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# NIGERIAN CIVIL WAR

CAUSES, EVENTS 1953-1967



Nigerian Leaders at the period

## HIGHLIGHTS

- \* 7 CHARGES
- \* IBOS, AND
- \* CALLING

CHARLES U. UWANAKA

*Other Works by Charles U. Uwanaka*

<i>Title</i>	<i>Year</i>
* The Secret of Love . . . . .	1953
* Whom to Love and When to Marry . . . . .	1953
* Zik and Awolowo in Political Storm . . . . .	1953
* New Nigeria . . . . .	1953
* Book of King Solomon . . . . .	1955
* Royal Visit to Nigeria . . . . .	1956
* Story of Ghana Independence . . . . .	1957
* Zik and Awolowo in Political Storm <i>Independence Edition</i> . . . . .	1960)
* Awolowo and Akintola in Political Storm . . . . .	1964
* Good Citizens Good Country . . . . .	1964
* 1964 Federal Election Crises . . . . .	1966
* The Wayfarer . . . . .	1970
* The Wayfarer ( <i>A reply to rumour merchants</i> ) Unpublished . . . . .	1972
* Model Letters ( <i>Junior</i> ) . . . . .	1972
* Causes of Crises in Africa . . . . .	1975
* Senior Model Letters . . . . .	1978
* Zik and Awolowo in Political Storm ( <i>Independence edition revised</i> ) . . . . .	1979
* Policy Guidelines . . . . .	1980
* Abuja Challenges Lagos ( <i>unpublished</i> ) . . . . .	1981

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# Nigerian Civil War

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# Nigerian Civil War

CAUSES, EVENTS (1953 - 1967)

Charles U. Uwanaka

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# Nigerian Civil War

1967-1970

THE NIGERIAN CIVIL WAR  
1967-1970

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## P R E F A C E

The decision to embark on this work was taken soon after the first fall of the avalanche—the military take-over of power on January 15, 1966. Later, the decision was suspended as a sequel to the rapidity with which similar incidents cropped up. They followed one another in quick successions, and as if directed by a divine order, they happened almost at regular intervals. Here was the May 29 disturbance in the North; here were the July 29 Army revolts in Kaduna, Zaria, Ibadan, Abeokuta and Ikeja; here was the August 29, mass killing in parts of the North; and here also were the incidents of September 29, 30, and October 1 and 2. The motives behind this chain of events were unfortunately, closely related.

As a matter of fact, I consider publishing this work now a sacred duty I have to perform to our country—Nigeria, to give already straying youths a sense of direction because since the end of the civil war there has been no change in their life style. We do not seem to have learned from our experiences. In attempting this, I feel positively convinced the only way out is nothing but objective presentation of facts of the events leading up to the unfortunate political upheavals then in the country. I cannot carry out this task successfully if I fail to take the mind of my reader to some major factors which contributed, in great measure, to bring about the confusion. The trouble then in the country was a mere end product, or rather what I can refer to as the eruption of accumulated grievances. Such grievances stemmed primarily from the following:

- (a) Kano riot of 1953;
- (b) Pre-Independence election feud of 1959;
- (c) Action Group crisis of 1962;
- (d) Census crisis of 1963;

- (e) Census crisis of 1964;
- (f) 1964 Federal election crisis; and
- (g) Western Nigeria election crisis of 1965.

Definitely, I will discuss these as briefly as possible in the ensuing pages.

To an average man in Nigeria today, particularly, the new comer, the confusion in the country was the follow-up of the Military Coup of January 15, 1966. This belief was even strengthened by the views of some local and foreign writers on the situation. But those citizens who have decent respect for truth and accuracy have absolutely rejected such suggestion and regarded it not only as a total departure from the truth, but also as a deliberate attempt to twist issues. My duty here is to present the facts to the reader for him to appraise and comprehend the issues involved, no matter whose ox is gored.

Further, to make it clearer for the reader, I undertook a series of fact finding tours of all regions then in the Federation, except the North, for obvious reason, to contact eye-witnesses to the horrible incidents which took place in the country years ago. So, what I am presenting to the reading public is nothing but eye-witnesses' accounts of the events as they saw them in their respective regions or localities, as well as personal record of parts of the events as I saw them, not hear-say.

In order not to be accused of bias of any sort, I have decided to steer clear, as much as possible, of some highly sensational and partisan previous writings on the crisis for some obvious reasons. I am writing for the enlightened public.

In any case, since the fratricidal conflict made it difficult for me to get at the root of facts in the North in person as I had done in the South, fortunately, I was able to procure a copy of a Northern publication. With this in hand I travelled to the East on February 10, 1967, for cross-checking since it embodied a series of allegations against the Easterners, particularly, the Ibos. At Umuahia, Eastern Nigeria, I was fortunate to be directed to the secretariat of the Refugees Association for Bende division where I met Mazi E. O. Nwagbara, the Secretary-General. With the Northern publication in hand, he devoted three days to

answering all the charges made against the Easterners resident in the area before the crisis. He was bold and frank in all his answers. These are published in the form of questions and answers at the latter part of this work. With Nwagbara at the Refugees Secretariat at Umuahia were the Treasurer of the Association and the President whose names were withheld. They were very helpful as all of them were eye-witnesses or even victims of the disturbances.

As a member of one of the ethnic groups directly involved in the dispute, one can then appreciate my difficulty. Consequently, I am not writing as an Hausa-man, Ibo-man, or a Yoruba-man. The situation demands we should see the whole issues from an angle devoid of tribal sentiments. Though this is a painful and thankless task, I am confident, this is what will save the Federation from the abyss of indiscipline and confusion to which it is daily and steadily approaching.

Today, Nigeria is badly in need of men of lion heart: Men whom lustre of office cannot buy: Men who will be bold enough to speak their minds even though it means starving themselves to death or facing a firing squad. For sure, these men will be remembered as martyrs from generation to generation. Their views may not be acceptable to all, since it seldom strikes two hearers from precisely the same angle, but then, they will be placed on record for posterity to read and ponder.

My ardent belief is that Nigeria still has the chance of recovery from any acute sickness, but the medical treatment should be swift to avoid medicine after death. Quite frankly, I can appreciate the difficulties of our civilian leaders. But I must point out that if we sincerely want to save this country from a repeat performance the question of sound Moral Education should be given a serious thought. What I have at the back of my mind are the recent Kano riot and Revenue Allocation squabbles, to mention a few.

Let us take a leaf from history though, unfortunately, often it renders itself impotent in the matter of solving human problems. But to me, it is sheer foolhardiness to ignore the facts of history and the experiences of other nations especially, those that have gained by them.

Nigeria is a geographical spot on the globe, and as such is

bound to out-live all of us. But one thing stands to reason—we must endeavour to make it better than we met it, so that, posterity, reading through the pages of the history of our time, shall doff their hats in praise of our names, and not to curse. History is replete with such precedents.

Furthermore, this work serves a double purpose in the sense, it draws us back to a period the corporate existence of this country was trembling in the balance, as well as a response to the calls of present civilian rulers in their bid to make this country habitable and great. To achieve this, a list of the names of some world self-made citizens have been supplied to serve as guidelines to aimless youths. This is published in the last chapter.

All should contribute to make this country great while we say in unison welcome to reason and common sense, and good-bye to the age of frightful barbarity now and for ever.

### *Acknowledgements*

I attribute the success of this work to Mazi E. O. Nwagbara, then Secretary-General, Refugees Association at Umuahia, Imo State, for granting me the interview, the substances of which I have reproduced in chapter three. He also supplied the replies Ibos made in response to seven charges the Northerners made against them. See chapter five. Equal appreciation also goes to a northern journalist who elected to remain anonymous, at the material time, based at Enugu, for his own version of the events as seen through the eyes of a non-easterner. This could be found in chapter four.

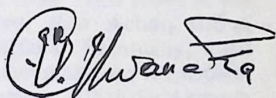
Local libraries in Lagos, particularly the Tom Jones, now non-existent, the head-quarters, as well as the eastern branches of the National Library at Onitsha and Enugu, played commendable roles in making my task less cumbersome. The Tom Jones library, then located at Victoria, now Nnamdi Azikiwe, Street by Idumagbo Avenue, Lagos, furnished me with all the useful examples of women and men of lion hearts I have published in chapter seven. These were recorded in my note-book as far ago as 1951, and now reproduced for the purpose of this work. The librarians and staffs of these libraries were the true stocks of women and men of their calling; and to them I am greatly indebted.

Another big thanks are due to a true neighbour, Educationist J. O. Chijide for sparing time to reading and criticising my manuscripts before going to press; to Engr. O Onamuti of Leigh Street, Surulere fame, for his useful reminders and hints as an eye witness to some of the events in Lagos. He and his darling wife also organised the typing of the scripts.

Further, I have to make it clear to the reader that my problem all the time is not so much the production of the manuscripts as meeting the production obligation. This time when all hopes of going to press were fading like evening Twilight, a local Master Printer, and long-time friend, Chief T.A.A. Awoleye helped me over the stile. I had already gone to press weeks earlier before any assistance came in. The Chief thawed me back to life when perseverance was almost at the freezing point.

Finally I have to record my inestimable thanks to Mazi Emmanuel N. Dike, Managing Director of Swift International Agencies Ltd., Apapa, Lagos, and an obliging friend, Alhaji Dipo Sanusi, Managing Director of Afrotours International Ltd., Lagos. The advertising materials found inside and outside of back cover of this book are those of their companies. These helped me to meet part of my obligations to the printer whose personal contribution I have mentioned earlier. The financial assistance I expected never came.

Surulere, Lagos,  
Nigeria,  
July, 1981

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'C. Uwanaka', enclosed within a circular scribble.

Charles U. Uwanaka



# CHAPTER ONE

## BACKGROUND TO THE CRISIS

The causes of the 1966 crisis in Nigeria, can summarily, like every other bitter conflict in history, be broken into two distinct headings, namely: **Remote** and **Immediate**. The memory of the remote causes, sorry to say, may have completely escaped some of us, especially those of us who are casual readers of newspapers or worse still, those with poor retentive memory. In the overall interest of those people, and more especially, foreigners in this country, I am compelled by necessity to review the incidents.

### Remote Causes

(a) **Kano Riot, 1953:** For the sake of historical accuracy, I have considered it significant to mention the Kano crisis of 1953, because that unfortunate incident marked the beginning of open conflict between Northern and Southern politicians. The cause of the dispute is also worth mentioning. Here are the facts:

A meeting of the House of Representatives which began sitting in Lagos in April, 1953, had on its agenda a motion for Self-Government for Nigeria in 1956. This stood in the name of Chief Anthony Enahoro, then Action Group Minister for Home and Mid-West Affairs. Eventually, when this was moved in the House of Representatives for debate, it became clear that a Northern member, Alhaji Sir Ahmadu Bello, then the leader of Government Business in the North, wanted an amendment when he suggested: *Self-Government for Nigeria as early as practicable*. Southern politicians and their teeming supporters did not take kindly to this view, with the result they reacted bitterly by heckling and abusing the Northern members openly on the premises of the building of the House of Representatives. There was no frontal attack or bloodshed. This eventually led to the Kano riot in which many lives were lost.

For a better knowledge of that Kano crisis, it is necessary to give a brief account of this unfortunate incident. The Nigerian *Daily Times*, May 18, 1953 issue, started off with the story, thus:

The disturbance began last night when a mob assembled near the Colonial Hotel where a meeting was to have been held by the Action Group delegation headed by Mr. S. L. Akintola, former Minister of Labour. Earlier, the Kano Native Authority had withdrawn its permission for the meeting to be held.

The mob stoned people near the Hotel, but they were repelled by the Native Authority Police. When rioters withdrew, they left behind three dead, two of them believed to be Southerners, and the other a Northerner. They had apparently died of matchet wounds. Earlier yesterday morning, the disturbance took a more serious turn and became what the Government described in an official statement as an inter-tribal rioting.

Mobs of hooligans attempted to break into the Sabon Gari area with some success. The Police then decided that their main task was to prevent further attack on the area. Meanwhile, those who had entered the Sabon Gari looted a number of market stalls.

Throughout the day, the Police and later the Army, prevented any major attempts to enter the area. During the day a further two people were killed and more than one hundred injured.

Actual rioting started on May 16, but by May 18, 1953, casualty list showed at least, five persons were killed and 145 seriously injured, most of them Southerners.

Later a Government statement on the whole situation pointed out that about 100 Ibo sanitary labourers were killed on a spot (See the *Daily Times*, August 12, 1953).

As a matter of fact, the cause of rioting was pointed out in an earlier official notice by the Kano Native Authority in which it warned on the possibility of a disturbance. The notice reads:

The organised demonstrations against the chiefs and other Northern representatives in Lagos, and the organised Press campaign against the Northerners have caused

so much popular resentment that it has become clear that if an Action Group meeting is to be held in Kano, then breaches of the peace are likely to be committed. Should this meeting scheduled for today be held, there are indications that a spontaneous and therefore uncontrolled demonstration will occur.

This unfortunate Kano disturbance was the second major clash between the people of Northern Nigeria and those of the South. The first was the Jos riot of 1945, in which many lives were lost. (See again *Daily Times*, August 12, 1953, file for full Government report on the riot).

It is also worth pointing out that the Kano disturbances gave birth to what the North regarded as its *Eight-Point Programme* whereby laid down its formula for a Federal Constitution for Nigeria or a basis for future association with the South. This plan, unfortunately, was given a different interpretation by Southern Politicians and their supporters. The impression then in circulation was that Northern Nigeria had drawn up a plan to secede from the rest of the Federation. For the purpose of clarity, I reproduce here below the North's *Eight-Point Programme*. It reads:

1. That this Region shall be complete Legislative and Executive autonomy with respect to all matters except the following:
  - (a) External Affairs,
  - (b) Defence,
  - (c) Customs, and
  - (d) West African Research Institutions.
2. That there shall be no Central Legislative body and no Central Executive Policy making body for the whole of Nigeria.
3. That there shall be Central Agency for all Regions which will be responsible for matters mentioned in paragraph (1) and other matters delegated to it by a Region.
4. That the Central Agency shall be at a neutral place preferably in Lagos.
5. The composition and responsibility of the Central

Agency shall be defined by the Order-in-Council establishing the constitutional arrangement. The Agency shall be a non-political body.

6. That the services of the Railway, Air, Post and Telegraph, Electricity and Coal Mining, shall be organised on an inter-regional basis and shall be administered by public corporations. These corporations shall be independent bodies covered by the status under which they are created by the board of experts with a minority representation of the Regional Governments.
7. All the revenues shall be levied and collected by the Regional Governments except customs revenue at the port of discharge by the Central Agency and paid to its treasury.
8. The administration of the customs shall be so organised as to ensure that goods consigned to the Region are separately cleared and charged to duty. Each Region shall have a separate public service.

This was later adopted at a joint meeting of the Northern House of Assembly and the House of Chiefs which met in Kaduna on May 23, 1953.

(b) **Pre-Independence Election, 1959:** It was true that tempers were gradually dying down following the Kano rioting, but relationship between Northern elements and Southerners, particularly, the Easterners resident in the North, became once more strained soon after the introduction of the Northernisation Policy almost a year after. Following the implementation of the policy, many Southerners, especially, those of them in the junior segment of the North Public Service lost their jobs and came back home to say it was all of a sudden. They reported for duty one morning to find the letters terminating their appointments on their tables. The terminations, according to them, were carried out on a large scale throughout the North. Supporting this allegation, a Northern publication on the scheme said that the Northernization Policy was announced publicly

so that Northerners could be given first priority in the Regional Government Public Service. This policy, I was informed, was tactlessly pursued and was even extended to commercial houses and private industries in Northern Nigeria.

This policy forced most Southerners to change course for other means of livelihood. Those of them who had saved enough money stayed back instead of coming down South, to start their own private businesses. Some of them who turned traders did wonderfully well within a space of two years and were actually acquiring land and other properties from the Northerners who were badly in need of CASH. Meanwhile a land dispute which nearly engulfed all Southerners resident in Zaria in 1957, was quickly brought under control by the Native Authority Police. The dispute arose out of a land tenancy agreement terms which one of the parties to the deal bluntly failed to carry out. When the law court finally stepped in, judgement was delivered in favour of the land owner who incidently was a Northerner. Many Southerners did not like this verdict. There were a series of similar cases in which many Southerners were found guilty.

As a matter of fact, tension reached a himalayan height when the pre-independence election was fast approaching. Old quarrels between Northerners and Southerners were dug up. There were accusations and counter-accusations by both sides—Southerners and Northerners. With the approach of Southern politicians in the North for the pre-independence elect ioneering campaigns, things became even worse as some Southerners resident in the North found the election a genuine opportunity to overthrow their unfriendly N.P.C. Government of the North. Northern leaders were even more conscious of this move with effect they reacted with equal vigour to accept the challenge. In one of his election campaigns, Alhaji Sir Ahmadu Bello, was reported as saying, his Government would make things difficult for Southerners resident in the North, and those Northerners who had political sympathy for them if they failed to respect his Government and people.

The result of this bitter struggle for the control of the Federal Government was that when Nigerians finally went to the polls on December 12, 1959, the verdict of the electorate favoured the Northern People's Congress (N.P.C.). Below

shows the strength of the parties in the pre-independence House of Representatives after the elections:

N.P.C.	134 seats
N.C.N.C./NEPU ALLIANCE	89 "
AG/UMBC ALLIANCE	73 "
Independents and others	16 "
Total	312 seats

which formed the composition of the last House of Representatives.

