

CREATING A PROCESS NOT A MANDATE: ONE PHILOSOPHER'S REFLECTION ON BIAFRA'S QUEST FOR SELF-DETERMINATION*

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Abstract

The word "Biafra" appears to be contesting for global popularity with the word "Democracy". The ubiquitous nature of Ndigbo, a major race among the Biafrans, has ensured that the Biafran question attract global interest. This paper argues that Biafra's quest for self-determination, if it must have any meaning and significance at all, should not be carried out as a mandate given to a group or groups or some individuals to "go and realize". The paper posits that Biafra's self-determination must involve political, legal, and diplomatic processes undertaken within the larger national and international security order. Seeking to intellectualize the Biafran struggle; and employing historical, phenomenological and critical methods, the paper argues that the emergence of a new "subject of international law" (or nation state) from an existing one, is neither a tea-party for neophytes, nor is it a "wish" that becomes "reality" via sitting at home, marching on the streets or sitting in a beer pallor with a plate of pepper soup. The paper concludes by positing that the political self determination of any people can no longer be a unilateral one; but one that must involve multilateral, pluralistic and international dimensions as well as involvements.

Keywords: Biafra, self-determination, intellectual, political, legal, diplomatic.

Preamble: Naked and Not Ashamed

As a people, we have endured as only giants endure, we have fought as heroes fight, we have dared as only gods dare. We are disillusioned by the world's insensitivity towards the plight of our people. Yet because our cause is just, we believe we have not lost the war only that the battle fields have changed. We are convinced that Biafra will survive. Biafra was born out of the blood of the innocents slaughtered in Nigeria during the pogroms of 1966. Biafra will ever live, not as a dream, but as a crystallization of the cherished hopes of

a people who see, in the establishment of this territory, the last hope for peace and security. Biafra cannot be destroyed by mere forces of arms. -**Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu, Jan 16, 1970** (quoted in Emekesiri, *Biafra or Nigeria Presidency*, 1)

The Biafrans have known suffering and death and as a responsible witness to that holocaust and as a Christian man of honor, I add my voice to those calling for an internationally recognized referendum on the future of Biafra. -**Hon. Robert K Dornan, Member USA House of Representatives, 1977-1997**(quoted in *International Business Times*), 22 March, 2016.

God is glorified. Honour is done me. I am elated. These three short sentences capture the state of my heart on this great event, the first of its kind as we approach the 20th year of the second stanza of Biafra's quest for freedom.

Once upon a Genesis, there was a Biafran named A daa m (Adam) who did something wrong, who disobeyed the instruction of his Creator. That disobedience brought upon him a shameful nakedness. So, he made leaves as clothing to cover himself. Little did he know that the leaves, having been detached from their source (the tree), would soon dry up and fall off his waist. That was in the Garden of Eden.

Today, we have come to another Garden in Rojenny, where *Orimiri Ide* (Ide River) is standing in the place of Gihon and Euphrates in Eden. I urge us to get rid of these leaves around our waists because they are already dry and are falling off. Let us remove the leaves ourselves, with critical and reconstructive eyes, and then let us stand naked and unashamed before ourselves. Let us box and pummel one another with facts and superior logic. One of the greatest physicist of all times, the American Jew, Albert Einstein once told us that insanity is not hard to recognize: just keep doing the *same* thing with the expectation of a *different* result and then you would be considered insane! We have come here to talk to ourselves in a no-holds-bared manner, so as to foster a new direction, a new zeal and a new garment after we have cleaned ourselves of the dirt and decay of the past 20 years.

For God to cloth our progenitor, Adam with an enduring garment He had to sacrifice an animal, and cover him with its skin. To make progress, we need to sacrifice ourselves-our positions, resources, ego, intellectual endowments, platforms, groups, etc so we can cover the nakedness of Biafra. For indeed, it is in the covering of Biafra's nakedness, in not bringing her to shame and ridicule,

that we then get clothed as well. Socrates, the Greek Philosopher once said, "An unexamined life is not worth living". Similarly, an unexamined action is not worth taking! For according to French Philosopher, Francois Marie Aroued, popularly known as Voltaire (1694-1778)," those who can make you believe absurdities can make you commit atrocities". (quoted in *Oxford Dictionary of Philosophy*," Voltaire", 396). My goal therefore is not to keep us perpetually naked; rather it is to ensure that we are dressed with the right clothes: the helmet of salvation, the breastplate of righteousness, the belt of truth, the shield of faith, the boot of peace and the sword of the spirit.

Why do we need to naked and dress properly? Because the quest for Biafra's freedom is not a tea party, it is a long and tedious journey, involving zigzags, diversions, turns, tunnels, obstacles, checkpoints, blockades, ditches, valleys, mountains, break-downs, break-ups, break-through, victories and sometimes defeats. To borrow the phrase of German thinker, G.W.F. Hegel, in his *Phenomenology of Mind*, it is a "journey of despair" (102). However, what we need to do is to ensure that we are on the right track, that we are facing the right road, and then, we shall be winning battle after battle in one long and terrible 'war'.

Introduction

The 2018 Biafra's Day celebration was as unique as it was historic. It is true that Biafrans occupy a territory that is not sovereign-to the extent that it is not a subject of international law and geopolitical entity. Yet, despite the loss of its sovereignty, Biafra neither lost her territory nor her identity. This is the truth we need to communicate to Biafrans, Nigerians and the global community. After all, According British journalist, Richard West, "Biafra is more than a human tragedy. Its defeat, I believe, would mark the end of African Independence. Biafra was the first place I had been to in Africa, where the Africans themselves were truly in charge" (quoted in Ezeani, *In Biafra Africa Died*, xv)

Why would some people be recognized as Arewa, Afenifere, Oduduwa, etc, even in official documents. Yet, the word "Biafra" is an anathema in Nigeria? Why should a territory recognized in the Portuguese map of Africa produced in 1492, about 500 years before the birth of Nigeria, be so ignored in Nigeria? Why should Nigeria's National Assembly in 1990, remove by an Act, the "Bight of Biafra" that has been in the map for centuries, changing it to "Bight of Bonny"? Can a river be removed by building a bridge across it? Who is afraid of the word "Biafra"? Besides, who are the Bonny people? Are they not Biafrans? According to B. O.N. Eluwa in his massive book, *Ado-Na-Idu: History of Igbo Origin*, Bonny

Kingdom was founded by Ndigbo in the late-14th and early-15th centuries, which was why he said that “if Bonny were not Igbo the names of her Kings would not have been Igbo” (45). What Achebe referred to as “a flood of deadly hate” (p.45, *The Trouble with Nigeria*) has led Ndigbo haters to blindly crash into objects lying harmlessly out of harm’s way. Biafrans must understand the audacious task of convincing, cajoling, or compelling Nigeria and Nigerian officials to recognize their Biafran identity. For what they lost in 1970 was their sovereignty, not their cultural identity.

This paper hopes to convince everyone (especially, those belonging to the various pro-Biafra groups), to start seeing Biafra as a process requiring concerted efforts by the vast majority and not a mandate given to some people, with a larger than life capacity, to go and realize; come will, come woe! Thus, if this paper makes this modest contribution, it would have satisfied one of its major objectives. Biafrans need to set up structures and institutions that would be driven by men and women that have five qualities: character, competence, capacity, commitment and charisma.

