knew that Biafra was on the cards. He did not expect Ojukwu to make as immediate an announcement as he did. But it should not have been any surprise. A prospective war leader who reveals a decision of such strategic significance to a prime decision-maker on the enemy side should not be expected to wait a moment longer than necessary to pre-empt a counterforce. It would have been better if Ojukwu had not told Awolowo anything about the plans to announce Biafra. But once he did, he was obliged to break whatever promise he had made. What kind of General would reveal such information to another, a potential antagonist, who had his own calculus of the power equation in the country that he was intent on splitting apart and not be worried about the consequences of a leakage. The

short of the matter is that once Ojukwu discussed Biafra with Awolowo, it was, or should have been, clear that any promise he made about giving Awolowo a breathing to organize his own fraction would not be respected.

As such, there is nothing in the forgotten documents to suggest that Ojukwu and Awolowo had reached any decisions about what to do if Ojukwu had waited. What Awolowo could have done can be left to the imagination. Only a very naïve Ojukwu could have accepted an agreement made with Awolowo as viable in the circumstances of the Western Region at that time. Certainly, Ojukwu was not that naïve. He was calculating enough to have known that whatever influence Awolowo had over his Yoruba people was not enough. Ojukwu was Nigerian enough to know that that influence would not have much cut in a situation where a virtual occupation army, as Awolowo actually called it, commanded by a brazenly Northern catchment in the army, was sitting pretty in the Western Region. It was an army only just moving from a secessionist disposition to the format of national unity. What is now well known is that the Yoruba echelon in the Nigerian Army was roundly pro-unity.

Among soldiers, on both sides, it was naïve to have expected that the Yoruba officers in the Army or even its civilian leadership would consider going into a coalition with an Igbo-led secessionist move

without their having made a genuine contribution to the framing of the project. Were there to be a handshake across the Niger, it would have had to depend not on any one-sided plans but a community of grievances shared. The intelligence that Awolowo himself gathered impressionistically during the Enugu meeting gave him enough reason to believe, as he told his followers thereafter, that the Eastern Region was not prepared for the war it was about to embark upon. Even if he was the most feckless leader in the world, and Awolowo was not known to embark on a project he had not given much thought to, there was hardly a chance that he would agree to go into a war on Ojukwu's side on the basis of a two week mobilization of his people.

Incidentally, Awolowo's hunch was shared on harder evidence by Biafran military leaders led by Hilary Njoku who knew that Biafrans had been stampeded into but not readied for war. In order to appreciate Hilary Njoku's position, many people would need to read Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's novel, *Half of a Yellow Sun*, the love story in a time of war, if only for the atmospherics. It shows how the General gave wooden sticks to his people, as civil defenders, in a shooting war claiming that no force in Black Africa could subdue Biafra. Sheer emotional grandstanding was what the war effort rested upon. But for the shenanigans on the Federal side, the deliberate pussy-

footing and sometimes larking in the war front, as a way of setting the stage to settle some scores with the authorities in Lagos, it would have been a much-shorter war.

As readers of Onukaba Adinoyi Ojo's biography of Obasanjo must know, Murtala Muhammed never gave up his grouse: "We told you not to end the war the way you did so as to sort things out, you went *gaddam gaddam* (Hausa expression for heedless rush) and finished it. Now you have a lion in your hands, a lion that does not roar, bite or claw, absolutely inefficient and ineffective", Muhammed charged impulsively."

As for the People's General in Biafra, he was carried shoulder high on a wave that he could have resisted and steered in a different direction but preferred to manipulate. At any rate, what Awolowo had offered Ojukwu as a solution to the crisis was absolutely outside the rooting for secession. It was more coherent and more consistent with his already fairly well-known position on Federalism and a strategy of welfarism as a solution to the Nigerian crisis. At the meeting, as the published document shows, Awolowo believed that: "What we want in Nigeria is a house to be built which will be big enough to accommodate all of us, without friction, without trouble. Let us have a plan made, let us get an expert contractor to build the house. When the house is completed to our satisfaction let them call it what name they like, what is important is that

the house should be big enough to accommodate all of us comfortably, without friction and without trouble. I think we should forget about federation or confederation. Let us see what the contents are going to be. Once the contents are stated then we will allow political scientists to give it a name they like. The name does not matter to us so long so we are satisfied that this is the sort of thing we need to make us live together as Nigerians.

"I was a little bit disturbed by the point you made before. I hope you have not taken a final decision on it, that is, that the East will not associate with the North in future. Easterners have fought more than any other group in this country over the years to make Nigeria what it is, or what it was, before the crisis began. I think it will be a pity if they just forget something for which they have laboured for years. Many of the Easterners who fought for "One Nigeria" are no longer with us. It will not be a good tribute to their memory by destroying that "one Nigeria". Certainly, it is not going to be the same as it used to be. I have taken a stand on that, and I am prepared to drop tribal labels at the moment, but I know in my own mind what sort of thing I have in view for the federation. But I think it will be a great pity and tragedy and disservice to the memories of all those who have gone to disband Nigeria. And here we are not here to criticize anybody, I think it is generally agreed that some units have done more for the unity of

Nigeria than others. The East certainly have not yielded first place to anyone in that regard. I would like you to consider that aspect very seriously".

This position taken on Saturday 6th May 1967 was quite in sync with the position he had taken at a meeting of the Leaders of Thought meeting at the Western Hall, Agodi, Ibadan, on Monday 1st of May 1967. In that speech, his aim was to undermine the position of those Nigerian Leaders of Thought who, as he later explained, were "seriously suggesting that the so-called four component units of the country should go their own separate ways as so many sovereign states". Specifically, he meant to repudiate the proposition that the Federation would be viable even without the East as was being canvassed by some people who had, in his words, "settled it finally in their minds the sort of Constitution they consider suitable for the whole country, or such part of it as may be left after the East shall have opted out of the Federation".

At the Agodi meeting, he placed four imperatives before the Western Nigerian Leaders of Thought in particular and the Nation in general. Of the Four Imperatives, he said:

"Two of them are categorical imperatives and two are conditional.

ONE: Only a peaceful solution must be found to arrest the present worsening stalemate and restore normalcy.

TWO: The Eastern Region

must be encouraged to remain part of the Federation.

THREE: If the Eastern Region is allowed by acts of omission or commission to secede from or opt out of Nigeria, then the Western Region and Lagos must also stay out of the Federation.

