



**AGITATIONS AND SALVAGING NIGERIA OR SAVING NIGERIANS:
A PHENOMENOLOGICAL ONTOLOGY OF THE FORCES OF
RE-STRUCTURING AND DE-STRUCTURING**

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Abstract

This Essay tries to show that the challenge facing Nigeria is not as simple as it has been addressed, especially socio-politically. It argues that unless the challenge is interpreted, understood and addressed ontologically, no far-reaching solution can be fostered or suffice. Thus this essay attempts to prove a set of mutually inclusive theses: one, that agitations in Nigeria cannot be addressed without an ontological understanding and solution to the being of Nigeria as such; two, that agitations without political participation is nothing but noisemaking expression of frustration; and three, that the best way to salvage Nigeria is to save Nigerians and if two of them cannot be saved then let Nigeria die so that Nigerians (the human beings in her territory) can live. The goal of the paper is ontological, while its methods are historical, phenomenological and hermeneutic. In conclusion, the paper submits that neither restructuring nor de-structuring can salvage or save Nigeria or Nigerians, respectively, if any of them occurs via a violent route.

Keywords: Agitation, De-structuring, Nigeria, Nigerians, Phenomenological Ontology, Re-structuring.

Introduction

The next set of essays tells the story of an idealist Nigerian. Born of the Igbo stock, who felt optimistic about the salvation of Nigeria. It can still happen! But now that I know that there are fundamental, foundational issues that my ideals and ideas cannot wish away. The salvaging of Nigeria appears bleak and seems like trying to squeeze water through your hands: the more you squeeze it, the more the water vanishes!!!

These essays are reflections on an orphaned country, corruption and ethnic nationalistic expressions. That was at the time when OPC was the only dominant ethnic pressure on the Nigerian state. No MEND, no Avengers, no Boko Haram, no IPOB, just an emerging MASSOB. Interestingly, what we now call “Abacha loot” was in the author’s radar as far back as 22 years ago. (Agbo, 2021 b:34)

“Street demonstration alone cannot achieve the right to self-determination...neither is any violence needed to accomplish self-determination in the 21st century ...organization, international litigation, diplomacy and publicity must harness the awareness which street demonstrations have created. Tyrants have no ears. They do not listen. They only issue orders and are in love with listening to their own voices only”.- Onyesoh (2017:118)



Recently, I published about seventy-three (73) of the over two hundred (200) articles I had written in various Nigerian newspapers between 1998 and 2003. The opening quote is, thus, my way of describing, with the advantage of hindsight, what I wrote those years. That Nigeria is a country groaning under a self-inflicted burden is a fact known by many. That she is a huge disappointment to her citizens and the shocked world is equally undeniable. That the decay, destruction, dearth and death within the Nigerian state is threatening her survival as a subject of international law and a geopolitical entity can also not be gainsaid, even by the most optimistic analyst.

However, that Nigeria's problem is ontological appears to be known only by a few historically, critically and analytically minded people. Those who think that Nigeria has political, economic or security problems are on top of the tree, cutting branches, shedding leaves and plucking some of the (sometimes) ripped and (sometimes) rotten fruits. But they need to come down and join those of us at the root of the tree, for the odious task of root digging to locate and solve the problem (Agbo, 2018).

Why is Nigeria in turmoil? And why are ethnic nations within her territory reacting adversely? Why are Nigerians agitating? What hope for survival does Nigeria have if this boiling point continues? Can Nigeria be salvaged? Can Nigerians be saved? Can both Nigeria and Nigerians be saved? If it becomes inevitable to save only one of the two, which one should be saved and which should be sacrificed? Can re-structuring salvage Nigeria and save Nigerians simultaneously? Will de-structuring make Nigerians live better, fare better and act better? What is the current structure of Nigeria that requires restructuring? Can the current mode of agitation across Nigeria bring Nigeria to a better situation? Can de-structuring be done without collateral damage to human lives and infrastructures? Who is afraid of either restructuring or de-structuring? What can phenomenology, ontology or ontological analysis bring on board to help provide a correct interpretation, deep understanding and enduring solution to the problem on the ground? These questions and similar ones shall be on our thoughts as we navigate through this essay.

Our purpose is to show that no simplistic solution exists to the problem at hand and that without at least an ontological understanding of the Nigerian quagmire, no socio-political solution would suffice. In the process of achieving this purpose, we shall prove a set of mutually inclusive theses: one, that agitations in Nigeria cannot be addressed without an ontological understanding and solution to the being of Nigeria as such; two, that agitations without political participation is nothing but noisemaking expression of frustration; and three, that the best way to salvage Nigeria is to save Nigerians and if two of them cannot be saved then let Nigeria die so that Nigerians can live.

What shall we do with a country that the Lagos Weekly Record, a colonial newspaper, describes in 1919, in the following words: "the three basic principles responsible for the successful working of the Nigerian system are fear, ignorance and military terrorism" (Kirk-Green, 1968: 272). Or the one described as "a gang land of unprecedented impunity" (Soyinka, 2009); whose leaders are a band of mosquitoes that stumbled on a nudist family



To be able to achieve these modest purposes and prove our theses, this essay has been structured as follows: after this introductory part, it shall clarify certain concepts that are crucial in the process of the essay. Such concepts include phenomenology, ontology and ontological analysis, forces, restructuring, DE structuring, agitation, self-determination, etc. Next, we shall explicate the primacy of ontology in any understanding or interpretation of reality. The next two sections shall then capture the ontological history of Nigeria and then expose her theaters of agitation, with a brief discussion on the Biafran dimension so that the discussion can be contextualized. After these, the next section shall then discuss the twin forces of restructuring and de-structuring, to find out if any spiritual prophecy, scientific prediction, and/or political prognostication can ensure any of them occurring as a result of the agitations. We would thereafter conclude our discussion.

To be able to realize all the above purposes and objectives, we shall employ historical, expository, phenomenological and analytic methods of research. In the process of this presentation, I shall share some of my experiences in the Biafran agitations since I am not just an armchair theorizer. I am a scholar and intellectual who believes in engaging and participatory social engineering. This is part of my philosophy of “refl-action”, that permits you to think-to-do and to do if-thought (Agbo, 2013). Let us proceed.

Concept Clarifications and Theoretical Framework

According to the Oxford Advanced Learners' Dictionary of Current English, 5th Edition "salvage" means "the removal of a damaged ship and its cargo from the sea" or "the removal of property for future use likely to have been damaged by fire, flood, etc." It also defines "save" as: "make or keep somebody safe from harm, loss, etc." The understanding given of 'salvage' is very appropriate for the current fixation in Nigeria. It conjures the imagery of a rescue mission. The Nigerian State-ship has gone adrift and is heading almost into the Bermuda Triangle. No doubt, she needs an anchor to salvage it and her cargo - the people of Nigeria! Saving the people in the country becomes possible, either within a salvaged country or outside it if the attempt at salvaging would bring about loss or harm for the Agbonifos, Oluwoles, Harunas, Okonkwos, Enos, Attahs, Jumais, Okons, Ijeomas, etc in Nigeria.