Following the victory of the N.P.C. at the polls, subsequent events in the country conclusively proved that Southern politicians and their supporters were not pleased with the results of the elections. The Action Group of Nigeria was in the fore-front of the attack by reason it claimed the N.P.C. obtained all but one of its seats from votes cast in the North. The only one seat captured in the South was in the Niger Delta area where the N.P.C. Alliance, the Nigeria Delta Congress, led by Chief Harold Biriye, was entrenched. Southern politicians accused the N.P.C. of rigging the election, hence its victory.

However, the dispute over the N.P.C. victory at the 1959 Federal Elections took a dramatic turn when the N.C.N.C. accepted an invitation from the party to form a coalition Government at the Federal level. The Action Group of Nigeria, which all along, with the N.C.N.C. had been very critical of the N.P.C. victory, became very much alarmed at this marriage of convenience between the N.P.C. and the N.C.N.C. Unfortunately, as events later proved, the truce between the two parties came to indicate it was a coming together of incompatible elements which was destined to crash sooner or later. The two parties were just tolerating each other until 1964, when the House was dissolved. (See *Daily Times*, November 20, 1959, for N.C.N.C. reason for the Alliance with the N.P.C.).

(c) Action Group Crisis, 1962: The Action Group intra-party dispute of May, 1962, had often been referred to in many quarters, both inside and outside Nigeria, as the fountainhead of the troubles in Nigeria today. But honest historians will definitely not accept this in its face value

without pausing to reflect on the causes of the crisis themselves. Here are the facts: The eruption of the Action Group internal chaos in 1962, two years after independence, and the subsequent detension, inquiry, trial and conviction of some leaders of the party were proofs that the A.G. had planned to overthrow the Federal Government formed by the N.C.N.C. and the N.P.C. The Action Group bitterly complained that the Federal elections which swept the N.P.C. into power were rigged. In truth, Southern parties accused the N.P.C. of using a fraudulent method in winning the elections. For complete background to the Action Group crisis see my *Awolowo and Akintola in Political Storm*, pages 19 – 64 .

This unfortunate Action Group crisis, eventually broke up the party into two hostile factions—one led by Chief S. L. Akintola and known as the United People's Party (U.P.P.), and the other by Chief Obafemi Awolowo, the parent body. The National Convention of Nigerian Citizens (N.C.N.C.) while in coalition with the N.P.C. in the centre also manoeuvred to enter into an agreement with the U.P.P. to form the Government of the West, the Action Group having been thrown out following the crisis. The formation of Chief Akintola's Nigerian National Democratic Party (NNDP) spelt the doom of the tie between the N.C.N.C. and the U.P.P. The U.P.P. gave birth to the N.N.D.P. which was formed on March 10, 1964.

With the formation of the N.N.D.P., all N.C.N.C. Ministers in the Western Nigeria cabinet were automatically thrown out of office as a result of constant sharp disagreements between the N.C.N.C. Ministers and those of the U.P.P. This new development in the West, however, proved to be a blessing in disguise for the Action Group, which since some months before, had found itself in a sort of political black-out. The strategic movement by Chief Akintola's Government of Western Nigeria, brought the N.C.N.C. and the Action Group together once again as allies. The first was in 1953, soon after the crisis in the House of Representatives. The second agreement between the N.C.N.C. and the Action Group was contracted in 1964, and it remained in force until March, 1966, when all Nigerian political parties were banned by the Military Government headed by the late Major-

General J. T. U. Aguiyi-Ironsi.

(d) **Census Crisis 1963:** The first census crisis of 1963 was precipitated by the population count of 1962. Trouble arose out of the disagreement in accepting the figures of the count by the Nigerian political parties, namely: The N.C.N.C., the Northern People's Congress (N.P.C.), and Chief Akintola's United People's Party (U.P.P.). The Action Group was then still nursing the wounds occasioned by the crisis of the year before. The population count of 1962 put the figures of the Regions as follows:

North	30.2 million
East	12.5 million
West (then no Mid-west)	10.5 million
Lagos	350,000.

Following the disagreement over these figures, it was unanimously agreed by all political parties that the controversial 1962 census figures should be nullified and a fresh count taken. The census figures were rejected.

(e) **Census Crisis 1964:** The official publication of the 1963 population count in 1964, after the first one had been annulled, once again, whipped up hostile reactions from some Southern politicians.

This time, it is interesting to point out that there were tactical moves by Nigerian political parties so that before the 1963 census crisis finally erupted, the population of Nigeria had instinctively been broken up into two distinct political groups to be known as Alliances. Here was the N.P.C. of the North contemplating forming an alliance with Chief Akintola's new baby—the N.N.D.P., as the main partners. Here also were the N.C.N.C. and the Action Group (now resuscitated), under the leadership of Alhaji D. S. Adegbenro, as the principal actors, inching towards a similar end. These two Alliances were to be known, in the first case, as the Nigerian National Alliance (N.N.A.), and the second, as the United Progressive Grand Alliance (UPGA).

So, when the census dispute started, it became obvious it was a showdown between the two camps and their suppor-

ters—N.N.A. and the UPGA.

As a matter of fact, while the N.N.A. saw nothing wrong with the second census figures, the UPGA complained the Northern Nigeria figures were “inflated” for political reasons. The second population count showed the Regions as follows:

Northern Region . . . . .	29,777,986
Eastern Region . . . . .	12,388,646
Western Region . . . . .	10,278,500
Mid-West (now created) . . . . .	2,533,337
Lagos . . . . .	675,352

The protest against this second count led to a *writ* taken by Dr. M. I. Okpara, one of the leaders of the UPGA, against the Prime Minister, Alhaji Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa. He lost the suit.

(f) 1964, Federal Elections Crisis: Before the announcement of the date of the 1964 Federal Elections, Nigerian Political parties had already concluded their arrangements and agreements for alliances. Their names and major compositions are as I have mentioned earlier. In brief, the two alliances were known and called the UPGA, (for N.C.N.C, AG and N.P.F.), and the N.N.A. (for N.P.C. N.N.D.P., R.P.N., N.D.C., and M.D.F.).

The electioneering campaigns preceding the Federal Elections, brought Nigerians face to face with a new brand of fierce political tactics. Thuggery was at its highest peak, so also were bitter press wars between the two political camps. This, eventually, led up to the killing of some prominent Western Nigerians suspected to be supporters of the N.N.A.

Before the voting day, politicians deployed all the political Buzzers and tricks at their command to prove to the outside world their popularity. As a sequel to these manoeuvres, the two alliances returned some of their candidates as unopposed. The UPGA (East) was the first to announce the names of a few of its candidates returned unopposed. A few days later, the N.N.A, as if it were a challenge, came out with such a staggering list that not only baffled its opponents, but also placed the alliance on a better pedestal of winning the elections. It was: UPGA 15; NNA 66.

It was a g-o-o-al

For a better understanding of the issues involved, it is necessary for me to point out the initial difficulties in the conduct of the elections. One of such was the said nomination irregularities announced earlier by the chairman of the Electoral Commission, Educationist E. E. Esua. This led to the resignation of three members of the Commission. In the second place, both the Prime Minister, Alhaji Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa and the President Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe did not agree on holding the elections on the day as scheduled. While the one wanted the elections postponed, because of the alleged irregularities, the other wanted the elections to go on. This precipitated a sharp clash between the Prime Minister and the President, but sooner, the whole issue was resolved when reason stepped in. Before this, there were near-riot demonstrations and cause for panic everywhere, one of such scenes I have record in a photograph on page 49

In short, the 1964 Federal elections, when finally conducted gave victory to the N.N.A after the UPGA had staged a boycott in parts of Lagos and the whole East. Following this boycott, it was later agreed a day should be set aside for separate elections in Lagos and East. When this was ultimately held, the UPGA swept the polls both in Lagos and the East. The date was March 18, 1965.

Below shows the strength of the parties in the newly constituted House of Parliament, thus:

N.N.A. ....	198 seats
UPGA .....	102 ,,
IND .....	12 ,,

To avert trouble in the newly constituted House of Parliament as was popularly anticipated, what was then known as a BROAD-BASED Government was formed by the Prime Minister at the centre. It was a 70-man Government. The surprising aspect of this new set-up was the conspicuous absence of the Action Group, a member of the UPGA. Many Nigerians did not like this.

(g) Western Election Crisis, 1965: Lawyer V. O. Key, an authority in constitutional law, once observed: "Many

election laws were intended for no other purpose than to ensure the supremacy of the temporary dominant political party. No other phase of public administration", he pointed out, "is so badly managed". He added: "Elections have been marked by irregularities, slipshod work, antiquated procedures, obsolete records and many other varieties of down-right fraud."

Putting it bluntly, Nigerians became eye-witnesses to such mismanagement of public affairs during the West Regional election of October, 1965. The N.N.D.P. Government of the time, mobilised all forces at its command to ensure it remained in power in the region, at all costs.

As a matter of fact, the Western Election of 1965, was a life-and-death struggle between members of the N.N.A. and UPGA. In brief, it was an actual battle for the West, and as a sequence proved to be the boiling-point of all political crises in the country. The electioneering campaigns were the most sordid ever witnessed in parliamentary elections in Nigeria. There were cases of killing, looting and arson; while thousands still completely lost their means of livelihood, homes. Trouble lurked everywhere in the West. The conduct of the election itself was exactly what Uncle Key, a constitutional expert, had earlier expressed about election—"down-right fraud".

One would, therefore, be compelled to ask as to why the elections turned out to be a sort of battle field. Here are the answers:

- (a) during the Federal Elections of the preceding year, the UPGA made up mainly of the N.C.N.C. and the Action Group regarded the Western Elections as an opportunity to overthrow the Akintola's Government, because they felt they were cheated;
- (b) a close study of the 70-man Broad-based Government formed by the Prime Minister, Alhaji Sir Tafawa Balewa, after the controversial Federal Elections, showed not a single member of the Action Group was invited. The Action Group felt humiliated by this act, no matter from what angle it was directed. The Western election was its last hope:

- (c) bitter feels generated during the 1963 and 1964 census crises and the Federal Elections were still fresh, and nothing was done to heal the psychological wounds; and
- (d) the Action Group members who were in majority in the West felt the imprisonment of their leader, Chief Obafemi Awolowo was cruel and unjustified; and that since in alliance with the N.C.N.C. their success at the polls would be a stepping stone to the release of the leader. This hope crashed.

### WEST GOES TO THE POLLS

The people of Western Nigeria went to the Polls on October 10, 1965, and on the following day, it was announced the N.N.D.P. had won the election to the Western House of Assembly. The UPGA was shocked to its marrows.

The irregularities that characterised this election were so glaring, they claimed, that public opinions waited to see what action the powers-that-be would take to allay the fears of the UPGA. In spite of a series of protests, Akintola proceeded to form his Government. Members of the UPGA bluntly refused to form the Opposition because:

- (a) of the said irregularities; and
- (b) results of some of its candidates had not been received despite the fact voting took place many days before.

Violence increased when the UPGA came to realise it had lost the Western Elections to the N.N.D.P. Violence was region-wide. Thugs were really busy pestering the lives of people both on the highways and in their private homes. Movements were not safe, not even for school children. To ensure the safety of children, some parents actually hired thugs to escort them to and from their schools and colleges. Parents who could not afford this instructed their children to stay back until the crisis was over.

Thugs were actually beating up people at random, no matter who or what you were-whether a politician or not.

They often demanded ransom to set anybody free from molestation. People were burned alive and fire set to many buildings believed or suspected to belong to N.N.D.P. members. Traces of these cases of arson could still be found in large numbers in all towns in the West to this day. This extended to all district councils controlled by the N.N.D.P. The N.N.D.P. did not accept this challenge lying low.

The party, apart from resisting this flagrant disregard for law and order by the opponents, it also resorted to tactics which honest citizens throughout the country regarded as tyranny, pure and simple. All the district councils under the NNDP, proceeded to reduce the salaries of those Obas who failed to toe party line, and who incidentally were presidents of councils in their respective areas, to one penny per year no matter their status.

The case of the Odemo of Ishara, Oba Samuel Akinsanya versus the Local Authority of his area, is on record to this day. True, this tactless measure of the NNDP, precipitated the sharp disagreements between some Western Obas and their subjects. It is true that the NNDP is no more, yet the roles played by some of the Obas are still fresh in people's minds.

To support my argument on the Western situation, a Lagos Magazine had this to say:

Bedlam broke loose in Western Nigeria following the one-sided, lop-sided victory of the NNDP, the party in power before and after the October election in the Region. It was a case of "Winner-takes-all". But the quarrel was that the apparently heavily crushed, but undefeated party—the UPGA) felt and actually still insists that it won the election but was merely swindled of the victory. . . . Blood was shed. . . there was arson, looting and plundering which at the time of going to press (early December) had not ceased.

*Spear Magazine*  
January, 1966

### **Soldiers Complain**

speaking frankly, there was every indication that the confusion in the West would lead to Army Revolt. Then I was not thinking in terms of the Army taking over Govern-

ment from the civilians. Some of us believed the nature of Nigerian Constitution made it difficult for the soldiers to be unanimous on such decision. We ran away with the impression the moment such an idea was contemplated the secret would leak. But soon I discovered we were wrong.

During the crisis in the West, I visited a number of places including, Ikorodu, Shagamu, Ijebu-Ode, Ijebu-Igbo, Ago Iwoye, Ibadan, Abeokuta, Iwo (where I was attacked with missiles by some thugs and later invited by the police there for questioning as a suspect), Oshogbo, Ilesha, Ife, Ondo, Akure, Epe (where I took refuge at the police station) and Ado-Ekiti—in fact, all the important towns in the West. In some of these places, I had heart-to-heart discussions with the Obas and their chiefs. While some said the NNDP should not submit to lawlessness, some described the party as a bird of ill omen. In some places, the soldiers and policemen on duty barred my entry into the Oba's Palace.

At Ijebu-Ode, for instance, a soldier who saw me advancing towards the gate of the Oba's Palace (the new Palace) cried out in anger: "Hai. stop!" I drew a quick breath and instantly halted. (Trembling). "Hu yu wanti?" He asked, in a rather harsh tone. "The Awujale of Ijebu-land", was my humble reply. The soldier did not take kindly to this. Rather he threatened to batter my head with the butt of his rifle if I did not retreat. Completely overwhelmed by this piece of indignity, I immediately retraced my steps in the direction from which I had travelled.

Reaching a spot where the soldiers pitched their tents, I protested to one of the senior officers I met, for he appeared to have an agreeable look. Yes! an agreeable look, and I was right in my guess. When we retired into a corner he said he was speaking to me in confidence. And I promised to protect his identity. He said, the rank-and-file of the army were fed up with the whole situation in the West. He narrated to me an incident a few days before where an angry mob of women and some party thugs attacked some soldiers somewhere in then Ijebu Province. The soldiers, he said, could not hit back because there were no orders to that effect.

He mentioned a few more cases of similar operations in other parts of the West. "We are fed up", he confessed to me.

Having heard his story, I was forced to regard as light the harsh treatment I received on my way to the Awujale's Palace. This was so because when tragedy strikes, human sympathy goes to the forefront for rescue work.

Back home in Lagos, I visited the Ministry of Defence and met an old-time friend, a Senior Officer of the Ministry. After listening intently to my story he tactfully asked: "Suppose the soldiers now react would it be too early?" As I was careful not to give an opinion on the issue, I was completely at the end of my wits to know the right answer, yes or no. When I insisted he should make his stand clear he was rather evasive and suddenly switch on to a different topic. When he took up the receiver to answer a telephone call, I rose up from my seat and bade him bye-for-now. He waved back. Before long, I was down again on the ground floor of that lofty building on the Marina, Lagos.

Barely, after seven days of that somewhat sentimental visit, the Army Coup took place. I called again at the office of Mr. 'S' and said: "Surely, nothing can change the leopard skin". He understood me, and chuckled. His attitude to me during my first visit to his office spoke in eloquent form something tragic was in the offing.

✱ As a matter of fact, a thousand and one terrible incidents happened before, during and after the Western elections, and no honest Government of the people by the people themselves would encourage the continuance of such horrors. But, the attitudes of both the Federal and the Western Nigeria Governments who seemed not worried about the atrocities arising from the Western situation, instead of pacifying, rather aggravated the crisis. There was no positive step to check violence.

There were rumours, and disturbing ones, of course, about certain attempts made within and outside the country to plunge Nigeria into a civil war. There were rumours of importation of arms, and soldiers of a particular ethnic group in the country being alerted by some politicians to get ready for attack. In Lagos, which is dovetailed to Western Nigeria, people panicked from time to time as rumours continued to spread. In brief, the trouble in the West was a struggle for the capture of the West between the N.N.A. and the UPGA. While the N.N.A. fought to retain it, UPGA mustered all its

strength to snatch it from the forces of the N.N.A. and so, the confusion continued.

### ELECTION HIGHLIGHTS

Some of the Election Highlights of the Western Nigeria Elections were:

- (a) one Alhaji Olowo, of Mushin, committed suicide in protest against the political development in the West;
- (b) women in hysterical manner, demonstrated against the results of the Western Elections, on October 18, 1965, at Mushin and Ikorodu Road, Lagos State;
- (c) in Ijebu-Ode, angry market women openly clashed with the police following the arrest of some of their members. Some were later treated at the General Hospital for injuries;
- (d) Mushin women threatened to parade the streets of their area stark naked;
- (e) about 33 houses at Akure were burned down by angry mobs, and some of them with their inmates;
- (f) many Hausas were attacked at Idi-Araba, Lagos State, Ikorodu, Shagamu and Ibadan. Some of them were fatally wounded, while some died; and
- (g) the UPGA members who incidently were Rediffusion subscribers in the West returned all their boxes to the Regional Government because they complained, they constituted a medium through which the N.N.D.P. Government and Lagos were dishing out false reports on the Western situation. Some burned their own boxes. Chaos, indeed!