FOUR: The people of Western Nigeria and Lagos should participate in the AD Hoc Committee or any similar Body only on the basis of absolute equality with the other Regions of the Federation”

It would require a major somersault in logic to make this look like a vote for the secession of any part of Nigeria. Actually, as early as August 1966, on his being reprieved from his ten-year imprisonment, Awolowo had made a speech in which he said: “The breaking up of Nigeria into a number of sovereign states would not only do permanent damage to the reputation of contemporary Nigerian leaders but would also usher in terrible disasters which would bedevil us and many generations to come.” To contort such a speech in favour of secession belongs to a vaulting refusal to see no reason that is not pro-secession. To insist however that Awolowo encouraged the Igbo to secede actually insults the intelligence of the average Igbo. The implication is that after the pogrom of 1966, it required an Obafemi Awolowo, whether as a goad or quarry to hearten the attempt at secession. It is close to saying that they thought of an

alternative that was different but had to bow to Awolowo's, an old enemy's, prodding. This may be the picture that many Biafrans liked to have of themselves. Those who think the Igbos deserve a better picture of themselves may be called names. But it does not change the score.

What is interesting in this regard is that well-known acts perpetrated by other leaders during the war are actually now being credited to Awolowo by postwar propagandists and are being made to stick beyond lines of collective responsibility while actual performances that he made are s m u d g e d o u t o f acknowledgement. For a man who could be said to have done more than any other single individual to have garnered the o u t - o f - t h e - w a r - f r o n t intelligence to keep Nigeria as one country, it is actually a surprise to see how little Federal cover has been given to Awolowo by Federal agencies and establishments. Generals who were worried that Awolowo might convert his proficiency in the management of the country's finances and general affairs into political power certainly preferred that the war story be told against him. For ex-Biafrans who believe that Awolowo disabled their war efforts through his many ploys, including the change of the currency, the refusal to devalue the Naira, and the ordering of a stop to food corridors, Awolowo deserves to be sent to the International court even post-

humously. The concentration on Awolowo as it turns out is such a fixation that many are prepared to believe that even if Awolowo was still in prison when the pogrom took place, he should be arraigned for it. It is very much unlike the position taken by the Jews who not only went after exposing the perpetrators of the holocaust after the Second World War but took extremely inter-subjective care to ensure that no innocents were punished for crimes that others committed. The reverse, clearly, is the case with the Nigerian crisis and civil war. It is quite interesting in this regard, and perhaps, a mark of Achebe's forgiving nature that in his *The Trouble with Nigeria*, he grants the status of arch-nationalist to Mallam Aminu Kano, of whose faction of the People's Redemption Party, PRP, he became a member, even after knowing of the Mallam's mobilization of the resistance to feared Igbo domination after the January 15 Coup. Or he did not know it? Allan Feinstein, Mallam's biographer, had given enough leads to explain the radical leader's mobilization of the North before the pogrom. On page 225 of *The African Revolutionary*, the autobiography of Mallam Aminu Kano, he writes that his subject “had to decide what was right for his country and his North Aminu Kano's smouldering fear of Southern domination had finally culminated in what he considered a genuine and serious threat to the

development of his first love, Northern Nigeria". As it happened, Aminu Kano was arrested in connection with the pogrom in the North but was promptly released for want of evidence. Decades later, as the issues are being memorialized by key actors of that era, the post-coup mobilization has been coming under new lights. As happened, it was Alhaji Ahmed Joda, a top aide to Major Hassan Usman Katsina, Governor of Northern Region, who was sent by "top civil servants" in Kaduna to meet with Alhaji Maitama Sule in Kano to "initiate leadership in getting the people of the North to understand the aims of government" after the January 1966 coup. On pages 211 -212 of the biography, Maitama Sule..Danmasanin Kanoby Ayuba T. Abubakar, it is told of how it was Maitama Sule, an NPC stalwart before the coup, who "suggested that Mallam Aminu Kano was the most suitable, because he was widely respected, never held a government leadership appointment and had the people behind him. Again, he was a leading figure in UPGA.....So Maitama arranged for Mallam Aminu to meet Alhaji Joda the following day. Thereafter, Mallam Aminu Kano became the leading consultant for the government and top civil servants and their link with the rest of the North". In *The Story of a Humble Life: An Autobiography*, Tanko Yakasai, an Aminu Kano deputy in the Northern Elements Progressive Union (NEPU) authenticates

the story: "At the beginning, most NEPU members were happy with the military takeover. It was only after some few days that they started to think twice about the situation...the way some Igbo traders at Sabongari market in Kano started to treat Northerners". A meeting was then held in Aminu Kano's house in Sudawa by old NEPU stalwarts. Aminu Kano "drew the attention of the meeting to the apathy pervading the political scene in the North and urged those present to rise up to the occasion; otherwise it would be difficult to rejuvenate political interest in the people. The meeting then decided that a tour of the Northern Region should be undertaken to make contact with opinion leaders with a view to alerting them of the danger posed by that situation. The tour was to be undertaken under the guise of paying condolence visits to the families and traditional rulers of those killed during the military take-over.... We started from Sokoto, followed by Bauchi and Maiduguri. Within a few weeks, we covered the whole region". (page 221). Although accused of having joined the NPC, "we continued with our mobilization campaign", writes Tanko Yakasai. Of course, there were different contact groups mobilizing, sometimes with cross-cutting memberships. They were all to make what seemed a consensual response to Major General Aguiyi Ironsi's Unification Decree which according to Tanko

Yakasai "created a lot of fear in the minds of the civil servants and traditional rulers...." A protest rally organized in Kano against the Unification Decree to turned the seething anger into a region-wide prairie fire that grew into the pogrom against the Igbo and those associated with them. As it happened, the pogrom preceded and accompanied the Revenge Coup of July 29, 1966.