My understanding of “ontology” in this essay would be Heideggerian. It is the conception of reality as it is, in itself, unhindered and unmediated. Thus, ontology is understood in this work as the exhibiting of the general profiles, modes, aspects, manifestations, etc of any reality at all. For Heidegger, therefore, “the task of ontology is to explain being itself and to make the being of entities stand out in full relief” (Heidegger, 1962:220). I would shortly link this further with phenomenology as I examine the theoretical framework of this essay. Within the Nigerian socio-political environment, the term “re-structuring” has gained the status of eternal truth in the past few years, especially since the presidency of Muhammadu Buhari began in 2015. In fact, in today’s Nigeria, the word “restructuring” has become more popular than the word “democracy”. There are many different views about the concept but the major reason for the demand is that the Nigerian state as presently structured, is choking the people and the ethnic nationalities therein before the coming of the British. The demand is thus for Nigeria to be restructured into a true



Federal State. Our phenomenological ontological analysis of this concept would help us to properly capture its meaning.

Of course, “de-structuring” here has the meaning of “disintegration” or “secession” or independence” for any people or ethnic nationality no longer comfortable with the current status quo. A milder conception of “de-structuring” may refer to the idea embedded in “confederation”. Here, the country would be deconstructed into autonomous regions, with a very weak Centre. These two concepts are the two forces pulling the Nigerian State and trying to take her away from the current situation this current force is a third one and it is best captured by what Chineizu (2015) calls “Caliphate Colonialism” – the current condition of Nigeria created and tenaciously sustained by the Fulani Islamic Oligarchy.

The choking atmosphere in which the Nigerian State currently exists has led to a plethora of “agitations” across the land. The term “agitation” in this essay would have a double connotation. On the one hand, it would mean an expression of discontent with ill-treatment, and, on the other hand, it would mean a demand for exit from the current state. As an “expression”, it seeks for a better say, participation and recognition in the scheme of things. However, agitation as a “demand” for exit seeks a right to self-determination to assert a different identity.

This essay is carried out within the theoretical framework of phenomenological ontology, which for Heidegger, is not a philosophy but philosophy as such: For Heidegger, the demand or need to exhibit reality as it is, in itself (which is the task of ontology), requires a method that would carry out that exhibiting without hindrance. That method is phenomenology. Conceiving “phenomenon” as “that which shows itself in itself,” Heidegger (1962: 202), argues that ontology carries out that task.

As something that lays bare the phenomenal structure of any reality at all, this essay believes that both Nigeria and Nigerians are classical phenomena; and thus, there is a need for a deep ontological analysis of their existence, both in their separatedness as well as in their relatedness. If we do not explain or analyze what is going on in Nigeria in a presuppositionless way, we are going to put pressure on such phenomena. The result is that they would not freely “manifest as they are in themselves”. They would end up manifesting the way “we have made them to”.

To be able to properly describe the twin forces of restructuring and destructuring, and give them “scientific definiteness as we encounter (them) phenomenally” (Heidegger, 1962:61), we must ensure that we do so unrestricted by our own emotions, idiosyncrasies and judgments. Thus, Heidegger (1962:58) writes, “Only as phenomenology is ontology possible...” Ontology attempts to uncover Being-Itself (Sein), the human Being (Dasein) and beings (Seinde). Heidegger’s primary task was to uncover this being of beings and Phenomenology takes up on itself the task of this uncovering. The primary task of making clear in what ways the being of entities is encountered via the objects that confront consciousness daily becomes that of phenomenology. The desire and the need to have unhindered access to the Being of beings make Phenomenology an inevitable method for ontological enquiry. The ontological task of explaining, elucidating and displaying the



general profiles of reality requires a method that seeks to display that reality the way it is in itself. In describing how we gain knowledge through phenomenological research, Heidegger asserts:

The achievement of phenomenological access to the Entities we encounter consists in thrusting aside our interpretative tendencies which keep thrusting themselves upon us and running along with us, and which conceal those entities themselves as encountered of their own accord (Heidegger, 1962:63)

Thus, we hope that when we carry out a phenomenological analysis of the current situation in Nigeria, there would be no hiding place for anything since all manifests, all phenomena, and every reality would be allowed to unveil themselves the way they are in themselves and consequently, described as such.

The Primacy of Ontology

Before I go on to a full discussion of these issues that surround the agitation for restructuring or deconstructing of the Nigerian state, it would be necessary to understand the importance and significance of ontology. Although our theoretical framework, Heidegger's phenomenological ontology, has been sketched out in the previous section, it would be necessary to give a brief restatement of the values of ontology to understand why this essay is circumscribed within its confines.

In this essay, we follow Heidegger to reject the conception of ontology as a branch of metaphysics or what is generally called metaphysics specialis, a view dominant in Western philosophical tradition. That ontology is fundamental to and in every enquiry is what Heidegger brought to philosophy and it has dovetailed into all disciplines. "Researchers in fields such as knowledge engineering, information system modeling, artificial intelligence, formal and computational linguistics, information retrieval, library science, knowledge management have come to realize that a solid foundation for their research calls for serious work in ontology, understood as a general theory of the types of entities and relations that make up their respective domains of enquiry" (Guarino and Musen, 2005: 1).

Understanding the relations among entities in reality is of crucial importance in any ontological analysis (Agbo, 2017). And now that ontology has become the foundation of scientific, linguistic, computer, management and various types of knowledge based research, it would even be more critical at the socio-political realm. For indeed, all these other disciplines exist in order to improve the welfare of man in society. Substances, objects, events, processes, etc, are the concerns of any ontological enquiry.

The general and embracing nature of ontology is captured by Barry Smith and Christopher Welty in their essay, "Ontology: Towards a synthesis". According to them:

Philosophical ontology is the science of what is, of the kinds and structures of objects, properties, events, processes and relations in every area of reality... The term 'ontology' (or ontologia) was itself coined in 1613, independently, by two philosophers, Rudolf Gickel (Goclenius), in his *Lexiconphilosophicum* and Jacob Lorhard (Lorhardus), in his



Theatrum philosophicum. Its first occurrence in English as recorded by the OED appears in Bailey's dictionary of 1721, which defines ontology as 'an Account of being in the Abstract'. Regardless of its name, what we now refer to as philosophical ontology has sought the definitive and exhaustive classification of entities in all spheres of being. It can thus be conceived as a kind of generalized chemistry. (Smith and Welty, 2001)

The above quotation not only tells us what philosophical ontology is, it also tells us the historical derivation of the term "ontology".