I have taken the trouble to review the story of the early struggles of Nigerian politicians for a period of approximately twelve years in the belief the causes of the 1966 crisis may be properly oriented.

No doubt, the Western Elections and the crisis that followed marked the end of the remote causes of the civil war in Nigeria. Immediate causes follow below.

# CHAPTER TWO

## SOLDIERS GRAB GOVERNMENT

### Immediate Causes

(a) **One-sided Coup:** Speaking frankly, a careful check of the list of those killed on January 15, 1966, Coup certainly shows most, if not all, of them were N.N.A. leaders and their supporters. All UPGA leaders, but one, were spared. The only one affected was Chief Festus Okotie-Eboh who at the time, was the Minister of Finance, and the right-hand man of the Prime Minister. The N.N.A. which was then regarded as the party of the Northerners did not like this pattern of killing.

All agreed the crisis was precipitated by Nigerian politicians, but Northerners contended they saw no reason why leaders of one party should be eliminated for a common crime.

(b) **Promulgation of Decrees:** Coupled with the promulgation of some of the Decrees the Northerners claimed were oppressive and inimical to their interest, the masses interpreted the Military Action as a calculated attempt to blot them out of existence, politically. *The attacks on the Ibos were because they always carry Southern Problems on their heads. Yamiri, Shege, too over-sabi people*, one Malam lashed out, in response to a question.

### ERA OF CONFUSION

Regarding the planners of the January Coup, this aspect of the story has seen much of the glare of publicity, and as such it requires little or no mention here. All we were told about the situation was that some senior army officers of Eastern origin planned the coup and invited other ranks in the junior segment from tribes other than their own to carry out the plan.

Going back to the 1964 Federal Elections, an impartial review of the conduct of the elections will exactly point out one fact—if the elections were conducted in a truly democratic and honest manner, the Western election crisis could have been avoided. Ditto to the 1959, pre-independence elections. The Kano riot of 1953 was a sentimental tribal conflict though the starting point.

In order to place my reader in the position to know at a glance the causes of the crisis in Nigeria, I have presented to him step by step, the country's constitutional ordeals. A proper study of the issues involved will definitely show it was all a chain of events or rather an astronomical metaphor. None could have happened without the other.

However, the military coup of January 15, 1966, closed a chapter in the history of Nigeria and opened up another which millions of citizens strongly believed was to usher in an era of peace and harmony. The confusions which came in the wake of the military takeover of power were so varied and scattered that they require special treatment in presenting the events in their order of sequence. To achieve this aim, I am presenting the incidents of the disturbances as they have occurred from region to region, especially the hot spots, to eliminate confusion in reading and understanding. Here they are in the following order:

**Events in Lagos:** The night that preceded the Army Coup of January 15, 1966, found me completely listless. Why? Because I had two projects on hand—one, the preparation for the launching of a Magazine of which I was a co-founder, the *New Era*. And the other, was the arrangement for the printing of my work—the *1964 Federal Elections Crisis*. I was completely upset, because the hope of success on either side appeared somewhat distant. In the morning of that fateful day, January 15, I travelled by one of the Lagos Municipal buses, from Lawanson, Surulere, to Lagos Island. On board the bus, there was no indication whatsoever that something was wrong with the affairs of "state", either by verbal expressions or movements of passengers. All appeared quiet as usual.

As I landed at my destination, Tinubu Square, there were no signs. But on my way to the direction of the C.M.S. now

C.S.S, Bookshop, on the Broad Street, there were scattered gatherings of people here and there. Some were in twos, some in fours, and in some places, more. These somewhat unusual crowds did not, in the least, bother me. The thought of my bungling business which cost me my peaceful sleep the night before was still haunting me.

Meanwhile, I reached my office and stepped in, but a few minutes later, I found myself once again in the Street—Campbell. Reaching the Lion Building Police Station, I found some of the constable standing with their arms folded across their chests, all in serious moods. Here, there were also scattered small crowds. It did not occur to me to ask any of the groups as to what was wrong until I heard one of them saying: "Six-hundred soldiers are coming from the North". "For what?" I asked myself. From that moment, I suspected something must be wrong somewhere.

As the crisis in Western Nigeria was steadily gathering strength, I suspected the soldiers coming from the North were intended to reinforce the already overworked ones serving in the West. At the Tafawa Balewa Square, formerly known as the Race Course, the scene here was completely a different thing. Thicker crowds were seen all over the place—all in very serious moods staring anxiously towards the direction of the Parliament Building. "What is wrong?", I enquired.

But no one seemed to be in the mood to say or tell me anything. I moved further and on the premises of the Supreme Court, Lagos, the crowds here were a little more confused than anywhere else. It was here I gathered the full information regarding what had happened—The Prime Minister and Chief Festus Okotie-Eboh had been kidnapped by soldiers and taken to an unknown destination. "Why?" I asked. One fellow around cried out: "Yu no si wetin de hapin for Wes, yu likam?" On this score, I submitted. Later in the day, the country was officially informed that Alhaji Sir Ahmadu Bello and Chief S. L. Akintola were also kidnapped by the soldiers in their respective places. Moreover, a meeting of the House of Parliament scheduled for that day had been sacked by the soldiers. Apparently, the usual retinue of well wishers who often flocked to the area to cheer their heroes(?) during their arrival for the Parliament

meeting were greatly disappointed and shocked when they heard the news. At the Parliament building itself, soldiers fully armed stood on guard. So also was the case at all public buildings including the Telephone Exchange on the Broad Street, and the old External Telecommunications building on the Marina. The heaviest guarded places were the Police Headquarters at Obalende and State House, the occupants Dr. Nwafor Orizu who was then acting for the President, Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe, having been ousted the night before by the rebellious soldiers.

While these dramatic changes were taking place, it is significant to point out that the sulky atmosphere consequent upon the Western Nigeria crisis was also getting brighter. At Mushin and Ikorodu Road which were the most dreaded areas on the out-skirt of Lagos during the troublous days, where cases of day light robbery, burning people alive with petrol, looting and every other vice which characterised that period were at their highest peak, violence subsided instantly. Gradually, acts of violence died away throughout Western Nigeria. People were generally overjoyed and hailed the soldiers as their saviours. Some who could afford it organised parties and entertained them lavishly.

### IRONSI FORMS GOVERNMENT

On Sunday, January 16, 1966, the Acting President, Dr. Nwafor Orizu, told Nigerians in a broadcast that he had been advised by the Council of Ministers that they had unanimously decided to hand over the government of the Federation to the Armed Forces in view of the then prevailing situation in the country.

Immediately after this message, the then head of the Army, Major General J. T. U. Aguiyi Ironsi told the nation in a broadcast that the invitation of the Council of Ministers to the Armed Forces to run the government had been accepted and he had been vested with the authority of the Head of Military Government and Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces.

He then announced decrees for the suspension of the office of President, the Prime Minister and of the House of Parliament.

He also said that there would be a Military Government

in each region of the Federation and that the Regional Military Government would be responsible to the Federal Military Government. By this decree, the provisions for the offices of Regional Governors, Premiers and Executive Council were suspended. But the last Governor in each Region would be the Military Governor, he pointed out.

He decreed that the Chief Justice and all other judges would continue to hold offices and the judiciary would continue to function normally under the statute then in force.

The then Supreme Commander further said that all civil servants, the Nigeria Police Force and the Special Constabulary Force would continue to function as at that time, but all Local Government and Native Authority Police would be under the control of the Inspector-General of Police.

He announced that the Military Government was determined to suppress the disorders then ravaging the Western Nigeria and then Tiv Division of Northern Nigeria. The Government, he said, would declare marshal law wherever there were disturbances.

**Ironsi's Policy Statement:** In a policy statement a few days later, the Major General Aguiyi Ironsi told the nation:

"When I assumed office, I appealed to you for your co-operation in restoring law and order. I am happy that you have responded magnificently. I wish to outline the policies and programmes of my Government for the Federation.

"All Nigerians want an end to regionalism. Tribal loyalties and activities which promote tribal consciousness and sectional interests must give way to the urgent task of national reconstruction ;

"The Federal Military Government will preserve Nigeria as one strong nation. We shall give firm, honest and disciplined leadership. There are a number of urgent problems now facing us. In solving them I shall count on your continued co-operation and hard work.

"The Federal Military Government will stamp out corruption and dishonesty in our public life with ruthless efficiency and restore integrity and self-respect in our public affairs.

"In the public service, efficiency and merit will be the criteria for advancement. The Government will study very

carefully the questions posed by those who recklessly abuse<sup>P</sup> their public offices through the acquisition of state land and<sup>C</sup> financial deals.

"The Federal Military Government will introduce<sup>1</sup> administrative reforms. It will also restore the laid-down<sup>T</sup> procedures for tenders and awards of contracts so as to eradicate corrupt practices and ensure maximum benefit from the<sup>1</sup> expenditure of tax payers' money.

"The Government realises that a few unscrupulous foreign and Nigerian business-men and contractors have contributed their own share to the tragic plunders and waste of the past. There will be no place in the new order for such profiteers and adventurers. The Government, however, reassures all honest businessmen and genuine investors who are in the majority and who can contribute to the country's development that they are most welcome.

"An end will be put to extravagance and waste in public expenditure. I have already reduced the number of Federal Ministries and I have ordered the Military Governors to take similar steps in their areas. I have abolished the offices of the Agents-General in London. Overseas tours by officials in Government, public corporations and other public bodies will be drastically curtailed. In future only essential tours will be undertaken by such officials.

"Public corporations all over the country have been a source of public waste. As a first step towards reforming these statutory bodies and state-owned companies, all political appointees and other non-official members of their boards shall cease to be members as from January 31, 1966. The board will be reconstituted to ensure that each statutory body and state-own company is properly managed.

"The major challenges facing us are the rapid development of the Nigerian economy and the problem of unemployment.

"The Government will pursue with vigour the implementation of the Six-Year Development Programme and see to it that Key Projects like the Iron and Steel Complex are started without undue delay.

"Prestige projects such as fanciful office buildings and palatial residential quarters will be discontinued, we shall continue the preparatory work for the next Development

an which has already started. Development involves sacrifices from all of us and we will ensure that such sacrifices are borne by all members of the community. No section or privileged group will be exempted from the burden of development.

“In the field of economic development, Nigeria will require foreign capital and technical know-how from abroad. The Government will ensure that such foreign assistance will be properly utilised in the interest of the country.

“We will ensure that objective economic criteria are used in determining the policies of all the Marketing Boards to the funds available for development. Government will take appropriate steps to increase food production and bring prosperity to the rural areas.

“We realise the important role of industrialisation in the rapid development of the economy. We will ensure that industrial development is co-ordinated on a national basis to avoid wasteful duplication of industrial projects. Where Government is a partner in an industrial venture, it will ensure that it is profitable and that it promotes genuine development.

“We also recognise the important role of private investment. To this end the government is revising the legislation relating to incentives in order to assist genuine private businessmen wishing to establish projects of benefit to the economy.

“Every effort will be made to increase revenue and to observe strict control in the disbursement of public funds to increase the funds available for development.

“The Government will give priority to the construction of adequate modern housing for the low income groups in urban areas. Work will proceed immediately on the long delayed low-cost housing scheme for workers in the Lagos area. Government houses occupied by former Ministers, chairmen of statutory bodies and other political appointees will now be utilised in the public interest.

“The Government will re-appraise educational policies to ensure high and uniform standards throughout the country.

“Our universities will be re-orientated to serve the genuine needs of our people.

“As regards health, the Government will ensure efficiency

in the management of hospitals and check abuses by doctors, pharmacists and other health workers.

“I stress once again, the need for hard work and honesty from all Nigerians. Flattering messages, political jobs and such corrupting activities, have no place in the Nigeria.

“As regards political activities, we cannot afford to continue with sterile political strife and mutual recriminations. I have, therefore, ordered that there shall be no display of party flags or symbols and no shouting of political slogans.

“Fellow citizens, this is a unique opportunity to build a strong united Nigeria. We are determined to succeed and with your support we shall succeed.”

### REGIONAL GOVERNORS APPOINTED

After the policy statement of the new regime and the appointment of Military Governors in each region, Irons announced that the Military Government would be administered by two bodies known as the Supreme Military Council and the Central Executive Council. The line-up is as follows:

#### (a) THE SUPREME MILITARY COUNCIL

- \* Head of the Federal Military Government and Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces, Major-General J. T. U. Aguiyi Ironsi
- \* Chief of Staff, Supreme Headquarters—Brigadier B. Ogundipe
- \* Chief of Staff, Nigerian Army—Lt. Col. Yakubu Gowon
- \* Military Governor, Eastern Provinces—Lt. Col. C. Odumegwu-Ojukwu
- \* Military Governor, Western Provinces—Lt. Col. Ade. Fajuyi
- \* Military Governor, Northern Provinces—Lt. Col. Hassan Usman-Katsina
- \* Military Governor, Mid-Western Provinces—Lt. Col. David Ejoor
- \* Head of the Nigeria Navy—J.E.A. Wey
- \* Head of the Nigerian Air Force—Lt. Col. G. T. Kurubo.

and also the

### (b) CENTRAL EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

- \* Head of the Federal Military Government and Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces (President)—Major-General Aguiyi Ironsi.
- \* Chief of Staff, Supreme Headquarters—Brigadier B. Ogundipe
- \* Chief of Staff, Nigerian Army—Lt. Col. Gowon
- \* Military Governor, Eastern Provinces, Lt. Col. Ojukwu
- \* Military Governor, Western Provinces, Lt. Col. Fajuyi
- \* Military Governor, Mid-Western Provinces, Lt. Col. Ejoor
- \* The Administrator of the Capital Territory of Lagos, Major Mobolaji Johnson.
- \* Military Governor, Northern Provinces, Lt. Col. Hassan Usman Katsina.
- \* Head of the Nigeria Navy—Commodore Wey
- \* Head of the Nigerian Air Force—Lt. Col. Kurubo
- \* Inspector-General of Police—Edet
- \* Deputy Inspector-General of Police—Alhaji Kam Salem

Above was the line-up of the administrators of the Military Government, January to July, 1966—Ironsi regime.

**May Incident in Lagos:** So far as the May 29, 1966, disturbances in the North were concerned, they were purely that region's affairs. The disturbances did not spread to other regions of the Federation as was the case in subsequent incidents. The part that Lagos played, as the seat of the Federal Military Government, was to issue orders to the then Military Governor in Kaduna, Lt. Col. Hassan Usman Katsina, asking him to stop further bloodshed. Subsequently there was a temporary lull.

As a matter of fact, when the news of killing reached Lagos, there were general unrests, especially, among those who had their relatives still living in the North. Those whose relatives were directly affected became panic stricken. Some left by air and some by train to see members of their families. Some lucky ones found their still alive, while in some cases

it was a case of, "old Johnny is dead and buried or missing."

Following this, many who had travelled to the North decided to come back home with their relatives for fear of recurrence, while some stayed put as a result of the appeal by some Emirs and Chiefs in the region guaranteeing their safety and those of their properties. Soon some of the Southerners came to realise they were guided by a miracle.

Later, it was reliably learned that a deputation of Easterners resident in the North travelled to State House in Lagos to make representation to Major-General Aguiyi Ironsi. In a memorandum submitted to the Major-General, the people alleged there was a plot to overthrow his Government. The plan, they said, was conceived and hatched in the North. In his reply, Ironsi was reported to have said he was a soldier and was not afraid of any attack. Some loyal Northerners from the North also visited State House for a similar purpose, but the former Head of State was adamant. Many letters from friends, and even some students of the Ahmadu Bello University sent in notes, but Ironsi was not to budge. Like Caesar, he was to die.

† **Masses Happy, But . . .** It was true the Nigerian Army had taken over Government from politicians; and it was true that the bulk of the populace of Lagos were jubilating, not because the Prime Minister, Chief Festus Okotie-Eboh and others were killed, but because the Western Nigeria crisis which was then spreading like wild fire had been stopped by the Military action. As a result of this jubilation, people welcomed the soldiers anywhere they met them, be it in department stores, in offices, or on the highways. Some welcomed to do ones gave them presents, and in some private hotels they were allowed to take foods and drinks free of charge.

There was no preferential treatment in the matter of entertainment, because what people in Lagos thought then was that the Coup was a collective responsibility of all sections of the soldiers irrespective of region or tribe. Major-General Aguiyi Ironsi received the greatest acclaim as the Head of the Nigerian Army at that time.

Unfortunately, this new turn of events did not last long following the rush of many DECREES, especially those of them that hit directly on the means of livelihood of some

people. One of such decrees was that which banned the existence of political parties, sale of recorded songs in praise of politicians, etc. The other was that which relieved certain persons of their lofty posts in statutory corporations and other Government sponsored institutions. The enforcement of those two decrees was felt, not only in Lagos, but throughout the Federation, with rude shock. The last straw as the UNIFICATION DECREE.

Soon after these decrees, people in Lagos became highly disgruntled, especially those directly affected politicians and their dependants. Major-General Aguiyi Ironsi and his "boys" who long before these days had been regarded as the darlings of the masses in Lagos, soon after the decrees started to fall out of favour with them. The usual ovation which was accorded the Major-General any time he was seen outside State House was drastically reduced.