The task of this paper is to point us towards the indispensability of the political, the legal and the diplomatic in the process of self-determination. With a discussion of these platforms, the essay hopes to deflate this fear, this terrorism that has been created by the government of Nigeria on the vast majority of Biafrans who now think that the word “Biafra” is a synonym for “Devil”. Yet there is a right to self-determination, to independence or even to secession. To ‘secede’ is just to withdraw from a federation or an alliance, and it does not have to be violent, if the right processes are followed, and if the people are massively involved. It was with admirable prophetic insight that Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu declared that “the battlefields have changed”. He said ‘fields’ and not ‘field’, which means that we should adopt multi-dimensional approaches, each approach geared towards realizing the same goal: the self-determination of Biafrans.

In order to achieve this purpose this essay will largely draw from a recent writing by Joseph Agbo, a critical reflection on the efforts made so far to bring Biafrans to the point where they can determine their own destiny. The document is titled, “SPLIDIMM: Strategic Platforms for the Revitalization of the Quest for Self-Determination by the Biafran People of Nigeria”. SPLIDIMM, of course, is an acronym for S-spiritual, P-political, L-legal, I-intellectual, D-diplomatic, I-intelligence, M-media and M-Monetary platforms. We would, therefore, draw

from SPLIDIMM the political, legal and diplomatic suggestions that we would discuss here. The thesis of this essay is that unless Biafrans activate the political, legal and diplomatic platforms of their struggle, the international community would neither take them serious nor would they be able to extricate themselves from Nigeria's stranglehold, even if they fight another war! They must find a way to navigate through a country that invites Boko-Haram for discussion after killing thousands of their "fellow countrymen and women" yet would maul Biafrans on the streets for daring to protest peacefully; a country that would invite terrorizing and murderous Fulani herdsmen for dialogue, but would arrest farmers for daring to complain! It is no longer wisdom to allow this senseless slaughter of Biafrans in the name of agitations for Biafra to continue. Agitation without engaging participation is frustration and noise making.

However, before we discuss the political, legal and diplomatic aspects, we need to understand the importance of the intellectual commitment that is the fillip that propels this paper. Nothing is as critical as taking action on the basis of competence and installed capacity, on the ground of previous and deduced knowledge. In his essay, "Ikenga Run Amok: Towards a Diagnosis and Healing of the Ndigbo Crises", social crusader and well-known scholar, Chinweizu, while addressing the challenge faced by Igbo-Biafrans notes the inevitability of the intellectuals in their survival. According to him:

Ndigbo has taken to compare themselves to the Jews, but it is an entirely superficial and misleading comparison. Ndigbo may be comparable to the Jews of the Diaspora in the way they suffered in the lands which they sojourned. But Ndigbo have not been at all like the Jews when it comes to the ways the Jews managed to survive their adversities. The Jews have always given pride of place to the intelligentsia in organizing their affairs....In any struggle in life, whether Baseball, Boxing or especially politics and business, you have to out-think your opponent if you want to win....Life's struggles are ninety percent mental....Those Jews who are in business or politics know that it is their duty to institutionally support their organized intelligential. From the beginning they did so by supporting their priesthood. They have continued to do so by supporting their best minds that do the collective thinking for the Jewish people. They have a system for identifying the brightest minds among their young, growing them and enabling them to do the necessary collective thinking for their people (48).

Do we need to say anything more before we launch into what we have to say about the intellectual cup that we need to drink from?

1. On the Concept of Self-determination

The compound word “self-determination” may be meaningful if considered semantically, but it has a deep political significance in our century. Understood individually as “the free choice of one’s own acts without external compulsion” (Onyesoh, 119), self-determination has come to mean more than just the ability or capacity of individual person to decide or refrain from deciding on a course of action. For in the context of the political conditions of today’s world, the “self” that needs to “determine” herself is a nation or a people. And it is in that context that “self-determination” figures in this paper.

In a recent massive, over 500-page book, with the tale-tale title, *To The Rescue*, Chukwuemeka I. Onyesoh explains the kernel of the book in the sub-title: *The Right to Self-determination, The Pathway to a Genuine Federation of Peoples without Shared Values*. This sub-title tells the story of the “rescue’ that self-determination” has become, especially in Africa where states were coupled together without the consent of the peoples that have long existed within such territories.

One discovery made in the process of this research is that the concept of “self-determination” has acquired several meanings and applications ever since the end of World War 1 when it was used to foster peace among the world powers. According to Onyesoh “U.S. President Woodrow Wilson, on 8th January, 1918, listed self-determination as an important objective for the post-war world. This resulted in the fragmentation of the old Austro-Hungarian and Ottoman empires and Russia’s former Baltic territories into a number of new states” (119-120).

What may be designated as the *locus classicus* of a presidential declaration on self-declaration was later stated by Woodrow Wilson himself, in an address to the U.S. Congress on 11th February, 1918. According to him “National aspirations must be respected. People may now be nominated and governed by their own consent. Self-determination is not a mere phrase. It is an imperative principle of actions, which states men would henceforth ignore at their own peril” (Quoted in, Onyesoh, 121)

Self-determination can be relative or absolute. A people can choose to govern themselves, decide their economic and cultural destinies within a recognized nation-state (after ceding some authorities to that nation-state). This is relative

self-determination. Or they can take the absolute option of becoming a subject of international law and a geopolitical entity – as an independent country. Most countries in the world are in the second option. Scotland is an example of relative self-determination. She is in charge of almost all parts of her affairs, even though it is still part of Britain.

It seems that when the United Nations charter gave vent to the phenomenon of self-determination in 1945, it appeared to be for the purpose of decolonization. In Articles 1 (2) and 55 (1) of the United Nations charter of 1945, the basis for self-determination is clearly and cogently stated and affirmed, a huge step above the mere “recognition” given to it by the League of Nations of 1919. Self-determination seemed to apply to the capacity of the Berlin-created nation-states in Africa to seek freedom from their erstwhile colonial masters; but anything outside it appeared inapplicable.

In an essay that is highly politically prognosticative, Charles Nixon argued that the Biafran case provided a test case for the UN conception self-determination and would have implications for the rest of the world. In his, “Self-determination: The Nigerian/Biafran Case” written in 1972 (just 2 years after the collapse of the Biafran quest for self-determination), Nixon wrote that the conflict in Nigeria as a whole, raised a series of critical problems for the concept of self-determination and its use as a principle governing the feelings of people caught in the process of political change. There are three problems highlighted by this particular case: the problem of the new context in which claims to self-determination will arise, the problem of the multilateral character of the claims involved, and the problem of the international character of the responsibilities generated by such claims (492-3).

If one puts the above view into proper perspective, it means that self-determination, even in the perception of the UN, would certainly have a different meaning and application for the African than say, the European. That was why millions of Sudanese were allowed to die before the 2011 UN-backed referendum created South-Sudan.

The breakup of the former Soviet Union into 15 countries in 1989, the splitting of Czechoslovakia, the dismembering of Yugoslavia, the emergence of Kosovo from Serbia, etc are all self-determination claims in Europe that have successfully brought into existence several new subjects of international law. Africa’s colonial experience has been its Waterloo in the claim to be self-determined. And that was certainly what determined the way the pendulum swung between 1967 and 1970

during Biafra's attempt to enforce her own self-determination, driven by the desire to survive.

The implication of the above is that self-determination sought in a higgledy-piggledy manner would not even be given a hearing by the international community. This explains why this essay seeks the creation of due process that would involve legal, political and diplomatic approaches. For there are political, economic, religious, cultural and even psychological global interests surrounding the Biafran case and this factor must always come to the fore each Biafra's self-determination is discussed. We would say on this in our concluding remarks.