That ontology is the study of Being, the existent, that which is or can be, is known by almost anyone who has attempted to study it. What is the nature of existence? How is reality structured? What is the relations among entities? By way of summing up what we have been discussing on the values or primacy of ontology, Paul Glen (1945:10) argues that "ontology satisfies the inner desire of the human mind for unified knowledge and a clear view of reality in a various and complex universe." Thus, the unity of phenomena, the relations among objects, events, processes, etc, as well as clarity of perception are what any ontological analysis seeks to engender. And this is what this work wants to achieve by ontologically analyzing the twin forces of re-structuring and destructuring of the current structure of the Nigerian state.

Finally, let us conclude this section by noting that in "The Limits of Ontological Analysis," Panayot Butcharov says that ontology has two fundamental tasks: "the account of the ultimate sorts of entities and the account of the ultimate unity of complex entities (1984:140) consequently, the complexities and diveraties of interpretation of the puzzle that has been named "Nigeria" cannot be fully, thoroughly and correctly address unless done from the hallowed foundation of ontology and within the context of this essay, phenomenological ontology. For in truth, if we undervalue ontology, we obstruct the development of thought (reality)" (Bucharov, 1984:140). Against this reality of the values and virtues of ontology, let us see if we can attempt answers to the ontological questions asked by the sections that follow.

What is Nigeria?

The above question is not a geographical one. It is neither political nor economic. It is an ontological one. It focuses on the search for those logically necessary and existentially significant conditions by which and through which the nature of Nigeria can be described or describable. The question sees Nigeria as a classic phenomenon that requires deep, clear and unified unveiling. A colleague and Bosom friend of mine, Dr. Odiche Ude of the Department of Mass Communication, Ebonyi State University, Abakaliki, Nigeria, has been writing a book with the ominous title, Only in Nigeria. But he has not been able to bring out the book for the last decade or thereabout. Why?

The book is about occurrences, events and happenings that have or can only take place in Nigeria, and cannot happen anywhere else on planet Earth. So each time he wants to go to press, something bombastic and flabbergasting would happen again: I have advised him to start publishing the book in batches, for no one knows when these fantastic occurrences would cease.



Phenomenologically considered, Nigeria exhibits different modes and profiles. Nigeria is a place (the Niger Area), a period (1914), a person (a Britained Fulani), a park (where amusements occur), and above all, a phenomenon (manifesting preposterous propensities, profiles and processes). Or how else can one define or describe a country whose president would travel to the United Kingdom on March 6, 2022 for medical attention, and the, 3 days later (March 9), a whopping 10 billion naira is appropriated for the Presidential Wing of the Aso Rock Clinic? (Premium Times newspaper, March 9, 2022). Notice that this fund is not for the entire clinic, but just for the “Presidential Wing” of the Aso Villa Clinic. Nigeria, thus, cannot be understood without grasping the philosophy of (the “whys” and “hows”) such occurrences. To account for such occurrences, one must go to the root, to the ontological foundation of the country. How did Nigeria come into being?

The being of Nigeria cannot be discussed without 3 events of monumental proportion. The first was the 1804 Usman Dan Fodio’s Jihad that occurred in Nigeria’s Northern area, whose effects on interpersonal relations have been thoroughly examined by Nmah and Amanambu (2017: 47 - 71). The second was the infamous Berlin conference of 184-5, and the third was the Amalgamation of the Northern and Southern Protectorates to form “Nigeria” in 1914 by Frederick Lugard. Chinua Achebe, in his last major work, there was A Country: A Personal History of Biafra, captures these events:

Great Britain was handed the area of West Africa that would later become Nigeria, like a piece of chocolate cake at a birthday party. It was one of the most populous regions on the African continent, with over 250 ethnic groups and distinct languages. The northern part of the country was the seat of several ancient kingdoms, such as the Kanem-Bornu, which Shehu Usman Dan Fodio and his jihadists absorbed into the Muslim Fulani Empire. The Middle Belt of Nigeria was the locus of the glorious Nok kingdom and its world-endowed terra-cotta sculptures. The southern protectorates were home to some of the region's most sophisticated civilizations. In the west, the Oyo and Ife kingdoms once strode majestically, and in the Midwest the incomparable Benin kingdom elevated artistic distinction to a new level. Across the Niger River in the East, the Calabar and the Nri kingdoms flourished. If the Berlin Conference sealed their fate, then the amalgamation of the southern and northern protectorates in inextricably complicated Nigeria’s destiny. Animists, Muslims and Christians alike were held together by a delicate, some say artificial, lattice (Achebe, 2014: 1-2).

What can be gleaned from the above is that Nigeria was not given birth to by Nigerians. The implication is that Nigerians became orphans before they were born and Nigeria became childless moments after delivering her children. The Igbo child remained Igbo but tried to see if he or she could accept Nigeria as a foster-parent. The Fulani child remained Fulani, ditto for the Hausa, Yoruba, Efik, Ibibio, Jan, Benin, Nape, Urhobo, Itsekiri, etc children.

However, the more the Igbo tried to accept Nigeria as a foster parent, the more they suffered from that parent. It was not difficult to know which of the tribal-children of Nigeria believes in her the most. In the first Republic, while the North formed the Northern People’s Congress (NPC) and the



West Action Group (A.G.) which was formed from an autochthonous Yoruba movement, Egbe Omo Oduduwa, the East (under the Great Zik) formed the National Council of Nigerian and the Cameroons (NCNC).

However, at independence in 1960, the word “Cameroun” was changed to “citizens”. What is the ontological status of a country where one part, the south, is conceived as a wife to the other, the North? In 1913, Louis Vernom Harcourt, then Secretary of State for the colonies had rang the wedding bell for the North and South and asked Luggard to conduct the marriage. In his words:

We have released Northern Nigeria from the leading strings of the treasury. The promising and well conducted Youth is now on allowance on his own and is about to effect an alliance with a southern lady of means. I have issued the special license and Sir Frederick Lugard will perform the ceremony, may the union be fruitful and the Couple content.