The matter of interest is that Awolowo was still in prison at Calabar when it all began to happen. But it was after the exodus of the Igbo back to the East and of many southerners from the North; and then, the failure of the various leaders of Thought meetings, including the Aburi meeting in Ghana, to resolve the consequent loss of faith in the idea of a united country, that secession was declared. And war began. In the narration of the crisis and the tragedies of the war, different partisans have chosen what to emphasize between the grisly images of the pogrom and the guitar-ribbed and kwashiorkor ridden children in Biafra and the direct casualties in the war front. Who to blame from the perspective of those who suffered the dire consequences? To ask is to put history in a quandary because in the situation of organized anarchies that preceded the war, it is the botched January 15 Coup that takes the rap. All murders are bad but it was the unrounded nature of the violence, the lopsided regional accounting, that Nigerians, North and South, will always remember. It

turned jubilation into self-questioning angst. The truth is that the years of distrust already on the ground, allowed for an interpretation which was incorrect. It did not start as an Igbo coup but it was turned into one by successive acts of commission and omission. It called for cultural empathy which was unwisely knocked aside not just by the arrogance of power which all military rule insinuates, but the inability of the new rulers at the centre to see Nigeria as a family of different nationalities needing an effort of mind and a lot of civility to turn into a nation of shared conversations. Leaders may have their prejudices but the necessity for shared living calls for learning how to let people govern themselves irrespective of how unprepared they may be. Education for leadership needs to begin from having laws that are not tilted against any part of the polity. Unfortunately, once violence became the definition of the terms of association, it was not going to be easy to retract. As violence begets violence, those who may be temporarily on top seek a draconian hold in order not to be sucked into its quicksand and boil. Those who began by detesting a unitary system ended up creating a unitary hegemony. Creating trust and a basis for stability becomes a goal that ends by having a lopsided cut. The point is that nothing can replace the effort which needs to be made in every society, even one that is uni-cultural rather than multi-ethnic and multi-

religious, to let decision-making come from within a community rather than as an imposition. The failure of all the coups in Nigeria's history and all of them have been failures is that they created the opposite of what they claimed they wanted. By being generally of a lopsided cut, all of them have been preparations for a genocide of sorts. Thus, even before the pogrom created the basis for a war, to use the word genocide in a society where power is regionally or ethnically positioned, required an accounting with semblances if not actualities of genocide. Specific to the period of civil war, those who use the term genocide tend however to use the term in the sense of a propaganda pitch to rev a cause or score points in the competition for power. Not distinguishing the pogrom in the North from the actual deaths and derangement of life found in the war situations yields too much ground to propaganda. One reason for this is that once war was declared, both sides were on a mutual genocidal binge. Put the word to some test and it turns out to have been so much a propaganda ploy to attract support for Biafra. In actual fact, as Biafra shrank from all of Eastern Region to the closed-in Igbo heartland, the weight of Federal might could not erase the sheerness of a pounding of one identifiable set of Nigerians. A war in a multi-ethnic society poses this execrable frame. Only those who love war may try to deodorize it by pretending that

it does not yield forms of genocide. On both sides of the Nigerian civil war, the genocidal instincts were quite alert. And knowing that genocides are such bad things, propagandists reach for international support by playing it up even where the claims are tenuous. This is why talking about the starving children of Biafra as an incidence of genocide turns out not to be such a straightforward matter. Biafra lost much potential international support when it was discovered, and discussed across the board, that the General of the People's Army was engaged in unethical profiling of starving children in order to attract international sympathy. In his letter of resignation from his \$400,000 contract and his post as Public Relations Representative of Biafra in the United States, Robert S. Goldstein, who had helped to build up much international concern for Biafra wrote to the Biafran Commander in chief as follows: "It is inconceivable to me that you would stop the feeding of thousands of your countrymen (under auspices of world organizations such as the international Red cross, world council of churches and many more) via a land corridor which is the only practical way to bring in food to help at this time.... I cannot serve you any longer. Nor can I be party to suppressing the fact that your starving thousands have the food, medicine and milk available to them....it can and is ready to be delivered through

international organizations to you. Only your constant refusal has stopped its delivery.” This piece of archival material may well have been a propaganda coup for the Federal side but it is part of the story. Around the much-trumpeted genocide, was a Biafra proto-state that was prepared to send some well-placed children out of harm's way to havens in Ivory Coast and elsewhere in the world but was using other people's children in Biafra as guinea pigs for propaganda purposes. The truth, bitter, as it must sound, is that once war was declared, both sides were on a genocidal binge.

The reverse side of the Biafran charge of genocide against the Federal side is that the charge can be firmly and rigorously laid that Biafra sent people into combat who had no weapons to fight in a real war. And there was a vast civilian population whose food needs were not considered either in the initial promotion of war frenzy or in the course of the war, to be an issue. Those who like to trip on the propaganda of war, and are probably hoping that they would be given food reliefs if they manage to plunge Nigeria into another war with their unthinking fictions, need to be told that it will not be called a war if one side must feed the other side. That such considerations were always there, and were seriously entertained, is why many writers call the Nigerian Civil war a phony war. Or a brother's war. The gleeful latching upon Awolowo's statement that

starvation is a weapon of war as a means of raking up old inter-ethnic animosities or winning a prosecutor's slot in a Nuremberg-type trial, won't change this reality. Even the Federal side which allowed and then stopped food shipment to Biafra knew that it was merely trying to fulfill all righteousness. Who has yet found a way to stop soldiers in any theatre of war from hijacking the food meant for the civilian population? Who does not know that soldiers move on their stomachs and are more likely to hijack food meant for civilians than not? The question is always there: whether or how to allow a welfare package to the other side without committing suicide. Even if war is thereby prolonged. This is talking about a war between brothers. Sad, it is that the truly brotherly elements that characterized the waging of the war on both sides of the Nigerian civil war have not been allowed to surface by the spoilsports of the propaganda Ministries.

Talking war as war, when Biafrans made the famous incursion into the Midwest State, they were not thinking of the convenience of Midwesterners. Their strategic exigencies had little thought for the sensibilities of a region that had shown much sympathy for the Biafran cause up to the point of not allowing the region to be a staging post for launching an attack on Biafra. The region was treated as mere faggot for the fire. It turned out that the military Governor of the state,

David Ejor had been outnumbered and out-gunned by Igbo-speaking elements in his cabinet who actually out-voted him on a six by three basis when the pressure came for Biafrans to be allowed to come in. *Strictu sensu*, therefore, Biafra did not invade. Biafra was invited into the Midwest State. Hence, as many writers on the war have reported, no shot was fired. The food and other resources, including hard currency, for whose sake the incursion was made, may have been a good enough bargain for the incoming army. But it exposed a lot of untoward factors including ethnic arrogance, which told the minority ethnic nationalities in the war-torn South what could continue to happen to them if they remained part of Biafra. To think of it, it is the easy indifference to the rights of the minority ethnic nationalities who itched to take their own lives in their own hands that horridly vitiated the whole idea of the Biafran enterprise. And it was this that gave the Federal side such moral authority, egged on, since the Revenge coup, by the release of Adaka Boro and his partisans who had been sentenced to death, awaiting execution, for pushing secession for a Niger Delta Republic. It was this that kept the creation of new states on the hot burner even without the threat of a Biafran secession to grant its inexorability. The bottom line is that the evidence of people seeking freedom for themselves without considering that others also

needed it was what routed Biafra, even as much as Federal guns and the idea of starvation as a weapon of war.