2. The Primacy of The Intellectual

"Study to show yourself approved, a workman that needs not be ASHAMED, RIGHTLY dividing the word of truth". -Second Timothy 2:15.

We have chosen to begin this reflection on the intellectual platform of our struggle by quoting this injunction, this advice, this counsel from the Bible given by Apostle Paul to Timothy, the Pastor of the Church in Ephesus. Ephesus was the location of the goddess, Diana, one of the 7 wonders of the ancient world. Paul knew that Pastor Timothy had spiritual and physical battles to fight in that city and he told him to get ready to "study".

We have decided to emphasize the words "study", "ashamed", and "rightly" in that Biblical verse because they are very critical to understanding the place of the intellect in any struggle. Paul knew that the "word of Truth" (God's word) needs to be properly "divided"; that is, explained, analyze, and understood. But it cannot just be done anyhow; it needs to be "rightly" divided! If that is not done, what follows would be "shame." He who does not give himself to study would be ashamed when the chips are down, when confronted with facts which he or she should ordinarily know, but which he/she has refused to discover.

Man is a tripartite being. He is a spirit, he has a Soul and dwells in a body. Man's body is a house with 5 rooms-Tastes, Touch, Smelling, Seeing and Hearing. The Spirit is made up of 4 faculties-Conscience, Communion, Intuition and Understanding. The Soul, on the other hand, is made up of 3 parts-Will, Mind (Intellect) and Emotion. The Soul, by the application of the mind or intellect, processes data from both the spirit and the body for the benefit of Man.

Once Man's intellectual capacity and capability is under-mined, man becomes a dumping ground for all manner of beliefs. And at that point, he is open to all manner of manipulating and seductive possibilities. Remember Voltaire's statement which we quoted earlier about the relationship between absurd beliefs and atrocious actions. The truth is that if you fail to acquire the right knowledge, if you chose to stand logic on its head, you are to be pitied rather than blamed. No wonder, the Bible again states in Hosea 4 verse 6 that "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge..." A wise God had to send Moses to pharaoh's palace to study the mystery schools of Egypt for 40 years. He then sent him to the backside of the wilderness to learn endurance and diligence before He sent him back to Egypt to confront the powers. When it was time to turn the whole of Asia and Europe upside down and inside out, God knew that Simon Peter, the fisherman, would not be the proper man. He sought and took Saul of Tarsus, Professor of Jewish law and a man of letters. Knowledge, the factual and right type of knowledge, is an important weapon in any struggle, especially in the struggle for freedom.

What brought the Biafran struggle to its zenith is the volume of facts intellectually-dug out from the past and placed at the disposal of Biafrans. Thus, unearthing the past brought an avalanche of books and documentaries on the Biafrans, Ndigbo in particular and the genesis of Nigeria. The late Reggae music legend, Robert Nesta Marley, once sang: "if you know your history, then you'd know where you're coming from; then, you wouldn't have to ask me; who the hell do you think I am?". At the end of the Nigeria-Biafra war, majority of the books that were published up to the 1980s came mainly from those who participated in the struggle or were direct observers. Thus, there appeared works such as: *Why We Struck*, by Wole Ademoyaga, *My Command* by Olusegun Obasanjo, *Nigeria's Five Majors* and *The Fall of Biafra* by Ben Gbulie, *Requiem Biafra* by Joe Achuzia, *The Nigerian Revolution and the Biafran war*, Alexander Madiebo, *The Making of An African Legend: The Biafran Story*, by Frederick Foresyth, and many others, especially the ones that have to do with Igbo history and culture.

However, in the past 20 years (especially within the past 10 years), more dedicated and specific researches have been conducted by intellectuals whose interest in digging out the truth is very obvious. Modern science, as we all know, came into being by the qualities of men and women who possessed two outstanding qualities: one, boldness in formulating hypotheses and two, patience in observation. These later group of researchers on Biafra and Igbo history are

very bold and patient in providing us with political prognostication, scientific predictions even spiritual prophecies, and of course, historical insights. Works in this category include B.O.N. Eluwa's *ADO-NA-IDU: History of Igbo Origin*, Karl Maier's, *This House Has Fallen: Nigeria in Crises*, Catherine Acholonu-Olumba's *They Lived Before Adam: Pre-history of the Igbos; The Never-Been Ruled*, Luke Aneke's *The Untold Story of the Nigeria-Biafra War*, Emefiene Ezeani's *In Biafra Africa Died*, Emeka Emekesri's *Biafra or Nigerian Presidency: What Ibos Want*, Chudi Ofodile's *The Politics of Biafra and the Future of Nigeria*, Emma Okocha, *Blood on the Niger: the First Black-on-Black Genocide*, the reappearance of Authur Agwuncha Nwankwo's classic, *The Nationality Question in Nigeria: The Class Foundation of Conflicts*, Chinweizu's *Caliphate Colonialism: The Taproot of the Trouble with Nigeria* and Achebe's *There was a Country: A personal History of Biafra*.

Of course, the boldest and perhaps, most-comprehensive attempt at grounding and sustaining this intellectual platform is T. Uzodinma Nwala, *et al* edited, two-volume work, *Igbo Nation: History and Challenges of Rebirth and Development*. This book contains 62 well-researched essays on almost all aspects of Ndigbo-past, present and future, and contributed by intellectuals at home and abroad. A product of Alaigbo Development Foundation (ADF), the work is the result of the "International Colloquium on the Igbo Question in Nigeria: Before, During and After Biafra" held in Enugu between 11th and 14th March, 2014. Recently, we also have Prince Chukwuemeka Onyeso's *To the Rescue: The Right to self-Determination, The pathway to a Genuine Federation of Peoples Without Shared Values*. With ADF in place and strongly organized, there is no need to search for those who would drive the Intellectual Platform. All that is needed is to incorporate them in the programme since the drivers of ADF are men and women who are also involved with our Biafra's quest for self-determination.

Knowledge brings courage. The right information destroys deformation and brings reformation. More scholarly research needs to be conducted into our scientific, sociological, anthropological, artistic, archeological, linguistic and historical past. Governments, institutions and private individuals need to invest resources into sponsoring researches. For example, According to Emefiene Ezeani, in his *In Biafra Africa Died: The Diplomatic Plot*, "the place known as Biafra was, in the 1960s, the fastest growing economy in the world...its economy then was based on cash crops, principally palm oil and other ancillary products from palm tree which is today boosting the Malaysian economy"(199). Apart from research needs, the other great importance of the intellectual endowment is that

it provides the weapon to distinguish between what is feasible and what is plausible. Certain things that are plausible in the Biafran struggle may not be feasible. The struggle should go beyond sentiments and emotional display of foolhardy actions and mere adventurism. Activist must weigh what they say and do, place them within proper historical perspectives and then ask themselves how they fit into current circumstances, situations and conditions. From “is it good to say or do it?” they must ask “can it be done?” “Is it doable?” The first question is the plausibility question, the second and third questions revolve around feasibility. The failure and refusal of majority of the Biafra activist to submit the struggle to intellectual assessment and superior logic have led them to utterances and actions that have put them to shame and exposed their objectives to ridicule by those who feel that they should have known better. One or two examples would suffice.