-Lord Lewis Vernon Harcourt (quoted in Agbo, 2021:1)

The “promising and well-conducted youth” here is the Fulani North, while the “Southern Lady of means”, was the Southern protectorate. As a “Lady of means”, it is obvious that Nigeria is in this existential malady because some people are interested in the wealth in the south. And when Obafemi Awolowo declared that:

Nigeria is not a nation; it is a mere geographical expression. There are no Nigerians in the same sense as there are English, Welsh or French. The word “Nigeria” is merely a distinctive appellation to distinguish those who live within the boundaries of Nigeria from those who do not

– Awolowo (1947)

Thus, for Awo (and unfortunately for many today), Nigeria's only ontology is defined in geographical terms. Therefore, if Boris Johnson, Emmanuel Macron and Mohammadu Buhari were to meet at a lobby during a meeting and Johnson says, “I am an English man” and Macron says, “I am French”, Buhari cannot say “I am Nigerian”, for he would be uttering an ontological falsehood. However, if Buhari says, “I am Fulani”, he would be on familiar ontological ground. The cultural-ontological differences among ethnic nationalities in Nigeria were exalted to the level of immutable truth at the birth of Nigeria; first by the colonial overlords, and then later by leaders of Nigerian extraction.

Is it any wonder, then, that Sir Ahmadu Bello continued to talk about “the mistake of 1914” (a reference to the Amalgamation). And later, just eleven days after independence in 1960, Ahmadu Bello was to utter the most audacious and annoying statement ever made about Nigeria. He said:

“The new nation called Nigeria should be an estate of our great-grandfather, Othman 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 not allow them to have control over their future”?

(Parrot newspaper, in Agbo 2020a: 135 October 12, 1960).



Many of those who have made comments on this Saduana pronouncement have referred to it as nothing short of a “Battle Cry”, a sort of “Declaration of War”. Thus, to the Fulani, of the Saduana extraction, the question, “what is Nigeria?” has a straightforward answer: “Nigeria is a Fulani Estate”! Period! And if anyone has given this ontological claim existential expression in the past 108 years of Nigeria’s epileptic being, it is Muhammadu Buhari. The social, political, economic and cultural spaces in Nigeria is currently under Fulani annexation. The result is increase in the fragility of “the artificial lattice” holding Nigeria together. Unity is decreed from the top as the people and their ethnic cleavages attempt to outwit one another. Our unity is “non-negotiable,” and I have discussed the insensibility and even the logical impossibility of a unity that is “non-negotiable” (Agbo, 2020a: 82-113). Odumegwu Ojukwu puts this ontological problem of unity when he writes:

Nigeria never was and can never be a united country. The very nature of Nigeria inevitably gave rise to political power groups, goaded by sectional rather than national interest. These groups were clearly defined and perpetuated by the constitution itself. The veneer of unity generated and maintained by the veiled became exposed with the coming of disjointed mass.... Nigeria was not united the Nigerians knew it.

Ojukwu. (1969:1)

When views like these are subjected to critical ontological analysis, the result can be scary. What is the ontological status of “never was” (the past) and “can never be” (the future) in the being of Nigeria? How can “the very nature of Nigeria” be understood? And if division or division (double vision) is part of the constitutional provision, how does such a country survive? Why would agitations not become a permanent feature and the future of such a territory? Or have we forgotten one of the slogans of the founders of the American Revolution: when injustice becomes the LAW, resistance becomes a “Duty”? In my recent book, *Sinking Structures on Faulty Foundations: Socio-philosophical Essays on The A-B-C-D of Nigeria’s “Failure” State*(2021), I had discussed 4 critical areas that the Nigerian state failed to address and which has resulted in her becoming, not just a failed state, but a failure state as such: These 4 areas are represented by “A” for Amalgamation and the problem of unity; “B” for Biafra and the Igbo question and the identity question; “C” for Constitution and the challenge of a grad norm, structure and formation; and “D” for the Niger Delta and the economic problem of fiscal Federalism.

The nature, hopes, structure, and destiny of the Nigerian state are difficult to pin down. It is a country at war with itself on all fronts, almost a gigantic human abattoir. Life has almost become meaningless in Nigeria, and it is perhaps a miracle that “the artificial lattice” is still hanging there. However, no one should be surprised at the agitations all over Nigeria. It is a reflection of a fundamental, foundational and ontological problem. Perhaps, after the pogrom in the North in 1966 and the genocidal war against Biafra, it seems like dying or being killed has become a major part of what it means to be “Nigerian”. But “what and where is Nigeria today after spilling the blood of Millions of people in undertaking the task to keep Nigeria one?” (Ezeani, 2014: xvi).

The questions “what is Nigeria?” “Where is Nigeria” bring us right back where we began in this section. For “what is x?” is an ontological one, while “where is x? Is not a geographical one. It is



not a question of Nigeria's location in space. It is, rather, a request for how far she has gone in fulfilling her manifest destiny. It is a search for what she has done to ensure that Nigerians- Mohammed, Ada, Oghere, Bosede, Okoro, Adewale, Dipriye, Akpan, Igbiniedion, Ihua, etc, within her territory survive. Or would she ignore Nigerians as they continue to agitate, thus it is a question of where she is in Time; that is, it is a historical question. Dipo Fshino(2012) almost got exhausted in his search for " who is the Nigerian", since neither location nor the diverse cultural groups located within the Nigerian space could help him. But what is the philosophy of these agitations? Let us attempt an answer.

A Theater of Agitations and Operations

The question "What is the philosophy of the agitations?" seeks the "why" and "how" of the agitations in Nigeria. How have agitations been carried out in Nigeria and why? And going by our last sub-section, is anybody surprised? Can any genetic manipulation make a snake give birth to a tortoise? Why is the response of the Nigerian State to these agitations coming by way of "operations", military operations?

Nigeria is a huge theater of military Operations, from the North to the South. All the agitations as well as other criminal activities, have one Operation or another launched against them. These Operations reveal a failure of civility, a desperation to hold the country together by mere force of arms. It is a country at war with itself and its citizens. Without going into details about when they were formed or for what purpose, check these out: Operation Mesa, Operation Safe Haven, Operation Delta Safe, Operation Ruwan Wuta, Operation Lafiya Dole, Operation Shran Daji, Operation Harbin Kunama, Operation Crocodile Smile, Operation Python Dance, Operation Safe Corridor, Operation Gama Aiki, Operation Crackdown, Operation Tsera Tekun, Operation Awatse, etc.

From our discussion in the last section, it should not be a surprise to anyone that Nigeria in recent times has exploded into a theater of agitations. It would be sheer naivety and a display of historical ignorance for anyone to think that agitations in Nigeria is a phenomenon of the 1990s or the 2000s. Agitations have always been part of Nigeria's constitution or formation. She was born into it and had continued to thrive therein. The only difference is that as a result of what has been called "systemic injustice (Nwankwo, 2004 :), these agitations have grown in scope, number and intensity.