Let's face it: it rankles. I mean, the long-standing and brazen refusal to recognize that there were others in the Eastern Region who deserved to be treated like the proper nationalities that they were rather than as pariahs in their own country. What cannot be denied is that it was Awolowo's fate to have earned the dislike of so many outside the Western Region whose region he slated for splitting from early in his career. He made the creation of states, along ethnic lines, his lifelong pursuit, while fighting for Nigeria to be turned from a mere geographical expression to a cultural expression, a nation, through the establishment of a common access for all and sundry to free education, free health, full employment and pensions and the freedom of the press and judiciary. No question about it: Awolowo was a very ambitious man who believed in becoming the leader of a great country that could lift Africans up. He felt it would be a belittling of his project if he stood by to allow an energetic nationality like the Igbo to excise themselves through the fecklessness of leaders who would send their people to the death in their millions rather than prepare them for the future with the calculating gumption of true generals. The sad thing for him was to hear people talk about how much the masses in Biafra wanted war, as if Generals are

not supposed to be citizens, specially trained to see beyond anger and bitterness and therefore able to obviate feckless projecteering in the name of war. Do you send your children to commit suicide because you are angry with your enemy? Where went that proverb which says that you do not ask who killed your father until you are firmly holding a matchete from the right side? So, what was Biafra's handle on the basis of which the world was told that no power in black Africa could subdue her. And then, at the end of the war, to suggest that it was those who hated Igbo people who were working so hard to bring them back to Nigeria by force? Or who were threatening to leave Nigeria if the Igbo were ever to be allowed to go; and going the whole hog to plead with Igbo leaders not to go to war! It may be good for war propaganda to tone the hatreds that shored up conflict. It simply does not make good post-war logic. Irrespective of the polemics and rhetorical afflatus that bedevil public arguments with notions of how Nigeria has no future, it is clear that a Nigeria together, as it is, even with all the poor quality of the quarrels that we all have with one another, is a better country than the fractionized mayhem, each acting like a mini anarchic Nigeria, which we would otherwise have to deal with. Awolowo believed it, showed it during the civil war, and too many Nigerians have shown that they agree, that this is still the closest that Africa has to a

country able to stand up to the rest of the world and thrive for the good of all Africans. The many differences that some people deplore, and which Awolowo spent his life seeking to re-engineer in creative directions, are actually part of what will save this country. The point is to prepare all concerned to work for that future rather than merely grumble, seek scapegoats for our own failings, douse it with cynical rhetoric, while waiting for it like manna from heaven.

The sad part and the shame of the moment is that, unable to look the history of our differences in the face, we allow ourselves to be flattered or incensed by odd serenades of ethnic and regional fictions. Even those who know that it is bad for their ethnic groups to seek to live like islands unto themselves are gleefully developing discrepant moralities for their supposed people: a benign one for self and a pernicious or predatory morality for others. It is usually based on bad logic and poor thinking as much of this narrative has shown. When people think badly they want to hide it by putting the rest of us in situation where, if we disagree, we can be accused of being haters of their ethnic group or nationality. So, I am told that a proverb belongs to an ethnic group so that if I disagree with the bad thinking that goes with it I may be charged with pushing for ethnocide or genocide. It is a form of blackmail that yields backwardness for a people. I

think we should feel free to show our dislike when people are mauled by their own as when they are mauled by other people. By the same token if bad logic is claimed for or by an ethnic group, it amounts to self-immolation on anyone's part to sit quiet and say it is their business. It is not just their business because their bad logic will not let neighbours live well or rest in peace. We are all therefore bound to be our brothers' keeper. We would need always to contest the veracity of what is claimed against other perceptions of reality. Until cultural empathy is achieved or approximated. I mean: not even the disabilities and pains of one life authorizes that life to deny other lives their due.

These are precepts that I think we should all bear in mind, as we confront situations such as when those returning home to Nigeria after Biafra found a country not too different from the one they left. Unhappily, the Biafra they knew maltreated Biafrans as much if not more than Nigeria kept maltreating Nigerians. Much of it came more from improper organizational setups, plain incompetence, rather than sheer wickedness or hatred as we are all being made to believe when we come to it. Rather than describe the problems with a clarity that allows for seeking genuine solutions, we get all manner of exorbitance, which push away answers and solutions. Thus, as a way of laying a basis for more harmony between the ex-

Biafrans and their Nigerian siblings, we hardly were told about the many who returned to find that their properties were intact and that people actually protected their rights in those properties. We hear so much about the absolute deprivation of Biafrans through the granting of N20 ex-gratia payment (slightly more than the equivalent of a third-class clerk's monthly pay) to every survivor after the war. It is forgotten that it was meant as a short-term welfare policy to enable many get back to their homes from wherever they were at when the war ended. It was not meant to be payment for being rebels or as an exchange for Biafran money. That was why it was called ex-gratia. It was supposed to be a provisional payment while sorting those who could still find the papers to prove how much they had in their accounts. Accountably, the system collapsed. Only a few could have managed to keep their papers who had not already emptied their accounts while they were leaving a country they did not intend to come back to. It called for an exercise of leadership on all sides; for a genuine lobbying or muzzling of whoever was in authority to act beyond the rule of law and to find a way of resolving the clearly confused circumstance of so many people having Biafran money in a country where it was impossible to regard it as legal tender. But just as in the planning for the war, there was so much left undone even in the

manner and mode of surrender. After the war, I used to wonder why the leaders dissolved into atoms. I am saying this partly because I am yet to meet someone who has vouchsafed a formula that could have resolved the matter of the ex-gratia payments without rancor. The same goes for the issue of abandoned property which no longer had a public advocacy once Sam Mbakwe who had briefed Awolowo to take the matter to court was importuned to withdraw it on the awkward reasoning that if Awolowo won the case in court he would make political capital out of it. It became a case of better not fight the abandoned property issue for the masses, if some old enemy would share in the glory. Hence the matter festered till it became a case of everyone for himself. The General of the People's Army had to wait till as late as the last week of General Ibrahim Babangida in office in 1993 to wrest his own abandoned property. We don't know about those who never had that luck. We don't know about the soldiers who could not get their pensions after the General got his. But that is the way the post-civil war atomization of demands got covered up by a rev of self-interest that many like to present as the interest of the whole nationality. The truth is that those to whom things happened, and who hardly had a chance of happening to anything, but suffered all the same, never had champions. It left mere grumblers in the public space who are still

wondering why others won't fight battles they themselves have abandoned.