In 2014, Benjamin Onwuka, leader of Biafran Zionist Movement (BZM) told us he wanted to go and jump Enugu State Government House (not going through the gate) to go and hoist Biafran flag! “we asked him If you go and hoist Biafra’s flag in the Government House, will that bring Biafrans?” Again, we asked “even if you must hoist the flag, do you have to jump the wall to do that?” These two intellectually-thought out questions were neither answered nor heeded. Onwuka and his BZM did it, one of them was shot dead (a Biafran lost for nothing!!) and he was arrested and remained in detention till 2017. When he was released, he went and declared himself “President of Biafra”. Is this not “an irrelevant search for relevance?” What did all these add to our struggle?

Do we still remember how Ralph Uwazurike, then of MASSOB (now of Biafran Independent Movement-BIM) told Biafrans in 2006 that we should not participate in the census because they are not Nigerians? Thirteen years after, Biafrans use allocated population figures to get Allocations from Abuja. Who is at loss? Biafrans!!! How can they say or do things for emotional satisfaction? Who will tell these people that though they are *indigenes* of Biafra, they are still *citizens* of Nigeria? They are not Stateless! In 2017 as Anambra people were getting ready for the gubernatorial election in the State November 18, Nnamdi Kanu, and his IPOB LONDON LIMITED colleagues said “no election” in the state. When reasonable people, in application of intellectual reasonableness, asked them whether they have the capacity to stop the election, they changed to the lesser evil called “boycott”. This spent more than 6 hours, in different radio stations and on different days, educating the IPOBians and the general public on the

invalidity of the boycott logic and the impossibility (and even inconsequentiality) of stopping the election. My interest in challenging that plan was fired by two things: one, they linked the boycott or stoppage to the Biafran struggle; and two, they went on to make the most-intellectually lazy statement ever made – that they can only participate in election if the Nigerian government “gives” them a date for the conduct of referendum in Biafraland!!! When you subject the plans and the statements made to critical scrutiny, it is hollow and falls flat on the faces of those who make them. In the first place, stopping or boycotting the Anambra election would not have added anything to the Biafran struggle. For one, the election was to elect a governor for the State. The House of Assembly was not standing for election. If the election did not hold, the Speaker of Anambra State House of Assembly would have been sworn in as Acting-Governor (if the situation in the state was peaceful). Or Abuja would have declared a State of emergency in the State and an Administrator would have been posted to take over the state (if the situation was violent). Head or tail, they lose, they would have told the world that they love anarchy instead of order. Thank God that Anambra people heeded the call to choose order and vote and rejected Kanu’s call for anarchy! Granted that elections in Nigeria are not conducted under the best of conditions and processes, but we would not throw the baby away with the bath water! Many well-meaning people who support the Biafran course, had asked Kanu’s IPOB to go to the polls, test their popularity and take over the state politically so that they would implement people-oriented programmes. But it appears Kanu and his colleagues do not yet understand what the issues are and the enormity of the task before the people. Nothing can be achieved at the socio-political realm without political power. Everyone involved in the Biafran struggle must first make clear their motives. How can someone claim to be “doing” Biafran struggle? The quest for Biafra is not a paid job for people who are jobless. How can someone who has no visible means of livelihood take up the quest for Biafra freedom as a job? Who does he or she expect to provide for him the means of daily sustenance?

The number of educated people amongst our people must be encouraged to acquire the right type of knowledge of the Biafran situation and then communicate it to others. There are more educated people who have refused, for very many reasons, to know what the Biafran quest is all about. Some of them are afraid of the word “Biafran” (yet they are Biafrans), others are suffering from ignorance. The 4 lepers at the gate of Samaria (2 kings 7) had to critically examine 3 options (going back into the city, remaining at the gate or moving forward to

the Assyrian camp) before they chose the last one. If hungry, abandoned lepers can think, if they can put their intellect to such liberating use, then the Biafrans can do even much better.

5. The Political Platform

After the spiritual platform, no other platform is as critical as the political platform. If the Godly is the way to Biafra's struggle, then politics is the vehicle with which she can drive through that Way. And there is no better way to begin the concern for the political than to quote the words of German Philosopher, Bertolt Brecht. According to him:

The worst illiterate is the political illiterate. He hears nothing, sees nothing, takes no part in political life. He does not seem to know that the cost of living, the price of beans, of flour or house rent, or any other material condition for good living, depend on political decisions. He even prides himself on his political ignorance, sticks out his chest and says he hates politics. He does not know that imbecile that from the political non-performance comes the prostitute, the abandoned children, all the hostilities we have in the world, robbers and more particularly, corruption in our country.

When one reads such expressions, one does not need so much sermonizing to realize that politics is where social lives are circumscribed. That "politics is a dirty game" is a mantra that has been swallowed to the detriment of those who uttered them. In their pretentious religiosity and hypocritical holiness, we abandoned the dimension that determines (in Harold Lasswell's words) "who gets what, when, how". That is what the political dimension is.

The result of this apathy, this political surrender, is the painful and unfortunate loss or annexation of the political space of Biafraland to merchants who masquerade as leaders and who are agents of the forces that have sworn that Biafrans would remain in mysterious misery and perpetual servitude. The unfortunate aspect of this insult on the sensibility of the Biafran people and assault on their territory is that these subversive forces have employed petrodollars exploited and exported from Biafraland to buy the conscience of their traditional, political and (painfully) religious leaders.

Regrettably, Biafra-conscious persons and (especially) groups, who should know better, have equally swallowed hook-line-and-sinker the irrational and ignorant position that “we are not Nigerians, we are Biafrans; therefore, we should not participate in anything being done in Nigeria.” Consequently, we were told not to be counted during the census exercise in 2006. We were told not to vote in elections, the recent being the Anambra State Gubernatorial election of November 18, 2017. All these occurred as a result of zeal without knowledge, passion without reason and mission without vision. One thing that has been missing, over the years; in the struggle for self-determination by the Biafrans is the political engagement of Biafra-minded politicians. That “we are Biafrans and not Nigerians” is the ignorant, senseless and useless mantra annoyingly repeated over time by neophytes who do not understand the working of the international system. No one is territorially stateless. If I am an Igbo-Biafran Indigene, I am still a citizen of Nigeria. If I should have any reason to go outside Nigeria, I must possess the green passport for me to pass to another country; else my entry would be branded “illegal”. Any and everything else outside the “political” is an invitation to anarchy. And the world is not prepared to listen to anyone who gives the impression that he or she is not governable.

It is in response to this inevitable need to apply the political option that the Movement of Biafrans in Nigeria (MOBIN) emerged. Led by the visionary, intelligent and versatile London based, Emeka Emekesiri, MOBIN equally has a strong-willed Biafran irredentist, Eberechukwu Anigbogu (Ada Biafra) as its Director-General. The main goal of MOBIN is to use the political platform to push for the right to self-determination of Biafrans, either within a restructured, truly federal Nigeria or as an independent country. Realizing the fact that self-determination is a right given to all indigenous peoples of the world, especially the September 13, 2007 United Nation’s Universal Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UN-DRIP), MOBIN believes strongly that until Biafrans take over the political space in Biafraland, the journey to freedom would not even have begun.

MOBIN’s experience during the gubernatorial election in Anambra State in 2017 showed that the Biafran ideology of Justice, Equity and Truth (JET) can be embraced by the mass majority of Biafra’s population. The current political class in Biafra land has not represented the people well. This class has created empires and built monuments. It has classically exhibited what A.R.M Kirk-Green said in his book, *The Amalgamation of Nigeria*, that “the three basic principles responsible

for the successful working of the Nigerian system are ignorance, fear and military terrorism” (p.272). By their republican and egalitarian nature, Biafrans are the easiest and simplest people in the world to govern. All they want are men and women who would tell them the truth, whose integrity and valour are enough qualifications to represent them.