However, in his essay, "Separatist Agitations in Nigeria since 1914", Tekena Tamuno (1970:576), says that minority agitations have been in Nigeria since the 1920s. That is to say that it began at the dawn of the Amalgamation. Before we continue our analysis, let us examine the meaning of agitations "or what it means to "agitate".

The word "agitate", according to the Oxford Advanced Learners' Dictionary of Contemporary English, 5th Edition, simply means "to make a person feel disturbed, anxious or excited for or against something". Without this inner feeling, the second meaning of "agitate" (which is relevant for our context) would not happen: "to demand something publicly or to take part in a campaign



for or against something”. Thus, the word “agitation”, means “a public protest about or discussion for or against something”. Thus, the ideas of “publicly” and “protest” are crucial in understanding the phenomenon of agitation: agitation as a feeling would not be socially useful unless it is publicly expressed. On the other hand, public expression of agitation would be impossible without an inner feeling of it.

Having said that, I would want to group the agitations in Nigeria into four (4) major types: Identity agitations, political agitations, economic agitations and religious agitations. Although these types are not mutually exclusive (one agitation type can also be identified in the other type), there is a sense in which they can be disentangled for pedagogic analysis to foster better and deeper understanding.

The Biafran agitation, for example, directly has a bearing on the first three types and indirectly on the fourth. It is an attempt by the people to assert their identity, decide their political authority and control their economic endowments, especially those that nature has provided them in their earth's crust and the seas. On the other hand and equally, the Biafrans are also saying that they are predominantly not Muslims and so should not be compelled, forced, or coerced into it.

On the part of the Ja'amatu Alis Sauna Lidha Awati Wal-Jihad, simply known as Boko Haram, one can see that the demand of the group is, first and foremost, religious, and then identitarian. The group seeks a separate state where their members would practice Islam without any inhibition or adulteration. Its collaboration with the Islamic State West African Province (ISWAP) justifies this religious classification of their type of agitation. Again, by insisting that they want to be in a world or society driven by the Arab-Islamic culture, they are attempting to assert an identity that is somehow different.

The agitations in the Niger-Delta of Nigeria present us with a classic case of economic agitation. In my essay, “Nationalism and the Niger-Delta Minority Question in Nigeria: A Philosophical Re-Examination”, I had tried to express this in the following words:

The politics of crude oil exploitation has ensured that international and (unfortunately) even national concern over the Niger Delta has revolved mainly around “stability” and a fugitive kind of “peace”...The conflict in the Niger Delta State moved from Boro's desire for an independent Niger Delta State to the demand for “resource-control”, if Nigeria's claim to “federalism” would be taken seriously. It was this demand to; at least, control the oil-resource and the frustration of the citizens of the Niger-Delta that snowballed into the militancy that began in the early-1990s. (Agbo, 2021a:317)

The fact that the Nigerian State over the years, failed to recognize the super-majority contributions to the economic respiration of the country was a major challenge of identity to the Niger-Delta crises. Consequently, in a bid to demand recognition the region unleashed a level of militancy that became dwarfed only by the Boko Haram carnage in the North.



The desire to assert their cultural identity and take charge of their political space have largely been at the core of agitations in the Yoruba-dominated Western Nigeria. From the Awolowo-Akintola crisis of the 1965 General Elections to the crises of the annulled June 12 Presidential Elections, from the formation of the Egbe Omo Oduduwa by Awo to the O’odua People Congress (OPC) in the 1990s, the Yoruba have perfected a way to get what they want from Nigeria. This view of mine becomes buoyed as I once again read a newspaper article I wrote about OPC 23 years ago (1999), when the group was unleashing mayhem in Lagos and Ibadan, where I lived and studied for 16 years. The article, inter alia, said:

I was shocked that the Federal Government waited for the mile 12 killings before it came out with a definite statement on OPC. And even at that, only time will tell whether the president’s pronouncements are not just lips service. We know that the gulf between words and actions in Nigeria is legendary and an unbridgeable one.

A look at page 2 of the OPC “Mission Statement” shows that the group had as far back as four years ago marked out where to attack. It has systematically unleashed mayhem on the areas mentioned therein. These include Shagamu, the seaports, Mile 12 market, etc. and if we go logically, we can conclude that their next point of terror would be the Murtala Mohammed Airport, Lagos – also mentioned in the document. Yet as its murderous hurricane sweeps through the land, we are still paying semantic attention to these abominable acts.

Consequently, the sooner OPC is comprehensively dealt with, the better for Nigeria (Agbo, 2021 b:56)

Incidentally, OPC has not only survived, it is also a registered political party in Nigeria! There is a virtue that Ndigbo needs to learn from the Yoruba: how to plan. When Pa Abraham Adesanya, then leader of the Pan-Yoruba group, Afenifere, told some of us in 1993 that they (the Yoruba) left Ruben Abati in the Guardian Newspaper because, in his words, “we would need him tomorrow”, I did not understand the utterance. About two decades later, when Abati was in charge of what news showed or should not come out of Aso Rock Villa during the Presidency of Goodluck Jonathan, I then understood the grand old Afenifere leader! Certainly, the current “Yoruba Nation” agitator, Sunday Adeyemo (a.k.a. Sunday Igboho) is not alone, rascal voice shouting on the streets. I would make more comments on his styles and strategies in the course of this essay.

The Biafran Agitation

Biafra is one of the greatest puzzles, diplomatic conspiracies and human tragedies that has faced (and still faces) the world. And as far as Nigeria is concerned, the Biafran agitation stands at the pinnacle and the foundation of her survival. Biafra is a puzzle because never in the history of the human race has a people a clear case of unfair treatment and yet even the people at the receiving end appear to be so disunited. Thus, is Biafra truly “a nation divided against itself”? (Chiluwa, 2018). Many unbiased analysts have pointed to the conspiracy by some of the superpowers at the height of the Biafran debacle in 1967 to 1970 (Ezeani, 2014; Jorres, 1972; Aneke, 2007). Of course, the cost in human lives, both in the war and the current resurgence, is unimaginable and this fact is awash in literature. I do not want to rehash the story of Biafra again here. I have done so in my essay, “Biafra: The Philosophy of the Historical Ignorance of a Critical Generation”



(Agbo, 2015). The interest within the context of our discussion is to examine the values, necessity, significance and consequences of the Biafran agitations of the past two decades or thereabout. This began in 1999 with the coming on board of the Movement for the Actualization of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB) led by Chief Ralph Uwazurike and the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) led by Mazi Nnamdi Kanu, currently on trial by the Nigerian State. It is the activities of these two groups that resurged and globalized, respectively, the agitation for Biafra's self-determination.