Some people, however, continued to regard him as their hero, decree or no decree. People who criticised Ironsi most were a section of Lagos youths who maintained he acted wrongly by detaining in prison those "boys" who were responsible for the January Coup. Ironsi regime staggered in this manner till the July 29 incident in parts of Nigeria.

**July Incident in Lagos:** What most people in Lagos thought was going to be the end of Ironsi Government came true on July 29, 1966, when Radio Nigeria announced that he (Ironsi) and his host, Lt. Col. Adekunle Fajuyi, had been kidnapped at Ibadan.

Unlike the January incident when I did not know anything about the coup until I got to Lagos Island, this time, I was completely aware of the situation right from home following a radio announcement at 6 a.m. of that fateful day. I came in contact with first sign of trouble while travelling by bus to Lagos Island at the Ijora Cause-Way. As the bus in which I was travelling was packed full, I did not take any notice that soldiers were stationed at certain points on the way.

But as soon as our bus rolled off the Ijora-Olopa bus stop, and just at the brow of the former Carter bridge, our bus screeched to a halt. "What is wrong with this bus?" I asked scornfully. But soon I learned! As I turned my bespectacled

aching eyes to my right on the road side were grim-looking soldiers all in full combat outfits. Before I withdrew from that angle, already in the bus were three peering menacingly into passengers' faces.

In fairness to those soldiers, none of them asked whether you were a Yoruba man, Ibo man or an Hausa man. Soon they stepped down and our bus hooted off. At Iddo Railway Station, on the side overlooking the Yaba—Lagos way, armed soldiers were seen in a somewhat scattered manner. Some sat at the foot of the overhead bridge, while others were in landrovers—holding out their rifles—just in case!

Full details of the incident were disclosed to me in my office. The story was that, the soldiers, apart from kidnapping their commander, Aguiyi Ironsi, were also fighting among themselves, hence they were seen at every strategic point looking for their escaping opponents—It was a scuffle between Northern soldiers and those of Eastern origin.

Later in the day, it became known that similar disturbances took place at Ikeja, Abeokuta, Ibadan, Kano, Kaduna, and Zaria Army Barracks. Frankly speaking, there was panic everywhere, despite the fact it was made known that the disturbances were confined to army barracks, people were not prepared to take chances.

## GOWON FORMS GOVERNMENT

Major-General Yakubu Gowon, then Lt. Col. took over as the Head of the Federal Military Government soon after the toppling of Ironsi Government on July 29. Many knowledgeable citizens in Lagos seriously thought the man to succeed Ironsi was the officer second in command in the Supreme Head Quarters in Lagos—Brigadier B. Ogundipe. However, the people's hopes crashed when later they learned the Brigadier had left the country for the United Kingdom. Unrests continued.

### Highlights of Gowon Regime

- \* Abrogation of the Controversial Decree No. 34 initiated by Ironsi regime.
- \* The release of Chief Obafemi Awolowo and some others from Prison.
- \* Appointment of peace-making bodies

- \* Creation of twelve states.
- \* Declaration, and end, of Civil war.
- \* Civil Servants and some others in the private sector received the greatest bounty of a benevolent government through the Udoji Award.
- \* Many ambitious projects were initiated, some executed.

**The Exodus:** In the evening of one of those eventful days, the compound where I lived in Lagos was packed full by fleeing women, their children and young men—all of them Easterners, and Ibos for that matter. It did not occur to men and women of other tribes in the East resident in Lagos to flee until the day Major Ibanga Ekanem and Major O. U. Isong were killed in Lagos. All of them were from the former Calabar Province. Most of the non-Ibo Easterners who stayed put at the first stage of the outbreak of violence claimed it was an Hausa and Ibo affair. This assertion could be admitted, for the purpose of argument, but soon they came to learn.

The mass exodus of PEOPLE from Lagos was not, frankly speaking, confined to those of Eastern Nigeria origin alone. As a matter of fact, Lagos being a cosmopolitan city, some men and women of other ethnic groups and foreigners also panicked and packed bag and baggage to their places of origin. This affected mostly market women, traders and private businessmen. There was a profound state of confusion everywhere as terribly excited parents and relatives trooped to Lagos to bundle back home their children and kinsmen. Poor me, nobody came. Instead, I received taunting letters announcing my doom.

This stampede stepped up on the Easterners' side as soon as it was made known that Eastern Nigeria Government had earmarked a large sum of money for the resettlement of those of Eastern origin who came back from the "disturbed areas of Nigeria." Tension actually mounted when news went round the city of Lagos to the effect that the former Personnel Officer of the Nigerian Airways, Mazi Stephen Achilefu, had been shot dead by some soldiers.

Same was the case when an occupant of Ironsi's house at Ekaete, Surulere, Lagos, was killed. Confusion became worst confounded when it was rumoured that soldiers were going round the places under the directive of some disgrun-

tled elements in Lagos taking down the addresses of the houses being occupied by Ibos. There were also rumours that the same soldiers were making forcible entry into provision stores owned and occupied by Easterners; taking of the drinks and provisions, refusing to pay for them, and beating up the owners if they resisted. Candidly, these THINGS and other THINGS more, heightened the fears of Easterners who fled Lagos between the July and October, 1966.

While the soldiers were making nonsense of the situation, some Eastern transport owners were also busy demanding their own fair-shares. These transporters rushed hundreds of lorries, buses and taxis to Lagos, not out of patriotic zeal but for selfish reasons.

I cannot say exactly what else spurred the strange idea of these transporters, but what the general public, including the unfortunate Easterners, came to realise one morning was that transport fares, to and from the East, had reached an insurmountable height. This had a smashing effect on the low income class who would have no other alternative, but to pawn away their valuable articles of furniture at such a price that could in fact, wet the eyes of a ferocious beast. But to our brothers would not listen to any talks that involved the expression of sentiments.

In fairness to the Eastern transporters, they were not alone in this scramble. Frankling speaking, while the Eastern transporters were busy making things hopelessly wretched for their kiths and kins, the Northern and Western sides were also demanding their own tolls from their own kinsmen. The slogan then was: *Yu go go, or yu no go go? Yu wan die for Lagos?* Of course, to a panicky soul, it was a "must". Some got the assistance of "friends in need", while some of us surrendered ourselves to fortune. I was a remainer in the interest of this work.

The class of people hardest hit was that of the low income earners who had about six to eight children, with themselves, wives and loads to transport back home. What is more, all official motor parks in Lagos were congested. With effect, every available space both on the island and the mainland of Lagos was converted into a temporary park, particularly the petrol stations. And so, the stampede continued, but went off on a recess between the months of March and

May to resume in June, 1967, following the "return home appeal" by the Eastern Nigeria Government to its citizens and the declaration of secession.

Lest I forget, some of these unfortunate incidents took place during the summit conference which commenced in Lagos on September 12, 1966. The conference broke down because of the disturbances in Lagos, and so also was the Aburi Summit in Ghana.

So far, this is the story of 1966 crisis in Lagos narrated in a drastically condensed manner.



*One of the unfortunate incidents of the banned Action Group intra-party conflict was the imprisonment of 18 prominent members of the party. Picture above shows the leader, Chief Obafemi Awolowo, being led out of the confinement by Lt. Col. Gowon (as he then was) following the second military coup on July 29.*

## CHAPTER THREE

### EASTERNER ON THE CRISIS

I have earlier in the preface to this work expressed my difficulty in an attempt to travel to the North to have an eye-witness account of the events of the disturbances in that Region. Happily, while in the East, I met someone whose story I regarded as authentic and unbiased. He was bold, frank and outspoken in his account of the incidents, himself a central figure in the crisis. He was Mazi E. O. Nwagbara, at the time Secretary-General, Refugees Association in Umuahia. I have earlier mentioned this name. Here, he narrates the story beginning from the January 15 to October 9, 1966, when he with others finally left the North for Eastern Nigeria by train:

The Military Coup of January 15, 1966, which claimed the lives of some prominent Nigerians namely, the Prime Minister, Alhaji Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa, Chief S. L. Akintola, Alhaji Ahmadu Bello, Chief Festus Okotie Eboh and a few Army Officers was, though an unfortunate event, welcomed in the North not only with a sense of relief, but also as an end to the excesses of Nigerian politicians.

Long before the military take-over of power, most of us in the North, including the Northerners themselves, were very much alarmed at the outcome of the West Regional elections of 1965.

Rumours reaching us then in the North were very disturbing. These rumours started to gain ground when certain changes started to take place in the Army Barracks in Kano. New faces were often seen patrolling the streets of the city with the familiar ones. We Ibos, in particular, then resident in Kano, were apprehensive of the changing situation in the army barracks. This was so because the trouble had always been between us and the Hausas. We rightly feared something explosive was in the offing.

Soon after the January Coup, many Northerners and Southerners jubilated because the military action put a final stop to what could have deprived us of our means of livelihood. At the Sardauna's official residence, out of sheer curiosity hundreds of people flocked there to see the wrecked building, but often we were repelled by the soldiers who were on duty all over the place. A few days later, most of us leaders of Eastern communities in Kaduna and Kano were horribly shocked when an issue of the *New Nigerian* of February, 1966, came out with an explosive article attacking Easterners. The article was credited to one Alhaji Takuma.

In the article, Alhaji Takuma accused the Easterners, particularly the Ibos, of being responsible for the plotting of the Coup. The Ibos, the article went on, should be prepared for the consequences of the army action.

Following this inciting article, there was a real polemic between Ibo elements headed by J. M. Kurunwanne, Jos Nnadi, E. O. Nwagbara (myself), R. Uchendu and others. This took place between February and March, 1966.

In a reply to Alhaji Takuma's article, the Ibos maintained that it was wrong for anybody to single out one ethnic group as being responsible for the January Coup. We further maintained it was an open secret that Major-General Aguiyi Ironsi was not consulted or even aware of the plan to overthrow the Federal Government by a dissident section of the Nigerian Army.

We also maintained that in-as-much as Ironsi was the General Officer Commanding the Nigerian Army, and while the Army had taken over Government, it was automatic that such head should be invited to lead the Nation. The fact that he, Ironsi, was an Ibo man should not be taken as a sufficient reason to assume that the Ibos were responsible for the January Coup.

Later, Alhaji Ibrahim Imam, a former Secretary of the N.P.C., wrote a series of provocative articles against the Easterners in general in support of an earlier one by Alhaji Takuma. Following these articles against the Easterners, the minds of the entire populace of the North

were in fact, prepared for a showdown. The Press between the Ibos and the Hausas eventually led to one of the causes of the May incident in the North. We resisted the attacks with manly courage.

It is clear to note that while the Federal Military Government in Lagos was worried about the killings in the North, there was no sign of any regret on the part of the Regional Government of the North, at least, for a while.

True, when killing started in parts of the North on May 29, there was no such incident in Katsina, but on the return of the Emir, who virtually is the natural father of the Military Governor, from a visit to Kaduna, killing started and about 62 Easterners were killed in a manner unprecedented in the history of mass massacre, while hundreds had serious knife wounds, and some were poisoned arrows. What actually took place during the Emir's absence was looting in general.

Regarding the July incident all Northerners were jubilant over the kidnapping of Ironsi and Fajuyi at Ibadan. In the evening of July 29, leading Hausas toasted their victory at the Nassara Club in Kano. Here drinks were offered free-of-charge to any Northerner who was willing. It was also at the victory party that one *Murtala Kano*, a major in the Nigerian Army, confessed he was the "Hero" who kidnapped both Ironsi and Fajuyi at Ibadan on July 29.

Quite Frankly, as soon as Lt. Col. Yakubu Gowon assumed office as the new Head of State in Lagos, there was an absolute satisfaction among the Northerners. Their only regret was that Zik, Okpara, Awolowo and Osadebay were still alive. All along the Streets, in Kaduna and Kano Northerners were busy telling off the Ibos. They threatened to treat them like the Jews of old. Sometime, between September 20 and 23, rumours swept all over the North to the effect that Northerners in the East had all been killed; another rumour had it that Eastern Nigeria would secede from the rest of the Federation on October 1, 1966. Following these rumours, killing started afresh. The September disturbances took two days, 28 and 29.

Frankly speaking, the Emir of Kano, Alhaji Ado Bayero should be congratulated by all men of good-will in Nigeria for his noble role during the disturbances in Kano. By his indomitable spirit and quick action he was able to save the lives of some hundreds of Easterners resident at the Sabon Gari. Ditto to the Chief of Jos, Ram Pwang Pam; Ditto to the Emir of Bornu. But would others have it so? The answer is no! Some directly took active parts.

On Saturday October 1, 1966, the day it was widely rumoured the East would secede from the rest of the Federation, the Nigeria Police, accompanied by some soldiers and the Native Authority Police constables, went round the Sabon Gari, Kano announcing that a curfew had been imposed on the city from 7 p.m. to 7 a.m. until further notice. According to them, this was one of their practical steps to maintain law and order, because, they claimed, some reactionary elements had entered the Kano Town to cause trouble. Subsequently, unsuspecting inhabitants of Sabon Gari, mostly Easterners, were herded into their rooms as early as 6.30p.m. This, later proved to be a move to perfect their design.

About 7 p.m. of that day, shooting started at the Kano Airport. A few minutes after 7 p.m. shooting of defenceless Easterners at Sabon Gari started in defiance of the appeal of the Emir of Kano Alhaji Ado Bayero, the good. At about 6.55 a.m. Sunday, October 2, 1966, disturbances started at the Railway Station, Kano, where well over 2,000 frightened Easterners were waiting for a train that never came. At about 7.30 a.m. some soldiers all armed, accompanied by their hysterical women and some thugs equally armed, continued operation.

Some few hours later, in fairness to the Regional Military Governor, Lt. Col. Hassan Usman Katsina, the soldiers returned to their barracks following his appeal. While they had withdrawn from the scene, the mobs continued in a fresh spirit shouting, "Ashare", meaning, "Operation Sweep Out". This bloody operation continued till Monday October 3. On this day, about 1,800 Easterners were quartered at the Wudil Primary School, Kano, for

safety by the orders of the Regional Government. On the day I finally left Kano, October 9, I did so in the company of about 1,000 Easterners. Northern friendly soldiers, about two in every coach, were detailed to escort us to the North/East boundary. On our way down South the crowds by the road sides were less hostile, but at Makurdi, it was a different story. At the Makurdi Railway Station, some few roughs entered one of the coaches carrying our loads and one of them removed my new Raleigh bicycle and was about to escape with it. He was intercepted on his way out. One of the soldiers, behaving in the true military manner, cleared the crowd and asked the thief to stand apart. He was consequently shot through the chest. The bicycle was later returned to the owner, cheers!

At Oturkpo, the crowds there were also very hostile, but we were repelled by the soldiers. As our "freedom" train was busy negotiating the corner between the East and North boundary near Ehamufu, there were spasmodic shouts of "Freedom! Freedom!!" emanating from the front coaches.

Soon all of us joined in shouting, "Freedom! Freedom!! It's home at last".

The Northern soldiers left us at Ehamufu, while we continued the historic ride till we reached Enugu Railway Station where members of the Nigerian Red Cross and other voluntary workers were expecting our arrival. Some of us who had minor injuries were treated on the spot and discharged, while those with serious wounds were taken to various hospitals at Enugu and environs for treatment.

Before concluding this painful episode, I seize this opportunity to thank some religious organisations in the North, particularly, the S.I.M. and the Nigerian Red Cross Society in Jos. While disturbances were still raging, these "Good Samaritans" were busy going from house to house taking Easterners to safety. Unhappily, some of them sacrificed their own lives in order to save souls. We are grateful to these organisations. The role played by some

members of the Nigeria Police in Jos was also commendable. Ditto to kindly Northerners.

### EAST GOVERNMENT ON THE CRISIS

No doubt, the Eastern Nigeria Government was the hardest hit by the unprecedented refugees problem then facing Nigeria. The Government was also conscious of its responsibility to its citizens and as a sequence employed all in its power both to save the situation and to enlighten the reading public both local and abroad on the causes of the crisis. Following this, a series of publications were produced one of which was the POGROM. This publication tells the story of the crisis in the North which of course, I am reproducing in part in the interest of my readers, beginning from May, 1966:

**May – June Incidents:** The genocide of Easterners by the combined action of Northern soldiers, Local Government Police and civilians which has been going on for the last four months in the North and other parts of the country is the latest and most savage attack yet unleashed. The pretext for the first assault on 29th May was the promulgation of Decree No. 34 by the Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces, Major J. T. U. Aguiyi Ironsi.

“This Decree which had been unanimously agreed upon by the Supreme Military Council, on which the north was fully represented (by Lt. Col. Hassan Usman Katsina, Military Governor of the North; Lt. Col. Yakubu Gowon, Chief of staff of the Army; and Alhaji Kam Salem, Deputy Inspector-General of Police) was merely intended to effect at the Government Level the Unified Command which had always existed at the Military Level. The Supreme Commander had clearly emphasized in a broad-cast to the Nation that the New arrangement was only an interim measure which would last until the high-powered Constitutional Commission he had set up had reported and the people had been given an opportunity of expressing their views.

“The so-called Muslim elite of the North immediately conspired with their feudal rulers, and aided by the former Northern Politicians and administrators, a plan was hatched

to massacre all the Easterners in their midst.