MOBIN’s mandate is not a quick-fix one. It may be slow but as long as it is sure, steady and enduring, it would pay in the long run. MOBIN’s experience in Anambra State tells us that our people can fly the Biafran ideology if committed and passionate Biafrans, cured of the Nigerian malady, could be presented. Biafrans are tired of politicians who steal them dry and play agency roles for powers outside Biafra’s territory. Biafran’s must work hard, strategize and plan to take over the Houses of Assembly in Biafra land. Self-determination by peaceful, legal, diplomatic and due process is not a hundred kilometers dash, it is a relay race. It would require moving from stage to stage. And the activation of the MOBIN Platform is a step in the right direction. One of the biggest challenges facing MOBIN is to get the various Houses of Assembly in Biafra land to pass the Customary Law Bill that is being prepared so that Biafran’s can have right to govern themselves in line with their own customs and traditions. Sections 282-287 as well as section 315 of Nigeria’s 1999 Constitution clearly recognize the place of Sharia and Customary Laws in our statutes. The 12 core Northern States have activated the Sharia legal system and funding it with Acts of Appropriation by their states Houses of Assembly. For example, during the 2017 Nigeria Professional Football League (NPFL), Rangers International Football Club of Enugu went to play against Gombe United Football Club in Gombe. The Rangers team was attacked after the match by fans of Gombe United. Some players and match officials were injured; the Rangers’ team bus was destroyed. But it is shocking to learn that the few fans that were arrested for that mayhem were referred to the Sharia Commission! Biafran-Conscious politicians need to be sensitized to understand the vision and strategy for self-determination. These politicians can be in any party, as long as they grasp the fundamental basis of the MOBIN policy. And because MOBIN is a political movement as well as a freedom platform, efforts should be made to synergize with other movements, with similar goal, in other ethnic nationalities in Nigeria, so that there would be joint confrontation of the common enemy- the castrating Nigerian State as presently constituted. Convincing and converting, bringing the mass of Biafra’s buffs who shout “Biafra must be restored” or “*Anyi Anaa*” (we are going) at beer palours, pepper soup joints, buses, newspaper stands, village squares, etc.

(without knowing what is to be done or without even thinking of the enormity of the task involved) is, perhaps, the immediate task of MOBIN and other Pro-Biafra groups. For indeed, the political goal of MOBIN would become simpler if all these masses of people would understand and key into it with open, political utilitarian eyes! Any Igbo or Biafran who, as we used to put it, sucked his mother's breast, should be worried by what Chudi Ofodile, in his book, "The Politics of Biafra and the Future of Nigeria" has rightly captured as "the gradual but persistent shift towards insularity" that Ndigbo face in Nigeria today. Barr. Ofodile, a former member of Nigeria's House of Representatives, believes that both history and ideology are critical in resolving the quagmire that Nigeria finds herself. He is among the few active politicians who believes that no one can fly the Biafran identity or ideology in politics and still want to be a thorough-going Federalist.

The more Biafrans leave our commonwealth in the hands of merchants, dealers (not leaders) who use the people as pawns in political chess boards, the more their freedom lingers. The Biafran territory cannot be left for them to manipulate at will. they must strategize, sensitize and mobilize to wrestle political space from these mercenaries and, consequently, rescue the people from their hypnotizing stranglehold! Any other effort outside this would be shadow-boxing with phantoms. Freeing Biafra or obtaining self-determination for the Biafrans is not a tea-party. It is not going to be by a hundred-mile dash, wherein we are expected to snatch it from Nigeria and then bolt away in 8.98 seconds like Husain Bolt. It is a relay race that involves speed and patience, planning and process, as well as knowledge and strategy. If war can give independence, Biafra should have been free between 1967 and 1970; South-Sudan should have been free in the over-20-year war with Sudan before the January 2011 referendum that led to her independence on July 9, 2011. War is not an option, as history has shown.

The Biafran quest can neither be understood nor expressed without the political option. The intellectual unveiling of the history and story of Biafra becomes necessary and significant, meaningful and axiomatic when the political steps in to fashion out practical tasks from that history. All the libration movements for Biafra's independence beginning from MASSOB in 1999 to IPOB in the present day have played the historical role of keeping the spirit of Biafra alive and sensitizing the local, national and international community. However, that phase

must now end. The activities of these groups must now be channeled towards the political, the legal, the diplomatic, with mass action being 30% of our activities and should be employed when absolutely necessary and relatively safe.

With the castrating principles of the territorial integrity of sovereign states as well as that of non-interference in the domestic affairs of individual countries, Biafrans must strategize and anchor the Biafran struggle on taking political control of Biafra's space. There is need to compel Nigerians to freely choose who leads them. Biafra's freedom must, henceforth, become the basis for choosing those who would govern the territory. For example, the Scottish National Party (SNP) has always been pro-Scottish independence. But it could not do anything about it until it won election and controlled the government. With that control, it organized the referendum for Scottish independence on September 18, 2014. Although it failed (55.3% voted against independence while 44.7% voted in favor), it brings to the fore the importance of the political in charting the course of the people. 84.6% of registered Scots came out to vote during the referendum, making it the highest turn out of voters to participate in a referendum in the United Kingdom.

This brings us to the vexed question of the restructuring of Nigeria, which gained currency in the past two decades or thereabout, but which has reached a crescendo and deafening level in the past two or three years. The blind, the lame, the deaf, the moron, even the idiot knows that Nigeria, as presently packaged is not paying any ethnic nationality in Nigeria. It is just that in the condition of decay, the Biafrans are worst hit. The Nigerian state has been hijacked by few individuals who have been dictating the political, cultural and economic direction of the country. The consensus of opinion is that if Nigeria continues this way, implosion is inevitable. The powers that have kept this country this way have been trying all strategies to maintain the status quo. A 2018 publication of elder statesman, author, publisher and social theorist, Arthur Agwuncha Nwankwo is given the tale-tale title, *Nigeria and her Path to Doom*. The book portrays the mood of a people in a country that has become a castrating glass cage.

Let us address the issues surrounding the question of Igbo nationality, the so-called South-East geopolitical zone and the Biafran question. Igbo unity is necessary and critical. But geographical unity is not as important as historical, cultural, economic and mental unity. The concept of South-East, as bad as it is, should not constitute a Waterloo for Ndigbo. It is plausible if Ndigbo can

geographically unite to Igwe-Ocha (which is today called Port-Harcourt). 51 years after Gowon's state creation, we are still, with good reasons, feeling the nostalgia of our Igbo brothers and sisters in the now so-called South-South.

The thesis of this paper is that it is more feasible to restructure Nigeria along the 6 geopolitical zones than along the nationality lines, not with the hundreds of nations within the Nigerian state. Ndigbo in the South-South are and would always remain Ndigbo. It is understandable that because of the lure to survive, they denied their Igboness. But that was over 50 years ago. How long will this condition be bemoaned? How long are we going to wait to join them or they join us before we take care of the South-East? Should we believe that our brothers in the South-South would deny us use of Port-Harcourt, Opobo or Bonny Ports, when they have become functional again? Besides, the best chance of getting these ports working again is to restructure Nigeria along the 6 geo-political zones. Regional, economic, cultural and (even) political co-operations would be established thereafter.