Unfortunately, both Uwazurike and Kanu were together in MASSOB but neither of them currently heads the original MASSOB. When few years ago, as a result of internal squabbles among the leaders, Uwazurike was removed and replaced by Uchenna Madu, the former had to form a new organization that now go by the name BIM MASSOB - 'BIM' here meaning Biafran Independence Movement. For about 18 years, I watched from the sidelines the activities of the pro-Biafra groups, especially MASSOB and IPOB, worried and unimpressed. I am worried by the fact that many people, especially the ever-increasing number of pro-Biafra groups, think that Biafra is a jamboree, a tea party of some sort. I am not impressed by the sheer number of pro-Biafra groups, gallivanting and perambulating over the places and thinking that a new country or the solution to marginalization would come by sloganizing or continuous reiteration.

When I physically got involved in the Biafran struggle, I was concerned about the level of disunity among the pro-Biafra groups. And it became my very first course to address. I had joined the group named Movement of Biafrans in Nigeria (MOBIN) because it believes in the legal, political and diplomatic methodologies to self-determination. I became its Director of Political Education and Governance. I got involved in serious mass education of our people on the right way to pursue self-determination.

In 2018, following the efforts of a few like-minded comrades, the Coalition of Pro-Biafra Groups was born and we continued to meet monthly in Enugu to see if unity could be forged. I remember that at one point, there were over 20 groups in the coalition! And one wonders, how can over 20 groups be pursuing one thing? What is the reason why they could not just become one, united and be in one accord? The original draft from where the essay, "Creating a Process Not, a Mandate: One Philosopher's Reflection on Biafra's Quest for Self-determination" (Agbo, 2020b), was first presented at the 51st Anniversary of Biafra's Declaration held at Rojenny Stadium, Orba, Anambra State on May 30, 2018. The Paper was concerned with raising awareness on the inevitability of the political, the legal and the diplomatic in Biafra's quest for Self-determination.

Some months later, I was appointed by the Coalition to head a "think Tank" Committee of five. I produced a document titled, "Thinking into a Tank: Biafra Liberation Organization, Worldwide (BLOW): Structural organigram for a United Struggle" (Agbo, 2020a: 173 - 184). I urged the committee to seriously think of collapsing into one huge organization, no matter the name, so that we can have our **energies, intellectual and material resources**, channeled towards one purpose and to ensure that we speak with one voice. I wrote inter alia:



Without a unified platform, anchored on a political process, driven by a legitimate governmental structure, the world would think that we are joking. Though Biafra is on the lips of millions across the world, both Biafrans and non-Biafrans alike, this massive awareness will not change anything till the year 3000 unless we move from di-vision (double vision) to uni-vision (single vision). This is a spiritual law: No Kingdom Divided against Itself Would Stand! Biafra is more than a talk show. Biafra is not an event that we mark. It is not a memory that we share. It is the destiny of a people. (Agbo, 2021a:177)

Unfortunately, after that first meeting of the Committee, we never met again. Even our preliminary discussions were never presented to the Coalition. The reason is phenomenologically manifest: no one of the major group leaders wants to submit to another or collapse their group!

How can there be freedom or independence for a people, in 2023, without involvement in the political process? How can we be running around on the streets ALONE or making broadcasts without having or seeking to take political authority of that territory? How can we expose ourselves to murderous reaction by a government that does not mind if Biafrans die, and then expect anything more than a verbal response from the world community? What did the world do when 3 million Biafrans were killed between 1967 and 1970? Do we have to sacrifice ourselves because we want our territory to become a new geopolitical entity and a subject of international law?

My interactions with the leaders of the pro- Biafra groups, my understanding of the structure of the current international security order, my modest knowledge of the history of liberation movements all over the world, as well as my study of the character and structure of the Nigerian State tell me that this sort of agitation by IPOB, MASSOB or any other group would only result in plenty of motion without movement. During my first private meeting with Nnamdi Kanu on May 8, 2017 (16 days after he was released from Kuje Prison), I had told him that there was no need for one more death on the streets of Biafra land; that even if the Nigerian.

State kills a million Biafrans on the streets, the world would say that it is “Nigeria’s internal affairs; that the world would not listen to him if he is promoting anarchy (that was when he was saying that there should be no election in Anambra State); and that unless core- Biafrans take over the political space in Biafra land, the Biafran struggle would not even have started. In 2021, I was at Ralph Uwazuruike’s house in Owerri with few friends. During our interaction, I reminded him of how the MASSOB he led then asked Ndigbo not to take part in the Nigerian census of 2006, because Ndigbo “are Biafrans, not Nigerians”. I reminded him again that we are still in Nigeria, 15 years after, and (unfortunately) using the population figure arbitrarily allotted to us after the census to receive allocations from the center.

Now, IPOB has moved Ndigbo from a voluntary sit-at-home to a compulsory one and then to a deadly and destructive one. Our lives are being taken away by all manner of killers while our economy is being destroyed. Imagine what would happen to the Igbo society if all these Biafran buffs on the streets, shouting “Biafra or death”, would galvanize and channel that energy into the political process; elect core-Biafrans and make them responsible to the people! Would our territory



suddenly become positively transformed, just because we have a “Biafra” with a mindset reading “Nigeria”? Is self-determination simply a demand for a change of name?

The legitimacy or the moral imperative of the Biafran agitation is no longer at issue. What is at issue is the method and how feasible they would be in the overall realization of that quest. I have tried to briefly carry out a phenomenological description of how that agitation has proceeded in the past 2 decades and what I think should be done. It has been sketchy because Biafra is not the main focus of the essay. But my idea has been 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. (Agbo, 2020b: 36).

Restructuring and De-structuring the Nigerian Structure

The agitations that are sweeping across the Nigerian space-violent and peaceful, political and economic, gender-based and End-SARS, etc-are reflections of a sick country. This sickness began at the very birth of Nigeria and has become exacerbated by “systemic injustice “perpetuated by the desire for control and domination by the Hausa/Fulani feudal and religious (Islamic) oligarchy. Thus, the hard truth is that the current structure of the Nigerian State can no longer sustain the demands of the different peoples and the ethnic nationalities within its territory.

Consequently, if there is any modern African State that needs to be rescued from the hegemony of ethnic nationalism, it is Nigeria (Agbo, 2021c). The Nigerian State presents a classic case of a country where the occupation of socio-political, economic, military and cultural spaces by one ethnic nationality has resulted in a in near-permanent crises and conflicts in the state.

It is necessary to note that before independence in 1960, the leaders of the various ethnic nationalities in Nigeria knew that Nigeria had to survive and progress as a federation or it would not survive. So they spent about 10 years (1950 - 1959) trying to structure the country into a Federation, first of 3 Regions. Thus, it can be said that Nigeria had a structure at independence in 1960. In 1963 when the Mid-Western Region was created via a Referendum, Nigeria had one Federal Constitution and four Regional ones. It also operated the Cabinet system of government, which she inherited from the British colonial master.