But there was clearly one silver lining in the whole business which ought to be acknowledged even in the face of the harsh circumstances that existed. It is in the fact declared by S G I k o k u , the Commissioner for Economic Development in East Central State in the Daily Times of May 22, 1971 that "the Federal Government had made available 21.505 million pounds grant and 10.620 million as advances and loans. It was part of the accumulated amounts saved for the East Central State during the war by Chief Obafemi Awolowo, the Commissioner for Finance and Vice Chairman of the Federal Executive Council, on the basis of population distribution of revenue. No one, these days, is ever allowed to know this little matter even if the point is to show how well those who wanted the Biafrans dead followed the financial regulations that guided the Federation and so kept what was due to the East in reserve for them till they returned to the fold. This is not even to ask about how the money was actually spent, which I am sure must be blamed on those who had saved the money. Besides, there really ought now to be a cross-check of Awolowo's claim that he saved African Continental Bank from collapse in order to help shore up the economy of the East. Right? Such things ought not to be left in the way that those who

took monies from Biafra to buy food and ammunition but failed to deliver have been forgotten with their loot of war.

This is why, across the social media, it is painful to encounter the many angry discussants of the civil war years who see it only in terms of what needed to have been done for the East. My grouse is that it is not being discussed in terms of what the leaders of the East owed the people but failed to deliver. Most of the intellectuals and leaders of opinion go about seeking to entrench fictions that merely disable the capacity of the ex-Biafrans to build with other Nigerians. The good thing is that the average Igbo man is way ahead of the griping ones who do not know that the war ended long ago. They are everywhere long gone beyond sweating talk about how to be Nigerian. Others, instead of helping the people to think through the necessity to get empowerment through education, industry and genuine employment, they are busy reproducing fictions that landed the country in a mess of incivility. And they are adding no value to existing answers beyond the fluff of ethnic nationalism masquerading as high-mindedness. Surely, blaming a neighbor for the mess you helped to create by not caring or standing up for an identifiable principle in pursuit of goals, is no way to go. Similarly, the habit of shouting my people my people has actually become a way of not caring for or about the people. This can be proved by simply asking why all the governments in the zone contrived

helplessness for forty years while the roads in the East deteriorated to war-time conditions. In a region where trade is an *Eze* with feathers on a red cap, you would have expected that all the governments in the zone would come together to tackle the monster as a matter of emergency. A people so energetic and gutsy, pumping so much enterprise across the country should not be so self-neglecting as to be waiting for others to raise or de-marginalize them. Unless as a strategy for getting more and more in the national spoils system. I mean, it is plain bad manners to blame other Nigerians, who have not found answers to their problems, and with whom cooperation is a fitter strategy than the politics of the old gripe. At rate, which part of Nigeria is in a good state where industries have not collapsed and public schools in a sorry state! As I see it, a distracted individualism which some people prefer to describe as republicanism, is being priced above a genuine sitting down to plan with and for the people. Instead of inventing enemies, and seeing competition in zero-sum terms, there is a need to mobilize affect and resources to rise above the disabilities that we all share as Nigerians.

Note: This article appeared on Sahara Reporters, October 21, 2012.

FOR THE RECORD

OJUKWU'S MESSAGE AS HE FLEES BIAFRA



Proud and heroic Biafrans, fellow countrymen and women, once again I salute you. My Government has been reviewing the progress of this war that has now raged for the past two and a half years with increasing fury. It is well that at each stage we remind ourselves of the purposes of this war, what we are fighting to safeguard, and why we are so determined

to continue to defend ourselves.

You have borne the brunt of the strains of this fight. You have suffered unmentionable privations at the hands of an enemy that has used every conceivable weapon, particularly the weapon of starvation, against an innocent people whose only crime is that they choose to live in peace and security according to their own

beliefs and away from a country that had condemned and rejected them.

Your heroism as a people has sustained our gallant armed forces in defending the territory of our fatherland and in giving you that protection that we all so ardently need and desire. You have had your villages and homes ravaged and plundered, your assets destroyed, millions

of your sons and daughters murdered in cold blood, and your youth condemned to misery by the enemy's recent movements and indiscriminate shelling and bombing of hamlets, villages and refugees in their camps and on the roads.

All this sacrifice has been in the interest and with the sole purpose of achieving security which was the main motive forcing our taking up arms to defend ourselves. We had proclaimed ourselves a republic independent and sovereign because we were and are satisfied that only through it can we guarantee our security. Nevertheless we left the door open and [declared] several occasions that we welcomed any other initiative that offers us the security we need. Each time we have said so our enemies and detractors have mischievously distorted our statements. We are entitled in the light of our recent experience to demand to know what measures are being proposed for our security.

The task of a leader of a people at war is to be responsive to the plight of his people, to determine what level of sacrifice can be accepted. Your patriotism has exceeded all expectations and earned worldwide admiration for your fortitude. Armed with your mandate I have striven to apply the forces at our disposal to the best of our ability against overwhelming odds. Throughout we have made strenuous efforts for peace, taking initiatives of our own to

get peace talks going, made compromises in order to get our adversaries to settle our conflict at the conference table. Each time a callous world has imposed a new set of conditions. Each condition that we fulfill gives rise to an entirely new one.

More recently, some friends of both sides have made some proposals for an arrangement with Nigeria that in our view will offer to Biafrans the security to which we aspire. This has been referred to as certain forms of union, confederalities, association, or commonwealth arrangements with Nigeria.

Once more, to show our honesty, and in accord with my own frequent affirmations that I would personally go anywhere to secure peace and security for my people, I am now travelling out of Biafra to explore with our friends all these proposals further and fully and to be at hand to settle these issues to the best of my ability, always serving the interests of my people. Our detractors may see this move as a sign of collapse of our struggle, or an escape from my responsibilities.

If, God helping, we can by this latest show of earnestness secure for our people the end of destruction of your homes and property, I shall be satisfied that this venture on which I embark with your blessing has yielded fruit. I know that your prayers go with me as I go in search of peace and that, God willing, I

shall soon be back among you.

In my short absence I have arranged for the Chief of General Staff, Maj Gen. Philip Effiong, to administer the Government with the rest of the Cabinet to run the affairs of this Republic while I go on this mission, accompanied by my Political Adviser and my Chief Secretary.

I once more pay my tribute to the Biafra Armed Forces, and urge all ranks to maintain their positions while I seek an early and honourable end to this struggle and all the suffering it has brought on our people. Proud and courageous Biafrans, [noble] Biafrans, Biafra shall live. God bless you all.