“On the Morning of Sunday, 29th May the Northerners pounced on Eastern Nigerians praying in churches or relaxing in the privacy of their homes. In three successive raids thousands of Easterners were butchered to death or maimed while several wives and daughters were raped and mutilated. The following Sunday, 5th June, the pattern was repeated some of the most horrible atrocities taking place in the town of Katsina ruled by the father of the Military Governor of Northern Nigeria, Lt. Col. Hassan Usman Katsina.

**July Incident:** On the Morning of 29th July, the world was startled by the news of a revolt organised by Northerners in the Nigerian Army. The Supreme Commander, Major-General Aguiyi Ironsi was reported ‘Kidnapped’ together with his host, Lt. Col. F. A. Fajuyi, Military Governor of Western Nigeria. Soon, more reports were received from several towns in the West and North which indicated a carefully-laid plan aimed at systematically annihilating all Eastern Nigerian Officers and men in the Nigerian Army.

“In Ibadan itself, nearly all the Army officers of Eastern Nigerian and Mid-Western origin were shot in the newly built Tailors’ Workshop of the Fourth Battalion. At Ikeja, eight miles away, 96 officers and men who had been despatched from Lagos to secure the route to the International Airport were ambushed by Northern soldiers and almost wiped out. An Easterner, Major Ibanga Ekanem, in charge of the Military Police was shot dead through the back in broad daylight at the Lagos Carter Bridge by a group of Northern soldiers.

“At Abeokuta Barracks, in Western Nigeria, almost all the Eastern officers and men and a few of Western and Mid-Western origin were murdered under very brutal circumstances. At Kaduna, about 190 Eastern Nigerian soldiers were surprised in their beds and shot.

**September – October Incidents:** From 18th to 24th September, disturbances continued in the Northern Towns of Makurdi, Minna, Gboko, Zaria, Gombe, Jos, Sokoto and the capital town of Kaduna. Men, women and children were surprised in their beds by combined teams of Northern soldiers and civilians and murdered. Others were slaughtered

t their places of work, or market places.

“A short distance from where the constitutional conference was holding in Lagos, Northern soldiers pounced on Mr Stephen Achilefu, personnel officer of the Nigerian Airways (an Easterner). Also, while hundreds of Easterners found genuine refuge from their attackers in the Police Stations in the North, several others were turned upon and slaughtered by Northern Policemen in the very Police Stations to which they had fled for protection.”

So far, that was part of Eastern Nigeria Government side of the story of the crisis as it affected Easterners in parts of the country. Next chapter we go over to the East for reported events in that Region, this time, by a Northern journalist based in Enugu. He left the region in the wake of the wholesale evacuation of non-Easterners before the actual confrontation. In the interest of justice, two sides to the issue must be presented to ensure an impartial appraisal.

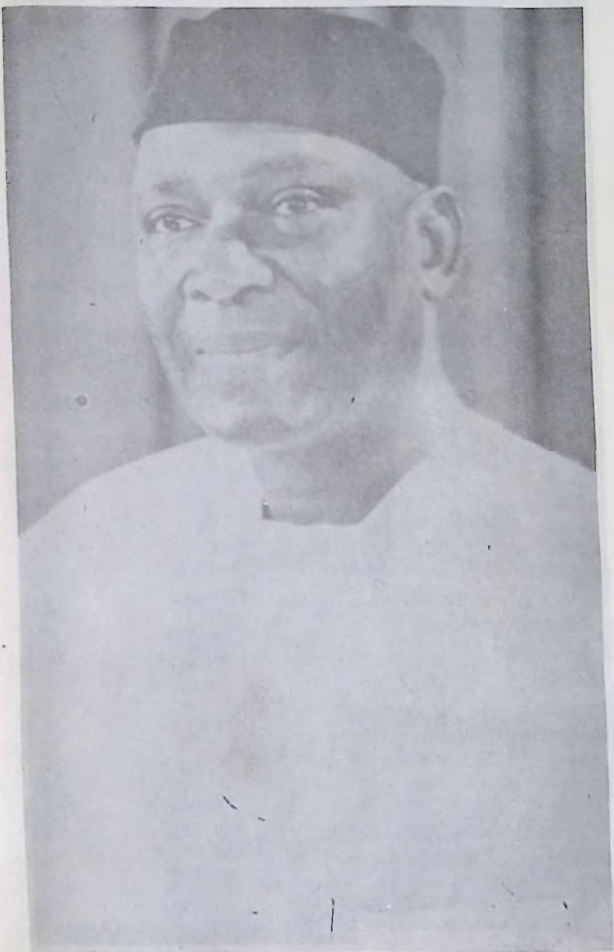


*The day Nigeria would have been blotted out of existence. Above, demonstrators made up of some UPGA leaders, supporters, and those of the Labour Party, trooping to State House in Lagos to brave a showdown over the nomination irregularities. This was during the 1964 Federal Elections.*

## HOW IT ALL STARTED

Picture (right) shows Chief Anthony Enahoro mover of the controversial motion for independence in 1956; while below is the Sardauna of Sokoto, then leader of Government business in the North, who moved the amendment that sparked off hostile reactions by Southerners in Lagos.

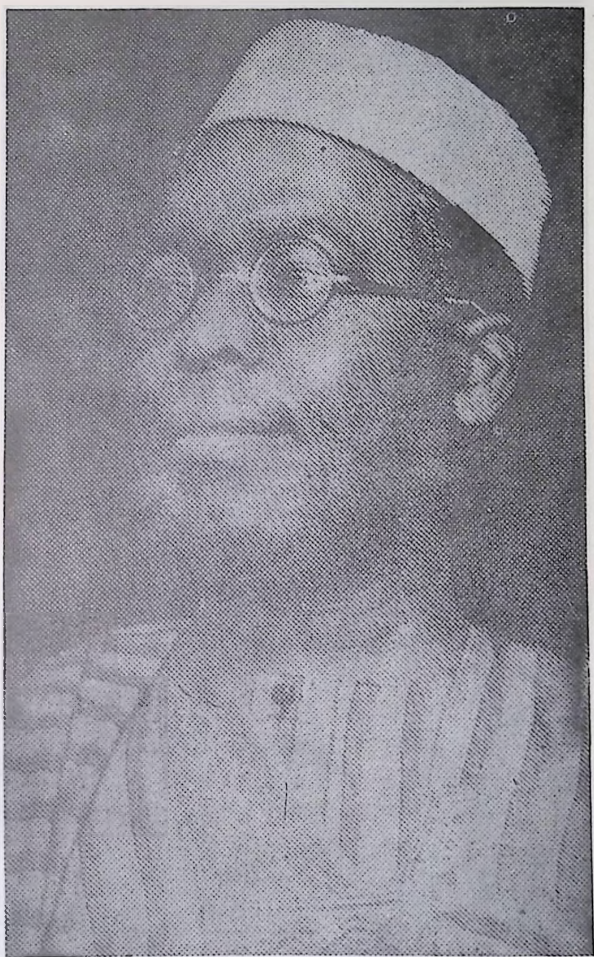




*Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe, President of the nation in the first Republic*



*Alhaji Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa Prime Minister of Nigeria  
in the first Republic*



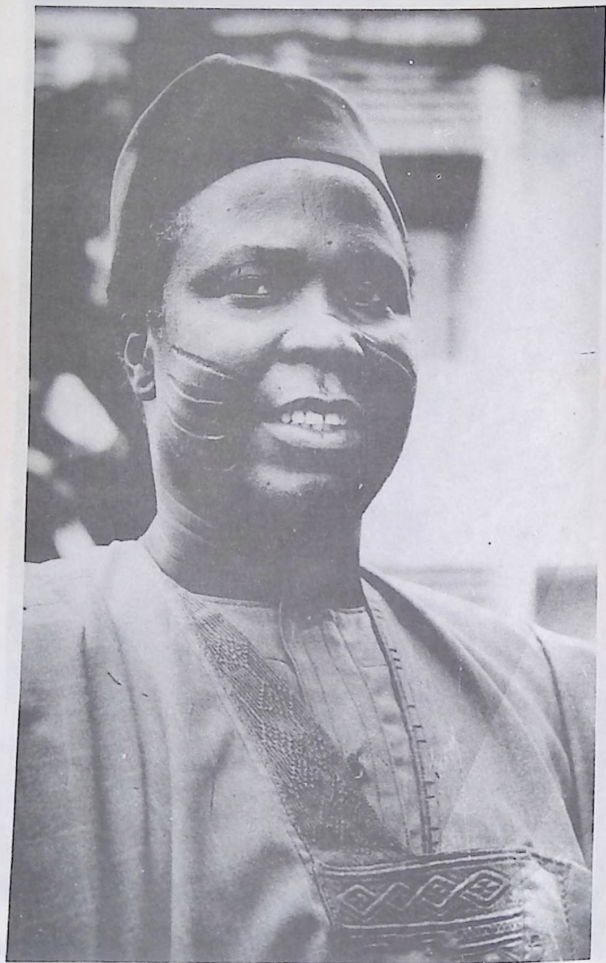
*Chief Obafemi Awolowo, leader of the banned Action Group*



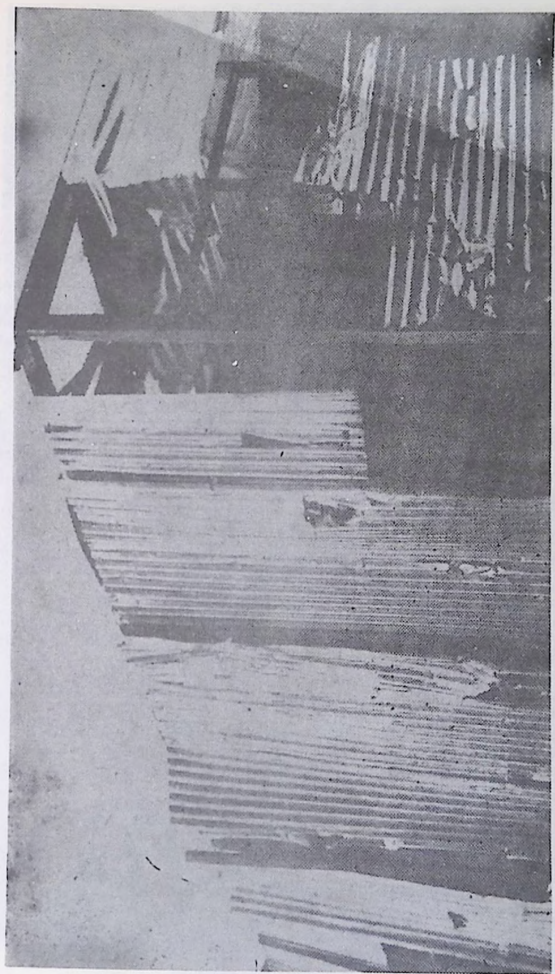
*Alhaji Sir Ahmadu Bello, the Sarkin Sokoto one of the leaders of the NNA*



*Dr. M. I. Okpara, one of the leaders of the UPGA*



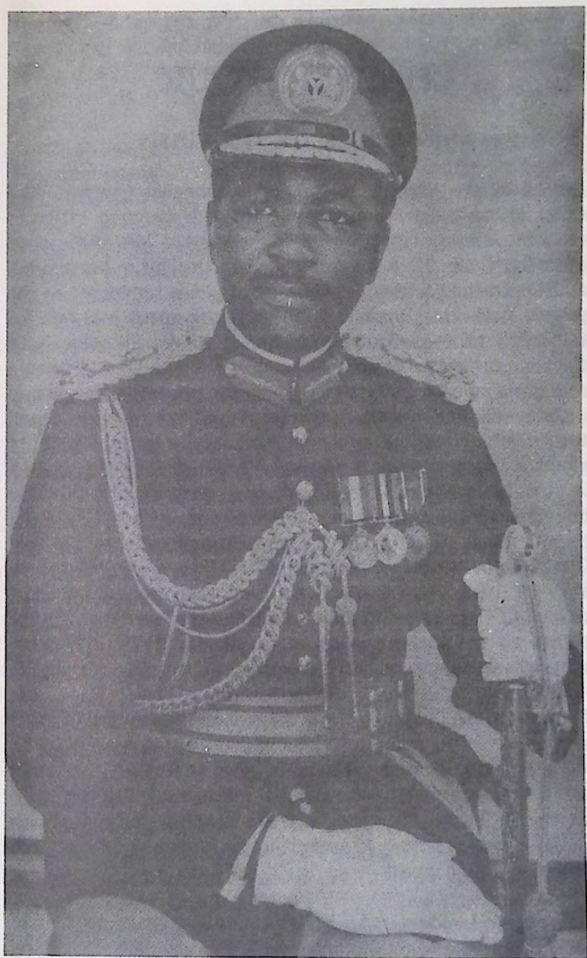
*Chief S. L. Akintola, one of the leaders of the NNA*



*Many polling booths in Lagos were damaged during the crisis period. Above shows one of such toppled in the melee.*



*Lt. Col. Odumegwu Ojukwu, Military Governor (East)*



*Gen. Yakubu Gowon, leader of the second military regime.*

## CHAPTER FOUR

### NORTHERNER ON THE CRISIS

**Events in the East:** Lt. Col. C. Odumegwu Ojukwu, like other Military Governors then appointed, assumed office as the East Military Governor on January 18, 1966, three days after the Coup. He was prompt and forth-right in his maiden address to the people of Eastern Nigeria. His broadcast to the people spoke in eloquent form his Government was out for the work of re-construction. Though his words were hard they were blended with the touch of humanity and were a reflection of the feelings of the masses whose patience had been overtaken following the crisis in Western Nigeria and the culpable attitudes of the politicians who were blinded by greed.

Governor Ojukwu, no doubt, must have been one of the happiest citizens in Eastern Nigeria for, at least, a brief period. From the day of his appointment as the Military Governor of the Region, January 18, 1966, to the month of May of that year, things were well with his region. But suddenly the scale turned. According to a narrator, the people of the Region woke up one morning to find themselves face to face with Refugee problem of the hardest type.

However, the story of the events of the crisis from January 15 to October, 1966, were told by a non-Easterner whom I had every reason to believe was not taking sides. In a reply to a question gentleman "X" said it was not true that the Easterners, did not revenge the attacks. "Anyone who knows the Easterners, especially the Iboman, will agree with me he is not the type to accept defeat lying low", he added. Here runs his account:

**January 15, Incident:** An ENBS announcer made it clear to the Region at the 6.00 a.m. news broadcast that something very tragic had happened in the Nation, but did not specify as to the nature of the incident. At A.C.B. (African Continental Bank) building, on the Ogui Road, Enugu, which inci-

dentially houses the ENBS (Eastern Nigeria Broadcasting Service) armed soldiers were seen on guard and people were being ordered out of the premises. More soldiers were still found parading the Road (Ogui), some in their landrovers—all armed.

“Following these unusual movements of the soldiers, there was real panic everywhere, especially among the native elements who were in the regional capital to transact their usual businesses. At the ministerial quarters, soldiers barricaded the whole area, kept some Ministers who had not escaped under house arrest including the Premier’s household. The Premier, Dr. M. I. Okpara was not in Enugu on the fateful day—January 15. Later in the day, it was learned he was at Umuahia—Ibeku, his home town. Some of the Regional Ministers who were not occupying official quarters were hunted and also placed under house arrest.

“In general, people all over Eastern Nigeria were happy that the ring-leaders of the troubles in the West had been killed, but regretted the failure of the Military action in the East. Moreover, they were happy that the coup had stopped killing, arson and looting in the West and Lagos. In the evening of that day, hundreds of Nigerians including some Northerners resident in Enugu toasted the victory of the Military operation in local hotels and public places. However, there was a sudden lull as torrents of decrees came pouring like a terrific rain in the region some few days after. Subsequently, opinion sharply differed and the masses were distinctively divided into two camps—those who supported the Military decrees as far as the politicians and board members were concerned, and those who frowned at the promulgation of such decrees. The region, like others in the Federation, remained in this state of nervous anxiety until the May incident in the North.

**May Incident:** The news of the killing of Easterners resident in the North created a great deal of wild sensation in the East, more especially, among those directly affected. The Ibos of the East were highly enraged and were in the forefront of the protest. Ancient quarrels between the Hausas and the Ibos were quickly dug up. The Aribas, the traditional war tribe of the Ibos, took counsel together to avenge the deaths of their kinsmen. As the news of the killing

did not say as to the numbers involved, tension was almost insurmountable. Following this, there were a series of meetings arranged by tribal organisations the aim of which was to send a delegation to the North Regional Government to ascertain the causes of disturbances.

"The mission of the delegation I should guess, was not a success following the spasmodic influx of Easterners resident in the North, to Eastern Region. Some of them had injuries all over their bodies. Later, this was followed by an appeal by Lt. Col. C. Odumegwu Ojukwu the East Regional Military Governor, requesting the fleeing Easterners to return to the North on the grounds that their safety had been guaranteed by the Emirs and Chiefs of that region. Later, the nation came to realise that neither Governor Ojukwu nor the Northern Emirs and Chief were able to assess the situation properly. It was like a desert mirage.

"As a result of what looked like a change of heart, many unsuspecting Easterners, particularly the Ibos, listened to the Emirs and Ojukwu's appeals and trooped back to the North to resume their normal businesses, while some of them bluntly refused to return to the North for fear of recurrence. The people of the Region, however, became a bit consoled when they learned that General Ironsi had instituted an inquiry into the causes of dispute, and that those found guilty would be dealt with. Easterners waited in vain to hear the findings of this inquiry until the calamitous July incident. The entire people of the East were completely enraged.