By the time what Achebe (2012: 3) refers to as the “naively idealistic coup” of January 15, 1966, occurred, Nigeria was never going to be the same again! Twenty-eight years of the rape and ravaging of her resources and people by different military juntas (interrupted only by another failed



attempt at democratic governance between October, 1979 and December, 1983), ensured that the Nigerian State lost its original structure. She became shapeless and formless. During these 32 years, all the leaders, except the six and a half months of Major Gen. J. T. U. Aguiyi-Ironsi (January – July, 1966) and the 43 months of Lt. Gen. Olusegun Obasanjo (February, 1976 – September, 1979), were all Northerners.

What was the purpose of changing to the presidential System of government during the Second Republic, different from the Cabinet system that was in place at the collapse of the First Republic? Why did Nigeria not go back to where it fell in 1966? How come the Murtala regime in 1975 made it appear as though Nigeria Began In that year?

What is the current structure of the Nigerian State that can make re-structuring a necessity and a possibility? For, indeed, there must be a structure before one can talk of restructuring. In an earlier reflection, on former President Goodluck Jonathan's "transformation agenda", I had asked what the "form" of Nigeria is, so that when that is determined, then we can start discussing the idea or need and possibility of "transforming" (Agbo, 2019a: 145 - 177).

One of the tragedies inherent in the hullabaloo over restructuring in Nigeria is that some people think that they are doing us a favor. But as noted earlier, Nigeria at independence had a structure. It was the years of military governments that have made it appear as though Nigeria is a hijacked field, an "Estate" of the caliphate. However, what is at stake is the need to salvage a country that is choking its citizens and its ethnic building blocks out of existence.

What is being demanded is actually a return-structuring and not just a restructuring (Agbo, 2021a: 52-72). The idea of "return-structuring" here is a call for an ontological return to the spirit of the 1963 Republican Constitution that sought to enthrone "Liberty, Equality and Justice". The truth, therefore, is that: What we had in 1963 was a situation whereby a Constitution created or spelt out the character of the state.

The current situation (from 1979) is a situation where the State creates itself and thereafter creates a Constitution for the people! Administrators of the Nigerian State, those who control the instruments of coercion, decided, according to their whims and caprices, what the State should be like. It was like Man creating God in his image, instead of God creating Man in His image! A state or a government cannot create itself. It is not done that way. The managers of the state must derive power from the constitution. Anything outside this is illegitimate. Section 14 of the 1999 Constitution still states that sovereignty belongs to the people.

But how can sovereignty belong to the people who were not allowed to make their Constitution? That is why we should "sincerely be talking about return-structuring" since, technically speaking, we do not have a structure to restructure now! (Agbo, 2021a: 59).

Those who say that restructuring has many versions are not sincere to themselves. Restructuring is an admission of the existential fact and ontological truth that the Nigerian State, as presently



structured, cannot meet the aims and aspirations of her citizens, the various peoples and ethnic nationalities within her geopolitical space. The Niger-Deltans are saying, “our ancestral land is feeling the pressures of oil exploitation and exploration; and our lives are being cut short by environmental pollution”.

The Biafrans are saying, “we are a people with a different identity, do not lump us into an unmitigated universalism of a modern state that we did not participate in forming”.

On their part, Oduduwa’s children are asking,” Who is this Nigeria that has taken over our seas and ocean and is determining who gets what, when and how?” Those in Hausa land, on their part, are screaming, “Until Sheu Uthman Dan Fodio compelled us with his Jihad in 1804, we had lived here on our peaceful territory”. And in response to all these agitations, the Fulani are saying, “Nigeria is our Estate, Nigerians are potential Muslims; if you do not submit, you will be humiliated, colonized or killed”.

It, therefore, seems that the major reason why the country changed to the American presidential system (without adopting the type of American Constitution), is to enable the caliphate to exercise powers similar to those wielded by the military. So, while the United States Federal Constitution would be terse because there are constitutions in each of the 50 federating units, Nigeria would structure itself into a country of 36 states with one Constitution! This is a constitution that practically plays God over the people within the Nigerian State. The British Cabinet System, where there is collective responsibility, where government stands or falls together, would not be useful for the dominating agenda of the Caliphate.

In an earlier essay, I had characterized the situation in Nigeria in terms of the current structure, the idea of restructuring and the challenge of de-structuring, with the metaphors of Abuja, Aburi and Araba (Agbo, 2019b). Abuja represents the current castrating structure that Nigerians are crying about and trying to extricate themselves from. Aburi, on its part, is a metaphor for a restructuring of Nigeria back to how it was agreed in Aburi, Ghana, between January 4 and 5, 1967. It was Gowon’s rejection of the Aburi accord that led to the declaration of Biafra and the war that followed. Araba (a Hausa Language word that means “share” or “divide”) is a metaphor for de-structuring or disintegration.

To many people in the south of Nigeria, the most available, perhaps, even justifiable and desirable solution to the conundrum in Nigeria, is the disintegration of the country. It seems to be the most psychologically satisfying option to a lot of people, including this author. However, the difference between this author and many of the other pro-disintegration buffs is that he tries to see how and in what ways the disintegration of Nigeria would happen! That is to say, “does the mere break-up of Nigeria mean or result automatically to better living for Nigerians? Realizing the challenges faced by nations that have gained independence via violent means, is it still plausible for a non-negotiated exit or integration of the contemporary nation state? And by the way, is independence an end in itself? Or is it a means to an end? That is to say, do people or a territory become better economically, politically, culturally, etc, just because they have become independent? Why is it,



for example, that the Biafran case has remained unresolved even though her case is as clear as crystal? What is the contribution of international capitalism and imperialism in deciding which people should be independent and who should not?

Why would the world watch Eritrea and Ethiopia fight for 30 years (1962-1991), until Eritrea won and pushed Ethiopian forces out of its territory? Why should thousands of Sudanese die over several decades before the United Nations, owing to Obama's African link, stepped in in 2005? Would the world have watched two European nations kill themselves for 20 years before intervention? Why did East Timor get a quick response from the U.N. in 2006? Why is the international community paying lip service to the crises in Ethiopia's Tigray Region for about one year now? Is it not the case that there is a conspiracy, both by African nations and their international imperialist collaborators, to suppress the Biafran struggle to avoid the obvious bandwagon effect it would have among other liberation movements

Across the continent?