Pre-recorded and broadcast over Biafran radio at 6.00 a.m., 11 January 1970. (Text from B.B.C. ME/3277/Bl.)

Ref: AHM Kirk-Greene, *Crisis and Conflict in Nigeria: A Documentary Source Book 1966-1970*, Gregg Rivavals, 1993, pp. 449-450

LT.-COL. EFFIONG ANNOUNCES SURRENDER OF BIAFRA



Late Lt. Col. Philip Effiong

Fellow Countrymen,

As you know, I was asked to be the officer administering the government of this republic on the 10th of January, 1970. Since then, I know that some of you have been waiting to hear a statement from me. I have had extensive consultations with the leaders of the community, both military and civil, and I am now encouraged and hasten to make this statement to you by the mandate of the Armed Forces and the people of this country. I have assumed the leadership of the government.

Throughout history, injured people have had to resort to arms in their self-defence where peaceful negotiations fail. We are no exception. We took up arms because of the sense of insecurity generated in our people by the events of 1966. We have fought in defence of that cause.

I take this opportunity to congratulate officers and men of our Armed Forces for their gallantry and bravery which have earned for them the admiration of the whole world. I thank the civil population for their steadfastness and courage in the face of overwhelming odds and starvation. I am convinced now that a stop must be put to the blood-shed which is going on as a result of the war. I am also convinced that the suffering of our people must be brought to an immediate end. Our people are now disillusioned, and those elements of the old government

regime who have made negotiations and reconciliation impossible have voluntarily removed themselves from our midst.

I have, therefore, instructed an orderly disengagement of troops. I am dispatching emissaries to make contact with Nigeria's field commanders in places like Onitsha, Owerri, Awka, Enugu and Calabar with a view to arranging armistice. I urge on General Gowon, in the name of humanity, to order his troops to pause while an armistice is negotiated in order to avoid the mass suffering caused by the movement of population.

We have always believed that our differences with Nigeria should be settled by peaceful negotiations. A delegation of our people is therefore ready to meet representatives of Nigeria Federal Government anywhere to negotiate a peace settlement on the basis of OAU resolutions. The delegation will consist of the Chief Justice Sir Louis Mbanefo as leader, Professor Eni Njoku, Mr. J. I. Emembolu, Chief A. E. Bassey, Mr. E. Agumah. The delegation will have full authority to negotiate on our behalf. I have appointed a council to advise me on the government of the country. It consists of the chief Justice Sir Louis Mbanefo, Brigadier P. C. Amadi-Army, Brigadier C. A. Nwanwo-Army, Captain W. A. Anuku-Navy, Wing Commander J. I. Ezero-Air Force, Inspector-General of Police, Chief P. I. Okeke, Attorney-General Mr. J.

I. Emembolu, Professor Eni Njoku, Dr. I. Eke, Chief A. E. Udoffia, Chief A. E. Bassey, Mr. M. T. Mbu, Mr. E. Agumah, Chief Frank Opuigo, Chief J. N. Echeruo. Any question of a government in exile is repudiated by our people.

Civilian population are hereby advised to remain calm and to co-operate with the Armed Forces and the Police in the maintenance of law and order. They should remain in their homes and stop mass movements which have increased suffering and loss of lives.

On behalf of our people, I thank those foreign governments and friends who have steadfastly given us support in our cause. We shall continue to count on their continued help and counsel. I also thank His Holiness the Pope, the Joint Church Aid and other relief organisations for the help they have given for the relief of suffering and starvation. I appeal to all governments to give urgent help for relief and to prevail on the Federal Military Government to order their troops to stop all military operations.

May God help us all.

Text taken from transcript of actual radio broadcast over the Biafran radio at 4.40 p.m. on Monday 12 January 1970.

Ref: AHM Kirk-Greene, *Crisis and Conflict in Nigeria: A Documentary Source Book 1966-1970*, Gregg Rivavals, 1993, pp. 451-452

GENERAL GOWON WELCOMES BIAFRA'S SURRENDER



My Dear Compatriots:

We have arrived at one of the greatest moments of the history in our nation. A great moment of victory for national unity and reconciliation. We have arrived at the end of a tragic and painful conflict.

Thirty months ago we were obliged to take up arms against our brothers who were deceived and misled into armed rebellion against their fatherland by the former Lieut-Col. Ojukwu. Our objective was to crush the rebellion; to maintain the territorial integrity of our nation; to assert the ability of the blackman to build a strong, progressive and prosperous, modern state and to ensure respect, dignity and equality in the comity of nations for our posterity.

I salute you once again for the courage, loyalty and steadfastness of our fighting troops, and the loyal support and sacrifice of all Nigerians. I pay tribute to the courage and resourcefulness of those who

have fought so long against lawful troops, as victims of Ojukwu's vicious propaganda and the machinations of certain foreign Governments.

You will have heard the broadcast of Lieut.-Col. Effiong asking the remnants of the secessionist troops to

lay down their arms. This is in accord with our appeal. I accept in good faith Lieut.-Colonel Effiong's declaration accepting the OAU resolutions supporting the unity and territorial integrity of Nigeria. I urge all the secessionist troops to act honourably and lay down their arms in an orderly manner. Instructions have been issued to all field commanders of the Nigerian Army to put into immediate effect the contingency arrangements for the mass surrender of secessionist forces. The officers of the secessionist troops are urged to send emissaries to Federal field commanders at once to work out detailed arrangements for orderly surrender. All field commanders will take all necessary measures to give full protection to surrendering troops. Field commanders are instructed to push and establish effective Federal presence in all areas remaining under secessionist control. Federal troops in carrying out this directive will be accompanied

by Police units and will exercise all care and shoot only if they encounter resistance. I appeal to all remaining secessionist forces to cooperate with Federal troops to avoid any further loss of life. All Federal troops must continue to observe the letter and spirit of the code of conduct issued at the beginning of the military operations.

We reiterate our promise of a general amnesty for all those misled into the futile attempt to disintegrate the country. Federal troops, East-Central State officials and authorized relief workers in the field will take adequate care of all civilians in the liberated areas. We must all demonstrate our will for honourable reconciliation within a united Nigeria.

Fellow countrymen, with your continued loyalty and dedication to the national cause, we shall succeed in healing the nation's wounds. We must all welcome, with open arms, the people now freed from the tyranny and deceit of Ojukwu and his gang.

Long live one united Nigeria.

We thank God for His mercies.

Broadcast at midnight on 12 January 1970 (Federal Ministry of Information Press Release No. 31/1970).