**July Incident:** Soon after the announcement that the Major-General Aguiyi Ironsi, and the other Military Governor of the West, Lt. Col. Adekunle Fajuyi had been kidnapped at Ibadan and taken to an unknown destination, the general atmosphere in the East appeared psychologically humid and sulky. Things nearly reached a saturating point, and there was a general desperation everywhere. People talked angrily, cursed and kicked in protest. To them it was going to be a struggle for survival in their own community or perish as a people, considering what happened in May.

"The dramatic part of this state of horror was that some Eastern Nigerian Politicians who since the January incident, had been in hiding, started to show up publicly once more

in the Regional capital. As a matter of fact, the news of the kidnapping incident at Ibadan was a welcome one to some politicians in the Region, while to the layman it was like a tidal wave. Some of the Politicians described the Ibadan tragedy as a happy relief believing it was going to be the end of Military rule in Nigeria.

"Between that fateful day of July and first week in September, information reached the officer commanding the 1st battalion, Lt. Col. D. S. Ogunewe of a well planned Military attack on the East by Northern soldiers serving in the East. Unlike Ironsi, Ogunewe did not hesitate in taking a quick action after consultation with the Military Governor of the Region, Lt. Col. Odumegwu Ojukwu, and proceeded to disarm all the soldiers. In the East then, there were about 700 soldiers including their officers. Of this number, 600 were, in fact, Northerners, while the remaining 100 were Easterners, comprising Ibos and other ethnic groups.

"Lest I forget, soon after the Ibadan incident, an era of fear and mutual suspicion prevailed between the Easterners, and non-Easterners particularly, between Hausa elements resident in the East. None was happy.

"Frankly speaking, there were disturbances at Enugu, Umuahia, Aba, Port-Harcourt, Onitsha, Calabar, Uyo, Ikot-Ekpene and Owerri, but for certainty, I cannot say whether any of these involved bloodsheds because my sources did not disclose this. In Enugu, for all I know, there were cases of injuries to, and manhandling of, many Northerners, while on the other hand, the Northerners themselves accepted the challenges.

"In truth, disturbances did not start in some of these places until the day of the arrival of the wounded, maimed and blinded Easterners, by plane, train and lorries from the North. In Enugu, disturbances were sparked off by party thugs and children. These made desperate efforts to attack the former Mayor of Enugu, Malam Altine Umoru, but they were tear-gassed by the police.

"Until the day he (Malam Umoru) left the Eastern Region for the North he was given full protection in the house of an Ibo friend of his. Other Hausas who had no places to run to were given full protection in all police stations in the regional capital and elsewhere. Police and the

Red Cross vans were really busy throughout the excited period collecting Hausa elements from their places of residence to Police stations to await evacuation to the North. On the day of their departure they were given full protection by the police to avoid molestation or mob attack.

“While the region was in this state of profound confusion, no one would expect the usual cordial relation between soldiers of Eastern origin and those of the North to remain unimpaired. As a matter of fact, as there was mutual suspicion among the civilian elements, so also were the case between the Northern and Eastern soldiers. At a stage, it appeared the aggrieved mass of the Easterners were about to wreak vengeance on all non-Easterners resident in the East, and at another, it seemed the people were preparing to march to the North to fight. The presence of Northerners, especially their soldiers at Enugu did not please any of them for fear they could strike anytime. Later they were repatriated.

“Regarding the Military Governor, Lt. Col. Odumegwu Ojukwu, the people did not spare him either. They blamed their fate on him, because it was he who persuaded some of those who were killed in the July incident to return to the North after the May incidents. This, coupled with the presence of Northern soldiers at Enugu, forced the Governor to seek refuge at the Regional C.I.D. Headquarters. In short, he completely lost confidence in the soldiers who long before this time had been disarmed, and the region’s mobile police drafted to the army barracks to take charge of the armoury. The Military Governor did not return to his official residence, until the day the Northern soldiers were evacuated from the Region.

**September – October Incidents:** One of the striking incidents of this period was the complete break-down of the constitutional talks then taking place in Lagos. Eastern Nigeria delegates to this conference came back home to complain that Northern soldiers in Lagos were pestering their lives at their lodging places, and in fact, were doing so with impunity. Easterners, once again, did not like this. While the Lagos incident was still bubbling in the minds of the people, refugees were still pouring into the East from all over the

Federation of Nigeria. Those from Lagos told of the molestation of their lives by Northern soldiers there, while those from West and Mid-West said they left these places as a precautionary measure.

“Apart from the general excitement aroused as a result of the influx of fleeing Easterners, in the Region itself, there was, at that particular time, a feeling of anxiety generated by tribal sentiment. At a certain time, there was a rumour that people of one ethnic group were preparing to attack others of different groups in their community. This unfortunate rumour created a situation whereby some people, particularly, the womenfolk started to panic. Immediate Government intervention was very effective.”

This was the unhappy situation in which Eastern Nigeria found itself from May to October, 1966, told in brief.

### NORTHERN GOVERNMENT ON THE CRISIS

Below is Northern Nigeria's own version of the story as contained in their own publication *The Nigerian situation* beginning from the July, 1966, incident:

“After the turn of the tide in July, the Ibos held a series of meetings in Eastern Nigeria at which they decided not to co-operate with the new regime headed by Lieutenant Colonel Yakubu Gowon; and to retaliate for the alleged loss sustained by Ibos during the May disturbances. They were to carry out subversive activities and to blow up important public buildings by means of explosives throughout the Federation, except in Eastern Nigeria.

“Northerners were to be killed and their property looted. In pursuance of this plot, a well-organised onslaught was launched by Ibos in August against Northerners resident in Abakaliki, Enugu, Owerri and Aba. Before this attack, the Ibo Army and the Police conducted a thorough search of the houses of Northerners and collected all arms and weapons from them. It must be pointed out that non-Ibos in the East deprecated the attack on Northerners and did all they could to save their lives and property.

“In Abakaliki Province, in the month of August, Northerners with their herds of cattle were attacked; their cattle were seized, slaughtered and distributed among the

Ibos. The Ibos followed up by killing these Northerners and looting their property. Over 1,000 Northerners are known to have been killed, thirty-four badly injured, and thousands of cattle were taken away.

"In Enugu, the attack on Northerners started on the 15th of August. Ibo soldiers led the attack. About 630 Northerners were killed in the province while twenty-seven were seriously wounded. A Northern boy, seven-year-old, was publicly slaughtered in the street by uniformed Ibo soldier in the presence of another Northerner who was dressed like an Ibo and was thus able to escape detection.

"In Onitsha Province, thirty Northerners were killed and six seriously injured.

"In Owerri too, where Northerners had lived for long and inter-married with the Ibos, they were attacked and killed in cold blood despite assurances of their safety by the "Ibo Elders". One Northerner who escaped from Owerri was Alhaji Sabo who was born there, his father having settled there seventy years ago. His father, Chief of the Hausa community in Owerri had been a customary court judge there for thirty-seven years. He was killed at the beginning of the organised attack on Northerners in the presence of the son who later managed to escape to Kaduna.

"In September, a very large number of those Northerners who had managed to reach Obolo Afor on their way to the North were murdered.

"At Nsukka, two Northern warders were able to escape death by taking shelter in the prison yard. A staff of the veterinary department of the University of Nigeria hid himself in the ceiling of his house to escape death. All they had acquired were taken away. All Northerners living on the outskirts of Nsukka were killed.

"In Aba township, Okigwe, Ahoada, Obubura and Elele, several Northerners were killed in cold blood. Those that got away did so with the help of non-Ibo elements.

"In Port Harcourt, a house with a large number of Northern women in hiding was attacked. The women in hiding were attacked. The women were raped and beaten to death. Ibos singing war songs slaughtered every Northerner they could find in the street, and a number of those who were in hiding were killed quietly by their neighbours.

“During the evacuation, a train driven by an expatriate, carrying about 2,000 Northerners from Port Harcourt was stopped at Imo River by Ibo soldiers. Suddenly, Ibos armed with deadly weapons rushed out from the bush and attacked the passengers. Every adult male Northerner on the train was killed and the body thrown into the river, while children and the young women were captured and taken into slavery. The few survivors were eventually admitted into Oturkpo and Makurdi Hospitals.

“These killing of Northerners and atrocities against them in the East coupled with the uncovered plan to sabotage important installations in the North by the Ibos sparked off the 29th September incidents.”

So far, that is the North’s version of the story as far as the East is concerned; and below are allegations against the Ibos in the North before the crisis. These should be studied carefully to remove possible areas of future frictions. My role is that of an impartial judge, preparing my case for the jury—Mature Public Opinion.



*Major-General Aguiyi Ironsi (middle) seen above with his Military Governors. They are from left: Lt. Col. Hassan Usman Katsina, for North; Lt. Col. Adekunle Fajuyi, for West; Ironsi; Lt. Col. C. Odumegwu Ojukwu, for East; and Lt. Col. David Ejoor; for Mid-Western Nigeria, now Bendel State.*

## CHAPTER FIVE

### SEVEN CHARGES AGAINST THE IBOS AND THE REPLIES

In the preface to this work, I promised to supply CHARGES made by the Northerners against the Ibos resident in their region before the eruption of the crisis, as well as the REPLIES to those CHARGES by the Ibos. Speaking for the Ibos was Mazi E. O. Nwagbara, Secretary-General of the Refugees Association in Umuahia, Imo State, himself a former businessman then in Kano. The Northerners' charges are contained in their publication entitled, *The Nigerian Situation*, published in 1966, the year the fratricidal conflict in the country reached a boiling-point. I relied on this publication, because I had every reason to believe it represented the opinions of a cross-section of Northerners. The *charges* and *replies* are equally significant in that they form the basic causes of the crisis. These should be dispassionately studied and treated by our present administration to avoid recurrence. They are as follows:

*1st Charge: That the Ibos in Commercial Houses and those in Statutory Corporations in the North practiced tribalism to extremity, thereby discriminated against Northerners in matter of employment opportunities in such places.*

**Reply:** This is absolutely false as it is unfounded, for the following reasons: (a) in the case of the commercial houses referred to, these were the exclusive concerns of the white expatriate business owners of such establishments. They had to decide policy as regards employment, promotion and dismissal.

Since academic qualification and experience are the two major factors for consideration before the employment of candidates, the Northerners should have themselves to blame for lacking these essential requirements.

Now, let us take for granted they possess all these prerequisites, another issue for consideration is their mental attitude to responsibilities. I must confess, most of them are very HONEST, but SERIOUSNESS, this is Nil. As for hard work, the average Hausaman is not prepared to strain his nerves to ensure an independent living, hence you find some of them going about begging, and indulging in games of chances or gambling, such as the Cha-Cha.

As a matter of fact, if there was any discrimination at all, the white employers of labour, and not the Ibos, were responsible. Every employer of labour obviously wants efficient hands in the interest of his business. There is no sentiment in this; and (b) regarding the issue of Statutory Corporations referred to, this is the position.

What barred some Northerners from securing appointments in commercial houses in their own region repeated itself in the Statutory Corporations. In truth, the introduction of the Northernisation Policy in the region made some of them swollen headed. Following the implementation of this policy, most of them who had the *Northern Standard* — Class IV, Secondary, were made to replace the Southerners with higher qualifications—School Certificates.

Unfortunately, as time went on, it became clear some of them could not cope with the standard of efficiency and discipline required in a quasi-government institution, as a result they started to succumb to administrative pressures. Frankly speaking, many white employers of labour had clashes with some government quarters for recommending candidates with poor standards.

*2nd Charge: That the Ibos used their positions in the Commercial Houses in the North to the detriment of Hausa traders. This vicious approach to the commercial life of the North consequently hindered the indigenous traders from buying and selling effectively. The Ibo monopoly extended to every aspect of trade in the North, including the purchase of yam, rice, maize, eggs, onion, timber, tomatoes and pepper.*

*The most annoying aspect of it was that the Ibo big-time traders bought these in advance or before harvest (in case of crops and fruits), and for eggs before they were laid. While*

*this subsequently impoverished the Northern farmers, it obviously enriched the Ibo traders over-night.*

Reply: Sheer pack of rubbish! For raising these points the Hausa-man exposed himself to public ridicule for his complete lack of elementary business tactics. Look here, Charles, here in Umuahia, my home town, makers of minerals such as orange drinks, buy up orange fruits right on the trees in advance before they are ripe.

Our farmers over here give out these willingly, because the cash they realise from the deal enables them to meet their immediate commitments and also reinvest part of it into other businesses. The trouble with the average Hausa-man is that he seems to have no sense of economy which certainly is essential in industry and progress.

Let me tell you, the cash the Ibo man pays to the Hausa farmers for his crops is often spent in the pubs, on women and drinks. Before long, he spends this money and comes back to us with cap in hand. Of course, this time we do real BUSINESS. Candidly, I expect the Northerners would be honest enough to tell the world some of their farmers after selling their unharvested products to us later resort to roguish tricks. This is the position.

It is really astonishing to learn that some of these farmers, when the crops are ready for harvesting would organise gangsters to reap greater part of the farm products and later turn round to complaint to some of their customers that thieves had harvested all their crops. Following this, the Ibo traders would become very suspicious of the whole situation.

This was almost the order of the day, apart from being one of the causes of constant quarrels between Ibo traders and some Hausa farmers with their politicians. While some did this with impunity, some would later come back to confess they were compelled by financial difficulty to commit the offence.

Who then is to complain, the Hausa tricksters or the cheated Ibo traders? Judge this yourself, Charles. This trick often repeated itself in many contract works and land tenancies.

*3rd Charge: That all trade between the North and East was conveyed in lorries belonging to Ibos; and that such*

*lorries carried food-stuffs direct from the farms in the North to the markets in the East, and returned to the North with imported goods with prices fixed by the former Ibo State Union Retail Price Committee; that though the lorry owners lived in the North, they bought, registered and licensed their vehicles in the East.*

Reply: These charges are not true, because in the first place, trade between the North and East was a real scramble between Northerners and the Southerners. People of other ethnic groups in the two regions, particularly the Yorubas, actively participated. All sides owned their lorries and agents or representatives posted at different locations at both ends.

The business of these agents was to buy, create depots for such stuffs at convenient places in each region, and later evacuate them by lorry or train to North or South, according to demands. As business between North and East was a flourishing venture, apparently this stepped up the tempo of competition among traders of different nationalities resident in the two regions. People conveyed their goods by own lorries, because it was cheaper and quicker.

In the second place, it is not true that Ibo owned lorries returned to the North with manufactured goods with prices fixed by the former Ibo State Union. This is exactly where the average Hausa-man does not understand his brother from the East. The Easterners as a whole detest being dictated to, especially in financial matters or trade.

As a cultural organisation, the Ibo State Union has no hands in the business of the people except in cultural matters and settling of disputes among its members. Regarding the issues of manufactured good and fixing of prices, here I ask: Why should the Union show concern in a matter in which it has nothing at stake?

This is untrue as it is unfounded, because every individual trader bought his manufactured articles of trade in towns all over the South. You see, if we made more profits it was so because our men had plenty of foresight, stamina, guts and better business acumen.

The issue of Ibos buying, registering and licensing their vehicles in the East when, in fact, their owners lived in the North is this. Since the Northernisation Policy of that region was introduced, the licensing policy in the North did not

favour non-Northerners. The licensing authorities discriminated alarmingly against those of us who did not belong to that region. Those of us who could not comply with the necessary pre-conditions for licensing decided to go down South.

Here, in the East, if you can remember, the civilian government of the early 50's pursued a similar policy which consequently compelled all intending lorry owners to turn the West and Lagos for the purchase and licensing of their vehicles.

The result of this today in the East is that one finds more vehicles with Ibadan and Lagos number plates than those of this region. They did this, because it was more convenient and cheaper for them.

Notwithstanding these administrative hurdles in the North, many Southerners for national reasons still bought, registered and licensed their vehicles in that region. Another interesting aspect of the lorry issue in the North was that most of the vehicles owned by the Ibos were left in the hands of Hausa drivers.

The saddest side of it was that when disturbances broke out in 1966, most of these drivers disappeared with the vehicles, most of them trailers. Consequently, many Ibos who had seven to ten of such vehicles arrived in the East without a single one. The case of Mazi F. E. Okonkwo, alias Okonkwo Kano, was a point at issue.

He was one of the leading Ibo traders we had in the North. He was dealing in cotton trade and had about 45 buying stations all over the North, as well as about 60 lorries and trailers. Majority of his drivers and conductors were Hausas.

In fairness to these drivers, some of them managed to return their vehicles to their owners who had fled the North to them in the East, even at the peak of the crisis.

*4th Charge: That foreign business organisations advanced money and credit facilities to the Ibos in preference to the Northerners.*

Reply: This was absolutely true; and thanks to our accusers they admitted it was the foreigners and not the Ibo State Union that advanced the money. While I admit the average Hausa-man is a sincere businessman, I submit his only stumbling block is good management.

At the outset, European business combines, especially the UAC, advanced moneys to both the Hausa and Ibo traders alike, but later the former foundered to the utter dismay of the European benefactors. In this wise, how does the Ibo trader come in?

*5th Charge: That during the census counts of 1962 and 63, Ibos in the North deserted the region and returned to the East for the purpose of inclusion in their area of origin; That the Ibos did not contribute to the development of the places they lived and earned their livelihood.*

Reply: This charge is partly true. This was exactly what happened in the North during the census counts of 1962 and 63. I have previously mentioned the disastrous effect of the Northernisation Policy of the North Regional Government on non-Northerners.