A critical examination of the demand and quest for political independence reveals that without the blessing of the big nations, no place is allowed to achieve political independence. Economic and political factors, together with historical and psychological considerations, come into play in the quest for political self-determination. No doubt, the Biafran quest challenged the concept of self-determination after both World War 1 (1919) and World War. After the failure of the Biafran quest, everyone knew that it would be a herculean task to secure political independence, especially in Africa. According to Peri Permir:

Indeed, given that an ethnic redrawing of the African political map would give birth to over 300 new states, the OAU adopted, on the eve of its creation in 1963, the binding principle of *Uri Possidetis*, namely, implicit respect for existing boundaries, in a separate resolution from its Charter. Consequently, members of the OAU have been largely faithful to the policy of not granting assistance to secessionist movements in Black Africa, a prominent illustration being their refrain from providing support to the Biafran movement during the Nigerian civil war.(permir, 1997:16)

In truth, "in Biafra, Africa died" (Ezeani, 2014). Biafra's freedom would have sparked freedom for the whole of Africa. Thus, realizing that independence statehood is not a simple issue in today's world, we must be courteous while agitating so that human lives would not become bargaining chips.

Self-determination does not mean today what it meant in 1919 and 1945. For the League of Nations that was established after World War 1, it was used to foster peace among the big powers. In 1945 following the emergence of the United Nations Organization, it was used to provide freedom from colonial domination (Onyesoh, 2017: 120).

In the past 31 years, only 9 countries have gained political independent statehood. Five of the nine were fallout from the breakup of the Soviet Union in 1989. These are Czech Republic and Slovac



Republic (from the former Czechoslovakia) and Mote Negro, Serbia and Kosovo (from former Yugoslavia). The other 2 are East Timor (now Timor-Leste, 2006) and Palau, a country of about a million people in Micronesia.

The remaining two are in Africa: Eritrea and South Sudan. It is important to remember that the world stood, almost hands akimbo, while Ethiopia and Eritrea Fought for 30 years! (1962-1991). It was in 1991 that Eritrea won the war, drove Ethiopia out of Eritrea, conducted a referendum and declared independence. The story of Sudan has led analysts to wonder why a country would fight for decades before the world moved into the country in 2005 to intervene and divide the country.

According to Charles Nixon (1972), the Biafran case brought into sharp focus the new context, the multi-lateral character and the enormous responsibility facing the international community in any consideration, desire or demand for self-determination. According to him the Biafran challenge.

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).

Nixon's thoughts, expressed half a century ago, is as true today as it was then. If the crisis that hit the Soviet Union had not happened, Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia would probably still be in existence. But the people who existed in those territories are still there answering to other names, so there is nothing divine about the Nigerian state. However, if it must cease to exist, it should be done in a way to prevent collateral damage.

The truth is that if Nigerian leaders refuse to allow the country to be restructured, these agitations may not lead to restructuring, but they would ensure that the country would remain in constant crisis. However, if all the other ethnic nations were to decide to collapse the country and go their separate ways, perhaps it would be feasible. For as the Biafran case has shown, no single nationality can decide to, as it were, "check out", without dire consequences. And since Biafra is my immediate universe of existence, I want to reiterate that pro-Biafran agitators should learn from the Yoruba strategy of relating with Nigeria. The synergy between Yoruba elders and youths, their mastery of how to use governmental structures to agitate and their tenacious hold on their cultural foundations, has been the fillip that always drives their struggles in Nigeria. Imagine the fact that it is respected and renowned individuals in Yoruba land that is backing Sunday Adeyemo.

Prof. Banji Akintoye is someone I know very well The Ilano Omo Oodua Worldwide organization is not driven by neophytes. Without an inner discussion and guidance, the "Yoruba Nation" agitators would not have just moved into the streets. The fact that OPC is today a political party is such an eye-opener to those of us in Biafra. Indeed, circumstances are not always and everywhere the same, but there is always something to learn from history and other climes. That is why I have continued to request one example in the history of humanity where there has been a successful



liberation struggle without a political angle, without political participation, involvement or programme. All these agitations are targeted at the political control of either Nigeria or the territory of the agitators. I must, therefore, end with Bertolt Brecht, who states with admirable insight that:

The worst illiterate is the political illiterate. He hears nothing, sees nothing, takes no part in political life. He doesn't seem to know that the cost of living, the price of beans, of flour, of rent, of medicines all depend on political decisions. He even prides himself on his political ignorance, sticks out his chest and says he hates politics. He doesn't know, the imbecile, that from his political non-participation comes the prostitute, the abandoned child, the robber and, worst of all, corrupt officials, the lackeys of exploitative multinational corporations. The implication of the above is that after the spiritual aspect of man, no other part is as important as the political.

Conclusion

Fortunately, this is a conclusion wherein nothing is really concluded. For no one, no work, no symposium, workshop, talk-shop or conference can conclude this matter. That Nigeria's problem is ontologically rooted at her birth, is the thesis phenomenologically presented in this essay. That there is nothing sacrosanct about a country that must be the name "Nigeria", has also been implied in the presentation.

Again, that if there is an inevitable choice to save either of the two, Nigeria or Nigerians, the former should be sacrificed, has equally and obviously been presented. This essay has also noted that there is a need for the peaceful restructuring of Nigeria, especially bearing in mind that the world of the 21st century is one wherein the use of force as a weapon or means of dispute resolution has become very unpopular and obsolete.

The reaction of the world to Russia's invasion of Ukraine points to the unpopularity of violence. The fact that Ukraine is an independent country has made global reactions punchier. Whatever happens in Nigeria, no matter how violent and destructive they are, would always be seen as an "internal affair" of Nigeria.

That is why in spite of the carnage in Northern Nigeria (including the callous murder of over 300 Muslim Shites in one fell swoop), the war against Boko Haram and bandits, the constant murder of villagers and farmers by Fulani herdsman militia, and the frequent attack on flag-waving Biafran agitators, the world has maintained an almost conspiratorial silence. The best we have got has been verbal condemnation that, at the end of the day, would amount to nothing those who think that violence would be used to subject, subordinate and subjugate the peoples of Nigeria should know that there is a limit to what the people can endure. Similarly those who imagine that violent agitations is the best response to the quagmire and fixation in Nigeria should equally remember that violence is the cheapest and easiest response to any problem. Dialogue and engaging confrontation would always win at last.

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IGWEBUIKE: An African Journal of Arts and Humanities

Vol. 11. No. 4, (2025)

ISSN: 2488- 9210 (Print) 2504-9038 (Online)

Dept. of Philosophy and Religious Studies, Tansian University Umunya

Indexed: Academic Journals Online, Google Scholar, Igwebuike Research Institute

Uzodimma Nwala, ET AL (EDS) Igbo Nation: History and Challenges of Rebirth and Development. Ibadan: KRAFT Books. PP 347 – 379