Ref: AHM Kirk-Greene, *Crisis and Conflict in Nigeria: A Documentary Source Book 1966-1970*, Gregg Rivavals, 1993, pp. 452-453.

THE DAWN OF NATIONAL RECONCILIATION'-GOWON'S VICTORY MESSAGE TO THE NATION, 15 JANUARY 1970



Gen Yakubu Gowon

Citizens of Nigeria,

It is with a heart full of gratitude to God that I announce to you that today marks the formal end of the civil war. This afternoon at Dodan Barracks, Lt. Col. Phillip Effiong, Lt. Col. David Ogunewe, Lt. Col. Patrick Anwunah, Lt. Col. Patrick Amadi and Commissioner of Police, Chief Patrick Okeke formally proclaimed the end of the attempt at secession and accepted the authority of the Federal Military Government of Nigeria. They also formally accepted the present political

and administrative structure of the country. This ends thirty months of a grim struggle. Thirty months of sacrifice and national agony.

Exactly four years ago on January 15, 1966, a group of young army officers overthrew the Government of the country with violence. The country hoped, however, that the military regime which followed would quickly restore discipline and confidence in the army and introduce a just, honest, patriotic and progressive government. The

country was disappointed in those hopes. There were further tragic incidents in the army leading to the death of many officers and men in July, 1966.

I then assumed the leadership of the Federal Military Government. I gave a solemn pledge to work to reduce tension in the army and the country, to restore the Federal Constitution and to prepare the country for an orderly return to civilian rule as early as possible. Despite my efforts and the cooperation of all other members of the Supreme Military Council, the former Lt. Col. Ojukwu pushed us from one crisis to another. This intransigent defiance of Federal Government authority heightened tension and led to the much regretted riots in September/October, 1966. He subsequently exploited the situation to plunge the former Eastern Region into secession and the nation into a tragic civil war.

The world knows how hard we strove to avoid the civil war. Our objectives in fighting the war to crush Ojukwu's rebellion were always clear. We desired to preserve the territorial integrity and unity of Nigeria. For as one country we would be able to maintain lasting peace amongst our various communities; achieve rapid economic development to improve the lot of our people;

guarantee a dignified future and respect in the world for our posterity and contribute to African unity and modernisation. On the other hand, the small successor states in a disintegrated Nigeria would be victims of perpetual war and misery and neo-colonialism. Our duty was clear. And we are, today, vindicated.

The so-called 'Rising Sun of Biafra' is set for ever. It will be a great disservice for anyone to continue to use the word Biafra to refer to any part of the East Central State of Nigeria. The tragic chapter of violence is just ended. We are at the dawn of national reconciliation. Once again, we have an opportunity to build a new nation.

My dear compatriots, we must pay homage to the fallen. To the heroes, who have made the supreme sacrifice that we may be able to build a nation great in justice, fair play and industry. They will be mourned for ever by a grateful nation. There are also the innocent men, women and children who perished, not in battle but as a result of the conflict. We also honour their memory. We honour the fallen of both sides of this tragic fratricidal conflict. Let it be our resolution that all those dead shall have died not in vain. Let the greater nation we shall build be their proud monument forever.

Now, my dear countrymen, we must recommence at once in greater earnest, the task of

healing the nation's wounds. We have at various times repeated our desire for reconciliation in full equality, once the secessionist regime abandoned secession. I solemnly repeat our guarantees of a general amnesty for those misled into rebellion. We guarantee the personal safety of everyone, who submits to Federal authority. We guarantee the security of life and property of all citizens in every part of Nigeria and equality in political rights. We also guarantee the right of every Nigerian to reside and work wherever he chooses in the Federation, as equal citizens of one united country. It is only right that we should all henceforth respect each other. We should all exercise civic restraint and use our freedom, taking into full account the legitimate rights and needs of the other man. There is no question of second class citizenship in Nigeria.

On our side, we fought the war with great caution, not in anger or hatred, but always in the hope that common sense would prevail. Many times we sought a negotiated settlement, not out of weakness, but in order to minimise the problems of reintegration, reconciliation and reconstruction. We knew that however the war ended, in the battlefield or in the conference room, our brothers fighting under other colours must rejoin us and that we must together rebuild the nation anew.

Those now freed from the terror

and misery of the secessionist enclave are therefore doubly welcome. The nation is relieved. All energies will now be bent to the task of reintegration and reconciliation. They will find, contrary to the civil [thus in press release; but probably 'evil' ?] propaganda with which they were fed, that thousands and thousands of Ibos have lived and worked in peace with the other ethnic groups in Lagos and elsewhere in the Federation throughout the dark days of the civil war. There is, therefore, no cause for humiliation on the part of any group of the people of this country. The task of reconciliation is truly begun.

The nation will be proud of the fact that the ceremony today at Dodan Barracks of reunion under the banner of the Federal Republic of Nigeria was arranged and conducted by Nigerians amongst ourselves alone. No foreign good offices was involved. This is what we always prayed for. We always prayed that we should resolve our problems ourselves, free from foreign mentors and go-betweens however well intentioned. Thus, our nation is come of age. And the meaning of today's event must be enshrined in the nation's memory for ever.

There is an urgent task to be done. The Federal Government has mounted a massive relief operation to alleviate the suffering of the people in the newly liberated areas. I have as announced, assigned special

responsibility for this to a member of the Federal Executive Council. We are mobilizing adequate resources from the Federal Government to provide food, shelter and medicines for the affected population. Rehabilitation and reconstruction will follow simultaneously to restore electricity, transport and communications.

We must, as a matter of urgency, resettle firms and reopen factories to ensure that normal economic life is resumed by everyone as soon as possible. Special attention will be given to the rehabilitation of women and children in particular, so long denied the comfort of homes, the blessing of education and the assurance of a future by Ojukwu's wicked tyranny and falsehood. We must restore at once to them hope and purpose in life.

Federal troops have a special charge to give emergency relief to the people in the areas they have liberated before civilian help can come. They must continue and intensify their splendid work in this regard. The state administrations are giving emergency relief the first priority. The Rehabilitation Commissions and the Voluntary Agencies are extending their efforts. The appropriate agencies of the Federal Government will soon make further announcements about additional relief measures.

My Government has directed

that former civil servants and public corporation officials should be promptly reinstated as they come out of hiding. Detailed arrangements for this exercise have been published. Plans for the rehabilitation of self-employed people will also be announced shortly.