The Jews in America, Europe, Asia, etc have continued to maintain economic, social, cultural links with the State of Israel. For over 2000 years, the Jews in Europe faced persecution but they never denied their identity. The Patriarch, Joseph was so Jewish that he gave instructions that his bones must be moved out of Egypt when God visits them! The South-East does not necessarily need to join their brothers in the South-South, politically and geographically, in order to survive the challenges of the region.

Bringing this to the Biafran discourse, what it means is that if no one else, if no people else, if no region else wants Biafra, Ndigbo in the South-East can successfully bear and politically activate the name. Scotland, South-Sudan, Catalonia, and others are able to talk about referendum and self-determination that comes after it because they have parliaments that could pass the relevant laws for the conduct of such. Restructuring Nigeria into 6 federating units would be a major step towards Biafra's freedom and that is why it is being opposed by the people that Chinweizu, in his book *Caliphate Colonialism: The Taproot of the Trouble with Nigeria*, have called "Caliphate Colonialists"

Majority of Biafrans have developed understandable but self-destroying apathy to public service, especially politics. This apathy has been buoyed by the attitude of political office holders in Biafra Land since 1999. Unfortunately, the more we keep away, the more the current political class feels a sense of *de javu*. We must take this political space back as Biafrans in Biafraland. We must retire these

politicians in Igbo land, in Biafraland, who would give Boko Haram support and solidarity, if they were To Take over Aso-Rock in Abuja.

Let us take the example of Anambra State which has registered voters of about 2 million people. Yet, during every election, only less than 500,000 people come out and vote. It appears that the remaining 1.5 million people are Biafran-minded people who have bought the falsehood that they are no longer Nigerians or who have, on their own chosen not to vote as a result of frustration from previous elections. The current task of all informed pro-Biafrans is to get these 1.5 million people out of their houses on Election Day. But this can only be achieved on one condition: that all Biafrans are presented to them core Biafrans whose character, competence, and commitment to the Biafran vision is unwavering and unquestionable!

Biafra's business men and women should understand the place of the political in shaping the character of the economy. What industrialists like Ibeto, Innoson, and Uba have suffered in the hands of forces against their interests and the interest of Biafrans is a wake-up call that they need to use their resources to mobilize the people to vote in those whose political policies would not only secure, but expand Biafra's economic interests. The synergy among the *Aka-ji-ochichi* (the political leader), the *Aka-ji-aku* (business mogul) and the *Isi-ji-aku* (the intellectual) must be expanded and maintained. We must have a *de facto* government that would drive the Biafran quest for freedom under customary Law.

While we seek core Biafrans that would go to the various Houses of Assembly in the states in Biafraland, we must mobilize and organize our people using the Customary Law that has been in existence before the advent of colonialism. Institutions and structures that can engage Nigeria and the International community are critical in this regard. These institutions are the only antidote and torpedo to the fear of Biafra that has been injected into our people in the past few years.

Perhaps, one of the most legitimate moves made in our current demand for self-determination is the formation of the Customary Government of the Indigenous People of Biafra (CG-IPOB). In the coming on board of CG-IPOB, two canons were fired at once: first, that the people of Biafra have always existed under customary laws and that even the 1999 Constitution of Nigeria, though grossly inadequate, recognizes that in section 282 of its provisions; secondly, that Biafrans are not anarchists, but law-abiding people who operate the finest

democracies in our world. These governments are not impossible to establish when we realize the capacity of our people to build structures for survival. Our people need to catch the vision of CG-IPOB so that they could help participate in it.

Before the Customary Government Bill is passed by the various State Assemblies in Biafraland (just like the Sharia Bill passed in the 12 core-Northern States), our people need to know that CG-IPOB would be the best legal and legitimate institution that would bring the international community into the Biafran struggle, if there is delay in restructuring Nigeria. **THE WORLD IS DESIGNED TO DISCUSS WITH GOVERNMENTS, WHETHER *DE JURE* OR *DE FACTO*!** For now, CG-IPOB is the *de facto* government of Biafraland. And those who fly the Referendum kite should know that a political party (that is not in control of government), a pressure group or any other organization for that matter cannot organize a Referendum. No international organization (UNO, AU, ECOWAS, etc.) no other government, including the government of Nigeria, has a right to compel Biafrans to hold a Referendum! Referendum is a legal process that can only be organized by a properly constituted government within Biafraland or anywhere else. Only when Biafrans are ready can the world be part of it to ensure it meets international best practices! When these facts are laid bare and properly understood, we then see that Biafrans are playing with government institutions (in this struggle) at their own peril.

The best thing that can happen to Biafra's struggle is for all the pro-Biafran groups, organizations and individuals to become part of the Customary Government. That way, we can pull energy towards one legal, legitimate and fruitful direction. The men and women in these organizations would then put their personnel, experience, resources and skills in an internationally-known and legally-recognized, productive direction.

6. The Legal Platform

In the process of the legitimate struggle for a peaceful route to self-determination for Biafrans, it was the legal platform that was first activated, to the surprise of many doubting Thomases. Legal justice may not be spiritual (divine) or social justice, but there is no doubt that the first sign or symptom of a non-democratic state is the absence or disregard of the rule of law. What makes a state, place or country democratic is not good roads, pipe-borne water, electricity and other paraphernalia of urbanization. Any despot, any Hitler, Stalin or Mussolini can

build these things. Two things make a state a Democracy: Rule of law and free Speech!

Under the platform of a registered human rights group, BILIE Human Rights Initiative (BHRI), the elders of Biafra land (known as Supreme Council of Elders-SCE) took the Nigerian State to the Federal High Court, Owerri. The case No. is FHC/OW/CS/192/2013: Indigenous people of Biafra (IPOB) vs Nigeria. And although Nigeria's Attorney General and Minister of Justice has been appearing in that case, the powers that be, have played all manner of legal gimmicks to frustrate the case.

The difference between Thomas Hobbes (British Philosopher) "State of Nature" and what became known as "civil society" is the regulation of the latter by laws. Life, reality, nature, even the spiritual realm, are all governed by laws, conventions, rules, treaties, decrees, agreements statutes, and resolutions. Why do some of us imagine that the legal process (especially at the home front) is an exercise in futility? The insistence by some Biafran buffs that only their conceived strategy is workable and should be followed is an attempt to be myopic and unnecessarily intolerant.

Of course, the Nigerian judicial system would not offer freedom to Biafrans. But there is a process to be followed before going to the International Court of Justice (ICJ). Whenever it is said that Biafra's freedom is a "process", not a "mandate", many mistakes it as a surrender position. Biafra, when realized, would be a subject of international law. Things must be done properly and in order. These riotous activities of some pro-Biafran groups would not help the Biafran course. It makes mockery of Biafrans before the global audience and those at home. K.O. Mrabure in his recent essay, "The Right to Self-determination Under International Law: The Current Biafran Struggle", discusses the issues surrounding municipal and international laws as it concerns to the Biafran Struggle.

There is certainly a need to create research team that would be digging out facts that would support the legal process. Also, liaising with internationally-known attorneys and advocates interested in the cause of Biafra's freedom would also be required.

Biafrans need visionary, knowledgeable and courageous politicians who would understand the values of law and legality in addressing the Biafran question. For example, which political leader in Biafraland is aware of the provisions of Article 20, cap 10, laws of the Federation of Nigeria, 1990? It states:

All peoples shall have the right to existence. They shall have the unquestionable and inalienable right to self-determination. They shall freely determine their political status and shall pursue their economic and social developments according to the policy they have freely chosen.