It disrupted the business of those of us in the private sector and deprived many civil servants of southern origin their means of livelihood. This immortal wound was still fresh on the approach of the pre-independence elections of 1959. On the election day, the Ibos voted solidly in favour of the NEPU/NCNC Alliance in order to overthrow their unfriendly Northern People's Congress (NPC) government at the federal level.

While the Alliance came out surprisingly with just eight seats, happily the Action Group (AG) captured 26. The NPC won that year's election, while southern politicians complained it was rigged. Again, I will not hesitate to mention the aggressive tactics of the NPC leaders during the electioneering campaigns.

The party degenerated to open physical attacks on all Southerners and their sympathisers of Northern origin. To mention a few, men like Alhaji Aminu Kano, J. S. Tarka, J. S. Olawoyin were specific examples. Frankly speaking, we then in the North supported the purported AG coup of 1962, but were amazingly disappointed it failed.

In brief, the approach of the pre-independence election in the North marked the cross-roads where Southerners then resident in the region completely parted company politically with Northerners. In truth, many of us were subjected to untold indignities and the only avenue to demonstrate our protest was to stage a mild boycott of the census.

Some of us, in fact, decided to go down South to be included in the counts there since population consideration was what they claimed gave victory to the NPC. We did this to make it very difficult, if not impossible, for the NPC to win future elections at federal level, and if possible, to vote the NEPU/NCNC Alliance into power in the North to avoid molestation or victimisation by the NPC leaders.

Regarding the issue of non-development, this charge is entirely untrue. Rather, the shoe is on the other leg. Anyone who really knows the Hausa-man and his conservative attitude to life will not hesitate to form his opinion about him. Before the disturbances, all major towns in the region offered rays of hope to any visitor.

No doubt, these were largely due to the contributions of Ibos in social development of such places. Until recently, Sabon Gari, Kano was referred to as New Lagos of the North. This was so, because the area was not only known for its dynamic approach to all phases of life, but also the patterns of buildings strewn all over the place were of the types similar to those found in Lagos, and these styles of revolutionary approach to living were repeated in all major towns in the North.

To crown it all, we were the first to build primary and secondary schools, provision stores, hotels and started organised clubs before any other ethnic group in the North.

The astonishing aspect of this was that when the crisis of 1966 broke out these emblems of progress were the major targets of attack by the Hausas.

The position today is that some of these places that offered learning and entertainment to Nigerians in general, have since been razed to the ground through malice. Hausas talk of DEVELOPMENT, but if schools or colleges, modern architectural buildings are not, I cannot think of anything else.

But can the Hausas think or boast of taking such initiative in the South, and where? The average Hausa-man is contented with the "Ant Hill" he calls his home. I challenge him to prove me wrong.

6th Charge: *That a research carried out in 1965 in the North showed less than two per cent of the Ibos that had lived in the region for over 20 years could tell how Hausa*

*marriage or Igala naming ceremony is conducted.*

**Reply:** This appears somewhat funny as it is strange. Isn't it? One of the complaints the Hausas made against the Ibos in their midst was that of monopoly of trade which is more or less an external issue. Imagine, then when we started prying into their marriage affair which invariably is a sacred institution.

What then do you think would be their reaction having regard to the prime importance they attach to marital matters? We did not leave our region to dabble in Hausa marriage system, but to trade for a living. In brief, the average Iboman feels it a compelling necessity to immerse himself, first of all, in the language of his place of visit, and not necessarily any other aspects of its culture. He speaks any language flawlessly and eloquently.

*7th Charge: That the Ibos in the North displayed the pictures of the Sardauna of Sokoto with that of Major Chukwuma Nzeogwu with a view to ridiculing the Northerners: that the Ibos recorded a song in praise of Nzeogwu.*

**Reply:** These were true to a point, but let me explain. As soon as the unfortunate death of the "S of S" was made known to the general public in the North, many anxious citizens in Kaduna, irrespective of their tribes or regions of origin, out of sheer curiosity raced to his official residence to see things for themselves.

The Sardauna was a highly respected nationalist as well as international personality in the country, and a symbol of institution in the North. As such, any news about him, particularly a sad one, is bound to arouse public sympathy. Among those who called at the scene of incident were some foreigners, white and black.

But as time went on, this general sympathy for the august personage dramatically changed to hostility following the re-actions of party stalwarts and their supporters. The NPC leaders in Kaduna and Kano were in the forefront, particularly the former ministers, urging the confusion forward.

Northern newspapers, especially the *New Nigerian*, carried a series of articles accusing the Ibos of master-minding the tragic incident of January 15, 1966. The only visible reply to these press attacks were the printed photographs of the Sardauna which were produced in hundreds, and one

early morning were found flooding Kaduna market.

This did not last long as the military decree which banned the sale or print of the photographs of the dead or living politicians was promulgated by the Ironsi Government. As for the recorded songs in praise of Nzeogwu, the military decree which banned the sale or circulation of the pictures of the politicians also affected all recorded songs in praise of any individual, military or civilian. This mild protestation did not last long as other sweeping events followed in rapid succession.

This is all I can recollect, Charles, and thanks for your patience all these days over this very trying task.

\*Mazi E. O. Nwagbara whose whereabouts I cannot locate was a central figure in the North before the eruption of the crisis. The way he has treated the subject matters qualifies him as a mature, objective and reliable witness.

As for this work it was not easy for me to convince the Refugees' scribe as everybody was suspecting the other at the simmering stages of the confrontation. It took me hours, if not days, before he granted me this interview. And wherever he may be, when he sees a copy of this book he will surely remember the initial dilly-dally and then the dialogue that ensued. I was nobody's agent. I was merely motivated not by selfish, but by patriotic zeal, like other citizens before me. I am an apostle of PEACE.



*It was a hell of a job for the Nigeria Police at the period. Here, some of their members are spelling it out with a suspect during tense moment in Lagos.*

## CHAPTER SIX

### SOLUTIONS TO CRISIS

What is Crisis? The answer to this is to be found in a British House of Commons debate when a Tory member said during a tempestuous moment: "Crisis is a situation in which the constituted authority of a place is challenged: whereby all wealth becomes ill-gotten and those in authority dubbed thieves, tyrants, oppressors; while the opposition becomes a pack of saboteurs, blackguards and traitors—allegations and counter-allegations"

Nigerians were witnesses to this confused state of affairs for almost a decade, hence the Civil War. And problems, philosophers had warned, "are normal", and that when they come should be treated with prudence. Here, a one time Indian Prime Minister, Jawaharial Nehru, in a statesmanly note warned: "It would be wrong both in practice and principle to attempt to solve political and social problems with formulas applied by other nations, because their causes can never be the same Every nation", he added, "has its peculiar problems".

Against this background, I am making the following suggestions as my solutions to any further crisis or bloodsheds in the country:

- (a) representatives of religious leaders, educationists and school principals or heads of educational institutions in the country should be appointed to draft a code of conduct for the nation. This should form the basis for writing a textbook for teaching Moral Education in primary and secondary schools. I am positively convinced moral education in all its ramifications is the only answer to conflicts anywhere. This is so, because the causes of all political and social problems anywhere are centred on the issues of moral. School principals are indispensable in this exercise, because of their daily

experiences with some of these boys and girls who eventually become the leaders of tomorrow. Masters and Mistresses who teach these youngsters should be well grounded in the rudiments of Moral Education, otherwise the exercise will fail. Adult schemes should also include moral education, and this made compulsory at all levels;

- (b) education, that is Universal Primary Education (UPE) should be made free and compulsory to enable average citizen read, write and communicate intelligently. Unwilling parents should be persuaded, not forced, to do so. No child of, say between the ages of ten and twelve, should be allowed to enter into service of any kind save on proven medical grounds. In preceding chapter (5), one of the charges against the Ibos in the North was that they barred Northerners from getting employments in the commercial houses of their region. As the reply to this reveals, good educational qualification was one of the requirements of the whites who owned the business houses. Imbalance in education breeds suspicion and slow progress:
- (c) great emphasis should be laid on mutual respect for the customs and institutions of Nigerians, states, tribes and Local Government Areas;
- (d) traditional rulers should be encouraged to perform their duties impartially and effectively. They should also pay regular visits to their counter-parts of other states as this is bound to strengthen the cordial relations among their subjects. The tradition that bars some of the natural rulers from leaving their seats for a visit to other places should be reviewed forthwith in the interest of National Unity. State Governors should also visit other States because, "home keeping youths have homely wits" (Shakespeare);
- (e) to check further bloodsheds in the country, when quarrels begin to take shape and form a Commission of Inquiry should be appointed immediately not after, to investigate the causes of, and settle, issues before they

- get out of hand. Traditional rulers should prove their worth here;
- (f) state radios and newspapers have been known as fuels that feed national disasters. To prove their worth, the allegiance now should be to truth and not sentiment. But where this fails for any reason whatsoever, Federal Government should not hesitate to apply the big club;
  - (g) party thugs or thuggery should be completely banned from our body politic. Every student of British Empire history will remember the ignoble roles of Kings' private armies in the Middle-Ages say, between 9th and 15th centuries. Because of the nefarious activities of these private armies they were disbanded from the soil of England. Same could apply to party thugs in Nigeria. Party spirit will not be what it is, especially during electioneering campaign periods, without the use of thugs;
  - (h) no company or their agents should be allowed to buy any farm product before harvesting since the tendency is to make maximum profit to the detriment of the farmer;
  - (i) politicians should be careful in their choice of words, especially the inflammatory ones;
  - (i) Nigerians should be free to choose where or how to live provided they are good citizens;
  - (k) no state government should enact any law for the purpose of protecting the interest of its citizens alone;
  - (l) wild rumours (repeat) and calling of names should be judiciously investigated, and where malice is proved, adequate penalty should be meted out to the detractors. But where found true, same punishment should apply to the concerned. This is one of the factors that fan tribal sentiments in the society; and finally

(m) I have unshakable confidence in the impartiality of the judiciary, and hope it will not fail us.

I end this chapter by quoting Aristotle when he said: "Legislators and would-be founders of any constitution will find that the work of reconstruction is not their only or principal business. The maintenance of the constitution is the thing that matters".



*Major Gen. Aguiyi Ironsi, leader of the first Military Regime*

# CHAPTER SEVEN

## CALLING NIGERIAN YOUTHS

**Path to Greatness:** Previous chapters of this work have dealt with the causes and the bloody events that characterised the fratricidal conflicts of years ago. This chapter, however, is not the continuation of the war story, but a guideline to Nigerian Youths, as well as the young at hearts. Sure enough, this is the response to the frequent calls of present Civilian Rulers and Radio Nigeria on Nigerians for their contributions in building a just, fair and great nation.

Since no government can be regarded as successful without the concerted efforts of its citizens, this exercise is a tip-off for those with enough guts and funds.

To further reduce the mental strain of the struggling Youths to the barest minimum in respect of what to do for a start, effort has been made to supply the list of some careers which any young man or lady will find to be of immense aid, because it provides him or her a wide range of choice. This is necessary, because a look at some of the remote causes of the civil war, one will surely find scramble for positions and material wealth were the major points at issue. As a matter of fact, it could have been a different matter had those concerned been apprenticed to, or trained in, particular callings, the issue of charges and counter-charges would have been avoided.

Another issue of importance is the supply of a rough-and-ready list of some men and women who could properly be regarded as successful in spite of obvious poverty and artificial obstacles. Apparently, this is meant to give the reader the impetus for dogged persistence; and if greatness is our dream for this country, this chapter contains the spirit and guidelines.

## LIST OF CAREERS

Come what may, no individual ever achieves success, much more greatness, of any sort without an objective in view. For this reason, the following is the list of careers, and for any intending aspirant to succeed the spirit with which he pursues his career counts. This decision should be taken, or interest shown, while at the secondary, lower still, the primary school.

Accountancy, Advertising, Arts, Banking, Baking, Book publishing, Beauty culture, Boot and shoe making, Brewing, Broadcasting, Bookselling, Catering, Church work, Cleaning, Coal mining, Carpentry, Commerce, Dancing, Domestic science, Dramatic art, Draughtsmanship, Engineering, Farming, Fire service, Furnishing, Hair-dressing, Insurance, Iron and steel industry, Journalism, Laundry management, Law, Librarianship, Medicine, Midwifery, Modelling, Music, Nursing, Office management, Oil industry, Personnel management, Pharmacy, Pottery, Printing, Public relations, Poultry keeping, Radiography, Retail trading, Salesmanship, Secretarial duties, Tailoring, Teaching and writing.

Obviously, not all the above mentioned careers offer equal chances of success, and at the same time, not all of them require high educational qualification. Some of them offer the opportunity of apprenticing candidates with little or no education right on the job. Success, I must once more point out, depends on the attitude of the mind and the approach resulting from ideas read in good books, such as success stories or contact with successful men and women around you. To succeed, one must be stubborn, bearing in mind there is no clear-cut route to success. You have got to find your own path or remain in a rut.

**Raising the Capital:** As a school leaver, whether fresh from the primary, secondary, or the university, the first hurdle before you is the decision regarding your aim in life; the second is making all necessary contacts for the take-off, while the third is raising the capital which is most important. From experience the last factor is the most difficult of all where you have no direct assistance.

Since this is so, my recommendation is that you should

endeavour to find a job to engage yourself in order toward-off wild thoughts. As soon as this is done open a savings account, and treat your savings as you do to your house-rent, since income is regular through salary. Remain on the job and confine yourself to your essential needs only. Avoid fast life meanwhile, especially when the fund is low. For no reason whatsoever should you quit your job without a substitute or even a better one to replace it; and never you give your employer the opportunity to give you a push. That may land you on where you will face the angry lashes of life's billows. The struggling man has no relations, friends—much more the beginner—the Wayfarer. Bear this in mind.

As a rule, you stand the chance of getting financial or material aid from friends or relations if there is visible evidence of ambition in you—not just day dreaming or a long chapter of inconsistencies.

At your spare time do odd jobs to augment whatever you receive as income; and put in extra time if you want to succeed. Put your problems to REASONABLE men and women around you. Lest I forget, it will be pertinent to point out that financial success and rise in social scale cannot, as a rule, go together at the same time. One must come after the other; and which ever your decision, this must be firm and irrevocable.

Our country wants enterprising young men and women, as well as good citizens, the types that made America, England and others, what they are to this day.

## WHAT IS SUCCESS?

In answer to this, a writer once observed: "Success is not a matter of Income and Saving. It means, keeping steps with your music, that rhythm which is audible to the spirit which is you. Success is an arcane of goal-creative realization."

For my part, success is realization of one's age-long dream, whether with instant profit or not; and for this reason. I have combed the corridor of history to scoop up the names of personalities whom addled heads of their ages condemned as useless, unprogressive, lazy, and unproductive. These men, in spite of abject poverty coupled with the

aggressive attitudes of their environments were able to carry out their dreams to successful ends. These are as follows:

- \* **Four World Acclaimed Religious Leaders:** Buddha of India, founder of Buddhism, the religion practiced mainly in India; Confucius, a religious philosopher of China, the author of Confucianism, from which Christendom borrowed some ideas; Muhammed of the Arab world the founder of Islam; and Joshua, whom the Greek Jews christened, Jesus—the man who introduced Christian philosophy that has now engulfed the entire West and parts of Africa.
- \* Anaxagoras paid the prize of exile when he condemned the ills of his time. He never gave up. History remembers him, not his detractors.
- \* Cleanthes did menial labour of water-carrier by night and in the day studied philosophy. He later became a leading philosopher of his day. He possessed the will to succeed.
- \* The universal humanist, Mamonides judged it most meritorious of all to anticipate charity by preventing poverty. He dared to explore the cosmic report which Averroes had written in Moorish Spain, for which reason backward synagogues burned his precious works. His home was sacked, but name immortalised by a grateful generation.
- \* Roger Bacon, a monk, endured imprisonment that he might carry through an enduring service to science. He later invented the telescope, pair of reading glasses, and the gun-powder.
- \* John Huss, Jerome of Prague and Savonarola opted to be taken to Pyre for punishment, rather than give outward consent to what their own sense of judgement denied.
- \* Paracelsus and Ambrose Pare, attempted to reform medical science each in own way, at the cost of sharp attacks on what people of their age termed, *dangerous experimentation*. They succeeded.
- \* John Milton's works were burned for their messages of

freedom. Another attempt rewarded him heavily. He did not give up.

- \* Roger William was banished from Massachusetts for preaching tolerance. He later founded a colony of his own.
- \* Rene Descartes had to run for dear life from village to village, because of his independent ideas and principles.
- \* Benedict Spinoza was ex-communicated by the Church as an irreligious man when he introduced his unique idea of unity of life. Later this was adopted with credit in his honour.
- \* The misunderstanding and attacks borne by Blake, Bechene, Eckhart, Tauler, Buckert, Yepes, and others of their ilk were very severe, and quite as groundless as the resistance to strange ideas in the physical science. These were men of honour.
- \* Respected professors labelled airplane, telephone and most of the tools of modern civilizations as *impossible tasks*.
- \* Philipi Pinel was charged with pampering lunatics when he introduced scientific psychiatry. But today we talk of Pscyhiatrists.
- \* Cesare Beccaria was called coddler of criminals when he wrote against torture and capital punishment.
- \* Richard Arkwright was a poor barber before he discovered the modern factory system that is today in popular use. Without the newly invented machine hand workers slaved for over sixteen hours daily. The factory system vastly increased production with less expenditure of time. But strange as it appeared, the odd barber's contemporaries said he was fooling around with those Newfangled Machine gadgets. Not a single word of encouragement from any source. He later survived it.
- \* John Fitch was neither rewarded nor recognised for inventing the first steam-boat. About twenty-two years after, Robert Fultin established a navigation, quite in line with what Fitch had initiated. Fulton's steam-boat was ridicu-

led publicly and rejected. Poor Fitch committed suicide as a result of frustration and lack of encouragement. However, many years later, a generation of grateful historians gave the credit of the steam-boat marvels to Fitch and Fulton, while the names of their imitators were blotted out of the pages of history.