The problem of emergency relief is a challenge for the whole nation. We must prove ourselves equal to the task. Our resources, which have enabled us to prosecute the war successfully and without obligations to anyone, are considerable. I appeal to the nation for volunteers to help in the emergency relief operations in the newly liberated areas. Doctors, nurses, engineers, technicians, builders, plumbers, mechanics, administrators—all skilled hands willing to help are urgently required. The detailed arrangements for recruitment will soon be announced. I am sure that there will be a prompt and good response to this call.

You will have heard that my Government may seek the assistance of friendly foreign governments and bodies especially in the provision of equipment to supplement our national effort. There are, however, a number of foreign governments and organisations whose so-called assistance will not be welcome. These are the governments and organisations which sustained the rebellion. They are thus guilty of the blood of thousands who perished because of the

prolongation of the futile rebel resistance. They did not act out of love for humanity. Their purpose was to disintegrate Nigeria and Africa and impose their will on us. They may still harbour their evil intentions. We shall therefore not allow them to divide and estrange us again from one another with their dubious and insulting gifts and their false humanitarianism.

Regarding the future, we shall maintain our purpose to work for stability with the existing political structure of a minimum of twelve states. The collision of three giant regions with pretensions to sovereignty created distrust and fear and led to the tragic conflict now ending. The multi-state structure will therefore be retained with the minimum of the present twelve states. Immediate post-war planning and reconstruction will continue on this basis. Any new constitution will be the result of discussion by the representatives of all the people of Nigeria.

I am happy that despite the war, Nigeria has maintained a strong and expanding economy. Plans are also far advanced for faster economic modernisation. Our enormous material resources and our large dynamic population will make this possible. We are pledged to ensure rapid development for the benefit of the Nigerian people themselves. It will be much easier to achieve reconciliation and reintegration

in increasing prosperity.

Fellow countrymen, the civil war is truly over. We thank God. But the state of national emergency and emergency regulations remain. Discipline and sacrifice are essential if we are to achieve our goals in the immediate post war period and lay sound foundations for the future. I demand of you patience, resolution and continued dedication. I demand of the workers and employers continued restraint in industrial relations in keeping with the recent decree. A decree on price control will soon be promulgated. We shall soon review wages and salaries to improve the lot of the ordinary man. The immediate economic problems are challenging and we must behave accordingly.

On this occasion, I wish to place on record the nation's gratitude to the Organisation of African Unity for its splendid diplomatic and moral support for the Federal cause. I thank particularly the Chairman of the Consultative Committee on Nigeria, His Imperial Majesty Haile Selassie I and the other members of the Committee. I also thank the President of the OAU General Assembly, Presidents Mobutu, Boumedienne and Ahidjo, who presided over OAU Summit discussions of the Nigerian crisis. The enemies of Africa were restrained by the demonstration of such solid support. I thank the Secretary General of the United Nations, U Thant, for his understanding

attitude towards our country's crisis and the specialised agencies for their assistance. I also thank the friendly governments who gave us moral and material support in the darkest hour of our need. The nation will remember them as true friends. It is the desire of my Government that our relations with them should grow stronger.

Consistent with our basic policy, we shall maintain correct relations with all foreign governments notwithstanding the anxieties they may have caused us. As we emerge from our greatest trial we shall endeavour to work for peace in the world and for a better economic deal for the less developed countries of the world.

The Armed Forces deserve the greatest praise for their valour in battle, their loyalty and dedication and for their resourcefulness in overcoming the formidable obstacles placed in our way. I praise them for observing strictly the code of conduct issued to them at the beginning of the operations. It is necessary now more than ever when the rebellion is ended, for them to maintain the high standard they have attained. The letter and spirit of the code must be obeyed. Their first duty is to protect the lives and property of all surrendering troops and civilians and to give them humane treatment. Stern disciplinary measures will be taken against any who violate the code. I know, however, that I

can continue to count on your loyalty and discipline.

I also praise the civilian population everywhere in the country for their patience, sacrifice, loyalty and steadfast support for the fighting troops and for One Nigeria. We must all be justly proud.

All Nigerians share the victory of today. The victory for national unity, victory for hopes of Africans and black people everywhere. We must thank God for his mercies. We mourn the dead heroes. We thank God for sparing us to see this glorious dawn of national reconciliation. We have ordered that Friday, Saturday and Sunday be national days of prayer. We must seek his guidance to do our duty to contribute our quota to the building of a great nation, founded on the concerted efforts of all its people and on justice and equality. A nation never to return to the fractious, sterile and selfish debates that led to the tragic conflict just ending. We have overcome a lot over the past four years. I have therefore every confidence that ours will become a great nation. So help us God.

Long Live the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

Broadcast from Lagos, 15 January 1970. (Text from Nigeria House press release dated 19 January 1970.)

Ref: AHM Kirk-Greene, *Crisis and Conflict in Nigeria: A Documentary Source Book 1966-1970*, Gregg Rivavals, 1993, pp. 459-461.

CONDOLENCE



Late AVM Mukhtar Mohammed (Rtd) Wazirin Dutse

1944-2017

The Management and members of the Arewa Research and Development Project (ARDP) offer their condolences to the family, relations, friends, well wishers as well as the Emirs of Kano and Dutse and their Emirate Councils and indeed to the governments and people of Nigeria on the passing away of one of its illustrious members of Committee of Elders, the late AVM Mukhtar Mohammed (Wazirin Dutse) whose sad event took place on Sunday 1st October, 2017. The late Mohammed was one-time Commissioner (Minister) of Housing and later Military Governor of Kaduna State (1976-1978); he was Deputy Chairman Arewa Consultative Forum (ACF) and one of the committed members of the Northern Elders Forum. May Allah forgive and have mercy on him and make Jannatu Firdaus as his eternal resting abode. Amin

*Dr. Usman Bugaje.
(Convener, ARDP)*



NORTH WEST ECONOMIC COOPERATION AND INTEGRATION COMMISSION



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Rt. Hon. Aminu Waziri Tambuwal, CFR
Governor, Sokoto State



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Dr. Umar Abdullahi Ganduje
Governor, Kano State

Working to promote cooperation and integration among the 7 States of the North West Geo political Zone, with a view to raising the living standards of its people, maintaining and enhancing economic stability, fostering close relations among the States towards the progress and development of Nigeria.



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Hon. Abdulaziz Abubakar Yari
Governor, Zamfara State



His Excellency
Malam Nasir El-Rufai
Governor, Kaduna State



His Excellency
Barr. Alh. Abubakar Atiku Bagudu
Governor, Kebbi State

This commission seek to harmonize and coordinate policies and programs particularly in agriculture and natural resources, energy, mineral resources, industrial development, transportation, education, health, culture and tourism, services, science and technology, and information technology.