Article 21 of the same law clearly provides that:

All peoples shall freely dispose of their wealth and natural resources. This right shall be exercised in the exclusive interest of the people. In no cause shall a people be deprived of it.

Unfortunately for the peoples of Nigeria, those who thought that Nigeria began in 1979 (following the Constituent Assembly of 1978), inserted a provision which appears in the current 1999 Constitution (as Amended in 2011). Section 162(1) states:

The Federation shall maintain a special account to be called "The Federation Account" into which shall be paid all revenues collected by the government of the Federation....

The battle for resource control would not rage today if our so called "grand norm", "the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999", has not been packaged to take sovereignty from the people and in the process their resources. According to Thomas Jefferson said: "The two enemies of the people are criminals and the government. We need to tie the second with the chains of the constitution so that the second does not become a legalized version of the first". With a Constitution that makes the government act like criminals, such as you have in Nigeria, what else can the people do? This situation has remained the same because, according to Emeka Emekesiri, in his book, *Biafra or Nigerian Presidency: What the Ibos Want*,

Most of the leaders of the people do not represent the people as they are not elected by the people but imposed on them by outsiders through rigging of election...the Governors,

Senators...are imposed on them by their political opponents
(287)

7. The Diplomatic Platform

Diplomacy involves the application of the depth of discernment, the capacity for engagement, a shrewd and respectable personality with an upwardly mobile knowledge of the international system in order to protect and promote, not just national interest, but national wellbeing as well. In a world that has become borderless, one can comfortably say that the failure of diplomacy in statecraft is the failure of that State. This is important when one remembers the view of former United States Secretary of States, Henry Kissinger that in International Politics “there are no permanent friends, no permanent foes, only permanent interests”.

Kissinger had written in his book, *My White House Years*, that when Richard Nixon (then President-elect) asked him what, in his view, should be “the goal of his diplomacy”, his answer was:

The over-riding programme was to free our foreign policy from its historical frustrations between euphoria and panic, from the illusion that decisions depended largely on the idiosyncrasies of decision makers. Policy had to be rooted to some basic principles of national interest that should be maintained as Presidents change... One of my attractions for Nixon, I understood later, was that my appointment would demonstrate his ability to co-opt a Harvard intellectual (xi).

What emerges from Kissinger’s view above for Biafrans, is the need to raise a crack diplomatic team, united in purpose and respectable in personality, to push Biafra’s case before the international community. When one examines this need, one sees the urgency and inevitability of taking over political space and dictating what happens therein - in line with the over-all interest of the quest for Biafra’s freedom. The often-flouted ignorant mantra, “we don’t need the UN”, “we don’t need Britain”, which some pro-Biafran people utter is a tragedy. They are not aware of Kissinger’s true and valid position that “frequently, uncertainties, compromises and incoherence are the essences of policy-making” (31). Biafrans must raise a diplomatic team with great bargaining skills, tremendous goodwill and dialectical flexibility.

This diplomatic team should one that understands that the struggle for Biafra is not that of individual personalities but that of irreconcilable interests and hostilities within Nigeria and (especially) in the larger world, exacerbated by economic and religious undertones. There is need to CONVINCED at least two of the Veto-powers to support our quest. The Biafrans would not be able to win this support if they are not united, organized and tactful. All the persons playing one role or the other, for or against the quest for Biafra's self-determination, must not be seen in their individuality. They are simply agents of interests articulated in policy statements. Thus, President Buhari is simply expressing and attempting desperately to preserve the Sarudana battle script of October 11, 1960, that conceives Nigeria as an Islamic "Estate". There is need to confront and disentangle that policy. According to Sir Ahmadu Bello, 11 days after Nigeria's independence:

The new nation called Nigeria should be an estate of our great grand father, Uthman Dan Fodio. We must ruthlessly prevent any change of power. We use the minority in the north as willing tools and the South as a conquered territory. We must never allow them to rule over us. We must never allow them to have control over their future.

With this type of perception of the Nigerian state by the Hausa-Fulani, Biafrans should realize that the quest for freedom involves employing all they have in their arsenal.

Much of the fruitful diplomatic moves involve secrecy and discreet discussions, which would not require media attention. Some high level bilateral and even multi-lateral discussions would become playing to the gallery if made public. Trying to impress Biafrans with information when preliminary diplomatic moves are made could be absolutely unnecessary. This approach is critical, especially in an attempt to secure the support of any or some of the veto-powers. The secret and discrete struggle is necessary because of the policy of the non-interference which the nation-states of the world adopt. For what others see as the "quest for freedom", others may see as the "desire to destabilize" a given country.

Unfortunately for small nations, especially in Africa, Asia and Latin America, bigger countries and the international bodies like the UN, AU or EU wait till there is a breakdown of law and order, beyond the capacity of the state in question, before they would intervene. In the light of the above, and realizing that Biafrans do not have to fight another war, Biafra's diplomatic maneuvers

must be top notch! They must, in all that they do in this quest for self-determination, show the world that they are governable, that they are not a people given to anarchy.

Biafra's diplomatic moves should equally target Multinational Corporations (MNC) or the so-called Trans-National Corporations (TNC), since much of the crises in the international system is economic. They must give a soft-landing for countries with economics interests in Nigeria, a landing that would assure them that instead of adversely affecting their economic interests, a free Biafra would even enhance it. A major disturbing matter noticeable noticed in the Biafran struggle is the apathy, ignorance and almost conspiratorial silence displayed by many Biafrans that are occupying sensitive positions abroad, especially in Britain and the United States. Is it true that there are 4 Igbo people in the British parliament? What about some Biafrans that are Mayors of cities in the United States? An Igbo-Biafran has just won election into the Italian Parliament early in 2018. What about Biafran-born sportsmen and women dazzling the world with their skills? Why are they not behaving like Gerald Pique of Barcelona Football Club, who proudly displayed his vote on October 1, 2017 when the Catalans had their referendum? Are they afraid of their Biafran identity? What about millions of other technocrats, bureaucrats, academics, and business moguls of Biafran extraction scattered all over the world? Are they buoyed down by apathy, ignorance or fear? They need to be reminded of the immortal words of Frantz Fanon, the Apostle of the African revolution. He once said, "every generation must, out of relative obscurity, discover its mission, fulfill it or betray it ... every onlooker is either a coward or a traitor" (6). Those Biafrans who watch idly as their people are mauled down on the streets, without uttering a word are cowards who, in Julius Caesar's legendary words, have "died many times before their death".

On the other hand, if one were to pulse a little and play advocacy role for some of those who display apathy, have they ever asked themselves: "which serious-minded people would get involved in a struggle which, though legitimate, has been hijacked by neophytes? How can serious people get involved with the Biafran struggle under conditions where integrity and normal truth-telling are scarce social commodities? Are they not justified in staying away in the face of opportunism, adventurism, foolhardiness, vagabondry and brigandage displayed by some of the pro-Biafrans, all in the name of fighting for the

restoration of Biafra? Does the need for a legitimate, peaceful, legal and diplomatic process in this struggle not stick out before them like a sore throat?"