- \* The first locomotive engine was invented by three enterprising young men, namely: James Watts, William Murdoch and George Stevenson who really survived the rolling tongues of the masses to give the world the first steam engine from which our present ones developed. His companions dropped off when respected technicians described the venture as a *wild dream*, doctors warned the masses the smoke from the trio's *mad ambition* would ruin public health, while the last straw was handed down by the British Parliament when it forbade the laying of tracks. Today we talk of Railways all over the world. The world owes much to Stevenson for his foresight and stubborn spirit.
- \* Metallurgists struggled for nearly a century to recover the ancient art of hardening copper. They had not the grasshopper minds.
- \* For many years electrical engineers sought the ways and means of utilizing alternating currents successfully, until the discovery of Tesla.
- \* Thomas Edison sought for a number of years to find the right type of filament to use in an incandescent tube so that it could emit light and have durability as well. His school teacher once described him as addle-headed. Edison was a world leading authority in electricity, with over sixteen patents to his credit.
- \* Professor Hertz discovered the electric waves by which wireless messages are sent across the seas. He was called names at the initial stages.
- \* Alexander Graham Bell was the first man to give the world the telephone. He was the product of a poor family. Instead of crushing, this made him enterprising.

- \* John Stockton was the first man to invent the Match with which we light kerosene and gas lamps, stoves, as well as our cigars and pipes. Match is the only popular means of getting fire and light in homes where there is no electricity. People laughed when he was experimenting.
- \* James Hargreaves brought the Spinning Machine into the world. This came about when his poor wife was weaving, accidentally the spinning wheel fell to the ground making several revolutions before it came to a stand still. Hargreaves took notice of what happened and concluded that if several spindles were arranged in a special manner they might be worked by one wheel. A few years later (not one day), he realized his dream. Strange enough, Hargreaves' success whipped up a hot controversy, and then a hostility with his comrades of the same trade. This led to an organised attack on his workshop and smashing of what they called a *lazy man's idea*. Though he died a poor man, Hargreaves succeeded in planting his name in the garden of Fame; and to the world new idea, a new dimension.
- \* Thomas Saint introduced the first Sewing Machine. He was a mechanic. This nearly cost him his life through hunger.
- \* The first idea of Printing Machine was conceived in China, while the actual invention was by a Chinese of that country. The scientist was the master of John Gutenberg a German who established the first moving types in Europe. At the death of Gutenberg, in the wake of the confusion that ensued when the Turks sacked Istanbul, now Constantinople in 1453, an English man, William Caxton, who was up to the time his apprentice, returned to England to set up the first printing press in that country. People laughed when he was fumbling with metals and paper. "Crazy"? maybe and they all laughed. Then, imagine a world without the press.
- \* John Braith-Waite was the inventor of the first steam Fire Engine. He also invented the Diving Bell (an apparatus to enable people remain longer under water while at work). In addition, this man also invented the Donkey Engine—the engine for working pumps in the ships. During the

period of his struggles the community in which he lived never took kindly to his ideas. When he finally succeeded, local fire men who thought this new invention would rob them of their means of livelihood, for reasons best known to them, walked into Braith-Waite's workshop and smashed the new engine. This completely disorganised the enterprising youngman, but after many years of a number of bouts with the blues, he was crowned with a huge success, and was heavily rewarded by the authorities of his day.

- \* Cart Wright Edmund of Nottingham, England, had a taste for mechanics. This led him to invent the Power-Loom for weaving. When this was first introduced his professional colleagues got mad with envy and attacked him. To avoid blood-shed, Edmund escaped to Manchester, but condition there proved more hostile. Following this, riot ensued, the result of which razed Edmund's building to the ground. Later there was sunshine in which he was rewarded very heavily.
- \* The Reaper invented by Cyrus Mc-Cormick was ridiculed in a London newspaper when he had it on exhibit on world affair. This *idler's* dream to day has revolutionised agriculture.
- \* Samuel Morse often went hungry when he was working on what his comrades described as a "Wild Scheme" – the Telegraph.
- \* Julius Mayer received no credit when he introduced the Law of the Conservation of Energy until it was too late to matter to him. Instead, history rewarded him with honour millions of naira cannot buy.
- \* Johan Wolfgang devoted nearly sixty years to writing a book he entitled, *Fraust*. He later sold about a million copies.
- \* William Garrison bore mob violence and imprisonment for his peaceful opposition to Slavery.
- \* Abraham Lincoln suffered martyrdom for the freedom of enslaved race—the Negroes.

- \* Rotten eggs were thrown at Susan Anthony, a feminist, when she began her brave project to emancipate American women.
- \* Marius, the King of Asyria, kept a prophetsess, a very powerful and courageous woman, to attend to him in all his campaigns. She never failed him. Strange enough, the shoe was on the other leg.
- \* George Bernard Shaw wrote for nine years before he made ₦12.00; and for twenty-three years before he could make a living from his writings.
- \* Shakespeare who today is referred to as the father of English literature nearly gave up writing as a career, but for his passion for literary life. Perseverance won him laurels at last.
- \* Charles Dickens, according to his biographer, never had enough to share with his wife. He is one of the widely read English authors to this day.
- \* Good history students remember Thomas Paine, R. L. Ingersol, Windwood Reads, to mention a few, for mob attacks on their persons for their works. They are not remembered as failures.

*Tom Jones Library, Lagos 1951.*

## AFRICAN CONTRIBUTIONS

The list below shows black men who also contributed to the tools of modern civilizations. Obviously, this dismisses the claim of our detractors who said no black man ventured anything in the field of science and technology. You must have heard of some African warriors and great traders, but never a great scientist. Here they are, but they were negroes of the United States of America:

- \* Norbert Rilicoux was the inventor of the Evaporating Pan for manufacturing sugar.

- \* Henry Blair invented the Corn Harvester which today has gone a long way to speed up the progress of agriculture.
- \* Jam Matziliger invented the Lasting Machine by which mass production of shoes and boots has been made possible.
- \* S. L. Dickson brothers invented over twelve appliances which enable the piano to be played automatically.
- \* Shelby Davison invented a Machine Tabulator (adding machine) which has since been incorporated in the present day comptometre machine.
- \* Ganville Woods invented the steam boiler furnace

(Source: *Renascent Africa* by Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe)

### START TODAY

The above lists supply the line-up of men and women of lion hearts whose names are now engraved in bold letters in the temple of fame. Your name, yes, I mean every letter of the word, could as well be there. It is only a matter of irrevocable decision now, and not any other moment.

To facilitate your tempo of decision, I have already supplied a list of wide range of careers from which you could choose. As I have pointed out earlier, this decision should be made early in life to form a part of you.

Let me draw your attention to one fact. People have often attribute one's outstanding performance or success to TALENT. Frankly speaking, what people regard as *Talent* is generally speaking, the development of someone's area of interest resulting from persistent practice and dedication. If the life history of those whose names appear above is available, it will be realised that those personalities identified themselves with the factors for which they are known right from boyhood, if not their childhood, days.

To be nearer home, take a look at any of our local sportsmen and women or those who have made their marks in any field. Interview any of them, the same fact will be surfaced—

the struggle started early in life and not when it begins to manifest itself in the individual. For instance, the rumbling sound or clapping of the thunder is heard eight to ten seconds after the clashing of two strong opposite winds in the sky. The real sound is released the moment the lightning (sheet or forked) flashes in the sky. Apparently, this explains away the issue of *talent*, and the individual. In brief, what people call *talent* is the display of one's expertise in a given field or profession. We often hear people say, "X" or "Y" is a good author, doctor, lawyer, musician, artist, footballer, teacher, or technician, all the same, it will be necessary to hear from the horse's mouth, his success story. It was not achieved overnight. Hence, we hear the saying: *The heights that great men reached and kept were not attained by sudden flight; but they, while their companions slept, were toiling up wards in the night.* Obviously, this explains the secret of success.

#### HONOUR AWAITS THE BRAVE

Quite recently, the Federal Government displayed one of those qualities to mark a mature and appreciative father. It is on record that on October 1, 1980, the day of the celebration of the 20th anniversary of Nigerian Independence, four Nigerians were honoured for their outstanding performances in their chosen fields of calling. Almost the same day, a number of sportsmen and women were decorated with costly ornaments in recognition of their enviable roles in sports. The amount of honours bestowed on this class of citizens is no more a news in this country. These included cars and houses.

The same order was repeated recently when national honours were awarded some Nigerians for their outstanding contributions to the nation. It could be your turn next, if you try hard; and like the author of *The Heroes*, Charles Kingsley, when he observed: *It is better to die in the flower of youth in the chance of winning noble name than to live like an ox in a stall and die unrenown.*

# CHAPTER EIGHT

## IBOS, JEWS OF NIGERIA?

Many writers during the Nigerian Civil War had often referred to the Ibos as the "Jews of Nigeria". To properly determine the appropriateness of this appellation, it will be necessary to supply a brief history of the Jews for a better Keynote.

Ethnically, they form a minority tribe among the people of Israel. Their story had always been fraught with pathetic incidents, and often theirs had been a football fortune. The ancestral home of the Jews is modern Canaan. They are scattered all over the world; and anywhere they went they made the place their native home. So also were their tales of woes in all these places.

For instance, in 1253, all Jews in France were eliminated; in 1290, during the reign of Edward I Jews in England were attacked and massacred, and later, the remaining ones were expelled by the order of the King; same was their lot in Russia soon after the Great Revolution of 1917. The word POGROM was first mentioned in Russia during the operation. In German States, there was a similar incident against the Jews in the 15th century, apart from their merciless slaughter during the world war II—about 6 millions of them. Spain also had its own ugly story about them.

The "Notorious Inquisition" was invented because of the Jews who refused to yield to what they believed was right. Needless talking of Jewish martyrs who breathed their last in the *Auto-da-fe Flames*.

In fact, there was a time the Jews lived in a world where they were despised and hunted—the Pilgrim Fathers of 1620 were a specific group of Jews. After a series of persecutions and prosecutions in many countries they decided to have a legal home in Palestine. What did they do? one might ask.

The Jews decided to take the bull by the horns—worked day and night, cleared forests for both modern homes and farm-land, drained swamps, planted fruit trees and crops, established co-operative societies and educational institutions, pursued trade and industry to the zenith, adopted a national language-Hebrew, set a high example of selflessness

and sacrifice. The whole world who stood aside to jeer, were dazed, baffled and amazed at this wonderful spirit.

The result of this was that the Jews, once despised as worthless, unenterprising, were producing leading world learned men and women—authors, doctors, lawyers, scholars, philosophers, merchants, scientists and travellers, to mention a few. The famous world travellers, Christopher Columbus and Marcopolo were full-blooded Jews or those with Jewish blood.

As a matter of fact, South Africa is basically a Jewish colony, while 80 per cent of world millionaires are Jews or those with Jewish blood. They introduced Banking as well as all financial institutions into the world. In brief, they are the fathers of modern tools of civilizations. Enquiry will show the German astronomers who recently discovered the largest and brightest STAR in the sky might be Jews. (See the *Daily Times*, May 27, 1981, centre pages).

### THE CRIMES OF THE JEWS

According to available records (credit to National Archives, Onikan, and Central Library, Lagos) the following were the primary charges against the Jews in most of the places they were found:

- (1) That their birth rate was highest any part of the world; while their sense of business was faster than the lightning. They used these to cripple the economic life of host countries, states.
- (2) That they or their blood relations introduced gambling or games of chances, money doubling and lending with high rates of interest to the detriment of their victims who desperately needed the moneys when in financial difficulties.
- (3) That with their financial and all round success they were throwing their weights all over the place; and were also buying up huge hectares of land and other properties from land-owners with terms of agreement couched in a

manner to convince their landlords. To most of these property owners, this was a hobson's choice.

### POSER TO NIGERIANS

From what I have laboured to unearth above, anybody who wants to satisfy himself as to whether or not Ibos are the "Jews of Nigeria" should read in-depth all chapters of this work. No doubt, an impartial and judicious study of the issues involved will invariably enable one to find out whose head the cap fits, bearing in mind there are three major tribes in the federation today—Yorubas, Hausas and the Ibos, with Nigerian experiences in the background.

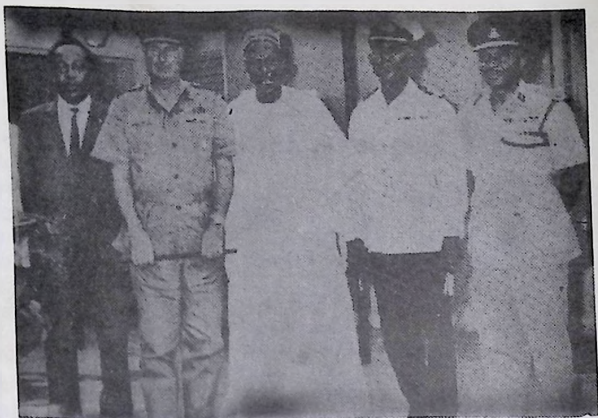
That being the case, whosoever the Cap fits should proceed with caution, because one of the silly mistakes of history is that often it repeats itself.

*Okonko were amara maka ada* are Ibo words of advice to the overjoyed dancing masquer. All the same, it is necessary to bear in mind nature has no special provision for the weakling.

I conclude this piece by asking, "Who are the Jews of Nigeria?"



*Members of the anti-riot police unit also had their own story to tell. Here some of them clash with a crowd of Street Arabs opposite the Casino Cinema, Rowe Park, Yaba. While some of them are attempting to avoid arrest, some of the captured ones are seen trying to jump off a Land-Rover.*



*There was real cause for panic as both Zik and Balewa sharply disagreed over nomination irregularities during the 1964 Federal Elections. Pic above shows the Prime Minister flanked on both sides by top civil service, military, navy and police officers.*

*And below, it is a happy smile and warm handshake to seal it all when the quarrel was settled*

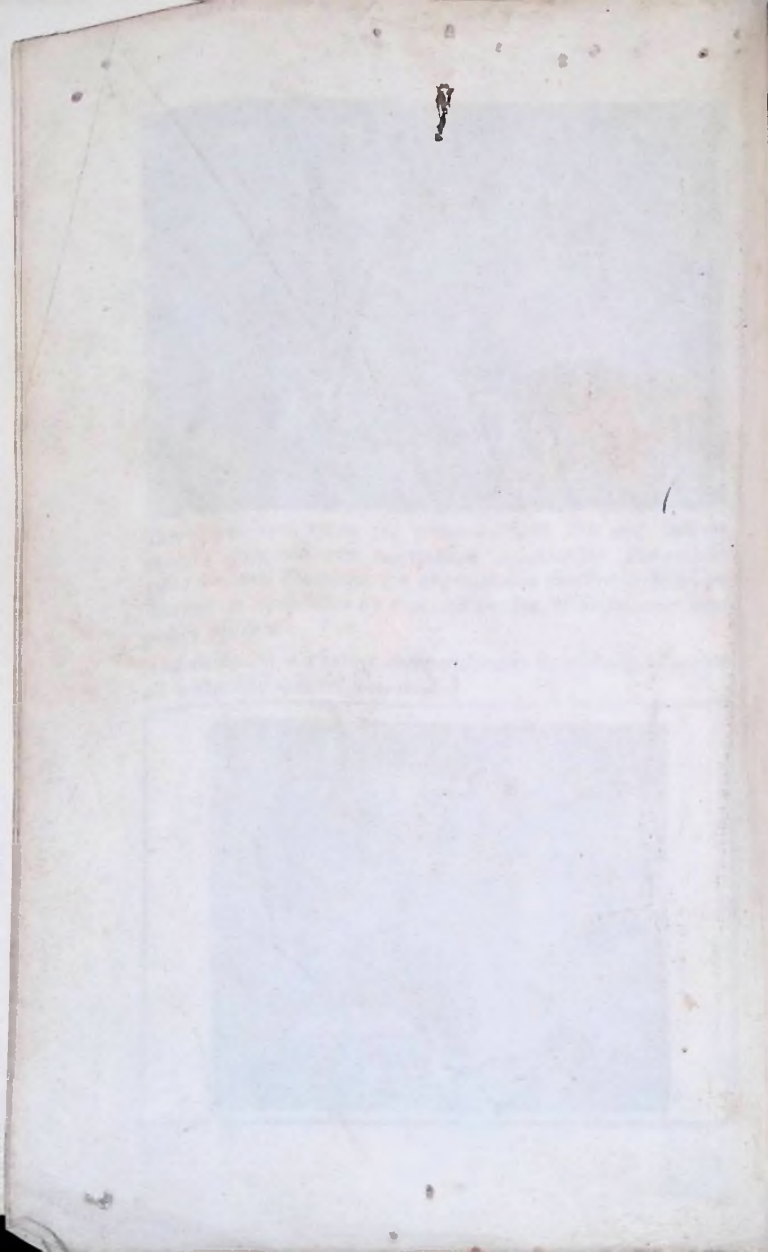


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