Biafra is not a mandate given to anyone to go and realize. Biafra is not a means of livelihood for the jobless. Biafra is not a sloganized ideology which someone has to shout-out to achieve emotional succor. Biafra is a people, a place, an identity, the "crystallization of the cherished hope of a people." Barr. Emeka Emekesri already has a team that is engaged in this diplomatic foray. That team should be enlarged and its objectives expanded and thoroughly worked-out. Career diplomats should be part of the diplomatic team, both in advisory and active capacities. Those who act as though Biafra, when it comes, would be a pariah State should realize that there are conventional ways of state existence as well as of interaction among States.

According to Emekesri:

The case of the Ibos is a perfect example of a people who have satisfied all the requirements of becoming a sovereign nation. They have been in the struggle for independence for many decades and have sacrificed their lives. The Youths of Ibo land have formed various liberation movements agitating for the emancipation of their region from Nigeria. Much blood and tears have been shed. In fact, there is no Ibo family that has not lost someone in this struggle from the 1966 massacre to the present day. Up till this day, the blood of Ibos are still being shed to keep Nigeria one. Ibos have been persecuted and oppressed beyond description. Their brothers from the South-South Region have denied them and allied with the Hausa/Fulani and the Yoruba... They are oppressed and denied political power. (289-290)

On September 9, 1968, French President, Charles de Gaulle said:

Why should the Ibos, who are generally Christians, who live in the South in a certain way, who have their own language, why should they depend on another ethnic fraction of the federation? Since that is what one ends up with, one's own element imposes its own authority on the others. Even before the present drama in Biafra, one could wonder how Nigeria would be able to live in view of all the crises the Federation was experiencing. And now that they are failing, enormous drama has occurred. Now that Biafra has proclaimed its independence and to subdue it, the Federation has resorted to war, blockage, extermination and famine. How can it be

imagined that the people of the Federation, Ibos included, can resume lives together. France in this affair has done what is possible to help Biafra. She has not performed the act which to her would be decisive, of recognizing the Biafran Republic.... Where France is concerned, the decision, which has not been taken, is not ruled out for the future... (quoted in p.294, Emekesiri)

Even those who oppose Biafra's independence know that the Biafrans have a good case. The degrees of incompatibility, the frequency of bloodshed, the level of injustice and marginalization have continued to widen. Our diplomatic forays must target getting at least two of the veto powers, together with the state of Israel to support us. Political, economic, religious and humane sentiments must be employed, depending on who we are dealing with. Civil rights Crusader Rev. Benjamin Franklin once said "Justice would not be served until those who are unaffected by injustice are as outraged as those who are". Those who are not directly feeling the heat that the Biafrans are facing must act as though they are the ones involved.

Times have changed and would continue to change. Some of the International conventions, statutes and resolutions available today were not there in 1967. The United Nations Resolution 61/295 of September 13, 2007 issued a Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UN-DRIP). If we get our acts together, mobilize our people and speak with one voice, the world would have no choice but to support the Biafran course.

We must employ diplomacy as well in engaging the government of Nigeria. Consultations, convictions and co-operations must precede confrontation. And even when confrontation becomes inevitable, it must not be violent. If you doubt it, ask the Sudanese. After several decades of war, it was jaw-jaw; it was a round-table discourse that brought about the referendum that eventually led to the independence of South-Sudan on July 9, 2011.

Using internal diplomatic strategies, approaches, arguments and methods, we must work hard to prove to the majority of the population of other ethnic nationalities in Nigeria that they would be better if they self-determined their destinies. We must show the viability of each region so that they would understand that the character of the Nigerian Union has acted more as a hindrance to unleashing their potentials.

Again, realizing the castrating and hegemonic hold exercised by the leaders of the Nigerian State, external diplomacy should involve getting the international community to put diverse pressures on these leaders to permit the will of the people to prevail, especially through referendum. We need to convince other ethnic nationalities that self determination is the best antidote to the looming implosion that is threatening Nigeria's fragile union. Similarly, we need diplomacy to convince the international community that investments are safer in a free, self-determining atmosphere than one held together by force. It is the lack of support from the Spanish government that has kept Catalonia where it is today, even after she held a successful referendum on October 1, 2017, the second in three years, having held an earlier one on November 9, 2014. If Nigeria cannot accept a Biafran people's referendum on her own, we must strive to get the international community to compel them to accept it as a matter of necessity to ensure peace within the African Region.

8. Conclusion

One does not intend to conclude anything here, especially bearing in mind that nothing can be concluded. We just need to close what we have opened so that you can open the closure wherever you consider plausible and feasible, necessary and significant. All we have done in this presentation is to stir us to the fact that we have enormous work to do; tremendous tasks to surmount and achievable goals to pursue if we unite, articulate our strategies and follow legitimate processes.

This paper pointed to the indispensability and even inevitability of the legal, political and diplomatic structures in the quest for Biafra's freedom. If we get Biafra-minded political leaders to take over Biafraland, the process of realizing Biafra would become easier and faster. We need to stop taking foolhardy and adventurous actions that do not add anything to the quest for Biafra's freedom. Critical minded analyst, statesmen, diplomat, and even politicians across the globe know that the Biafran case is more serious than some neophytes in Biafra imagine it to be. Charles Nixon captured it clearly when he wrote:

The Nigerian/Biafran conflict is the first case in which the claim to self-determination was brought to the fore-front of world attention after a process of decolonization has presumably been completed. It thus, lay outside the presumptions of earlier UN declarations and actions which applied the concept of self-determination to the process of decolonization...that once independence was attained,

the principle of self-determination was fulfilled, and the concept had no further applicability to subsequent political changes in former colonial areas. Certainly, it was not to apply in cases of secession. The Biafran claim challenged this view and it gained substantial recognition for its position including verbal support from France for the application of the principle in this case (493).

Again, we cannot use the fact that we are an egalitarian society and then permit all kinds of riotous and socially-destructive behaviors in the name of Biafra's struggle. Respect for elders is a value and virtue that our society extols. The opinion and strength of the young as well as the counsel of the elderly must be synergized to move the struggle forward. According to Onyesoh:

Street demonstration alone cannot achieve self-determination...neither is any violence necessary to accomplish self-determination in the 21st century. Organization, International litigation, diplomacy and publicity must harness the awareness which street demonstrations generates, to arrive at that goal. Tyrants have no ears and they do not listen they only issue orders and are in love with listening to their own voices only (118).

The implication of what Nixon and Onyesoh have said above is that self-determination is not a joke; it is not something you do (as the Igbo would say) while carrying snuff in your palms. It is a serious business. Self determination is no longer "a simple moral concept which an abused people can invoke unilaterally to impose its own solutions on others, regardless of the consequences such solution may have for others" (Nixon, 496). Too many interests are involved in self-determination locally, nationally and internationally.

Finally, we need to note clearly that Biafra is a Spirit. Those who fight for her must apply righteousness and integrity before any expression of boldness would be necessary and significant. "Bi-afra" as 'Obi Afra" ("Afra" meaning the "God-man") is the source of the name "Africa". We must be sincere and do what is right; that is what "righteousness means". A person with wrong motives, insincere actions and lying lips cannot fight for Biafra. Those who wrote Biafra's anthem were right with the last line of the 4th stanza stating clearly that we hope "to make this clime a land of righteousness".

Biafra is a spirit, but not a blind spirit. She would pay anyone and their generation for the role played in this process. If you are not sincere, if you lack

integrity in this struggle, the time to change is now. For indeed, time is running, out. And I would like to end with the immortal words of George Washington who said that "worry is the interest paid by those who borrow trouble." May we not borrow trouble in this process of self-determination for Biafrans and may those who have borrowed the trouble of denying Biafra self-determination continue to worry endlessly.

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