

The Igbo Genocide, 1966: Where is the outrage?

By

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Introduction

This paper revisits the genocide the Igbo people of eastern Nigeria suffered in northern Nigeria especially between May and October 1966, following the abortive coup d'état led by Major Chukwuma Nzeogwu and some radical military officers of the Nigerian armed forces on January 15, 1966. This genocide was the proverbial straw that broke the camel's back, and resulted in the secession of eastern Nigeria from the Nigeria federation as well as the formation of the shortlived Republic of Biafra (1967-1970) after a brutal civil war in which an estimated over 3.1 million Igbo people—out of an estimated population of over 12 million—lost their lives.¹ This paper deals, however, with the pre-war genocide that particularly has not been seriously studied by historians, until recently, at any rate.²

The soldiers struck, they said, to cleanse Nigeria of corrupt and ethnic-minded politicians who had ruined and degraded the great Nigerian experiment in nationbuilding in less than six years of independence. The hope was to change “our country and make it a place we could be proud to call our home, not to wage war.”³ Unfortunately, the coup led to the death of **15** prominent Nigerians—including six northern Nigerian military officers—only one of whom was an Igbo military officer, the ethnic group to which most of the coup leaders belonged. The individual who aborted the coup, Major-General

Johnson Aguiyi-Ironsi, was also an Igbo as well as the most senior military officer in Nigeria. He thus emerged as the country's first military head of state.

Within six months Ironsi was brutally murdered by a group of northern Nigerian military officers, and the coup that was widely popular in the country⁴ had been nuanced in such a way that northern Nigerian politicians and military officers no longer accepted the majors' explanation as to why they struck. The real motive, it was now claimed by them, has all along been the grand plan of the bumptious Igbo to impose their rule on the whole country, in pursuit of an arrogant assertion of their own exceptionalism.⁵ Thus, in four successive pogroms terrifying in their hatred, barbarity and periodicity – May 29th, July 29th, September 29th, and October 29th – 1966, over **30,000** Igbo people domiciled in northern Nigeria as well as Igbo military officers were systematically ethnically cleansed.⁶ The Organization of African Unity, Britain (Nigeria's former colonial ruler), the Vatican (Igbos are mostly Catholic), the United Nations, Pan-Africanists, Socialists, Communists, the African diaspora, and so forth were incredulously mute—and still are—in the face of abundant evidence.⁷ Neither the government of the Northern Region (where the genocide occurred) and nor the government of the federation of Nigeria (the ultimate authority in the land) was held accountable—and none has still been held accountable—for what happened. Interestingly, the international community also displayed a similar nonchallant attitude toward the Tutsi genocide in Rwanda until it was too late, and was only reluctantly prodded to intervene modestly in the Sudan to stop the Darfur genocide. It also needs to be pointed out also that the same international community under the urging of Germany and the United States had no hesitation in dismantling the federation of Yugoslavia, and in forcing Serbia to stop the killing of Muslims in Bosnia as well as in

intervening robustly in Kosovo against Serbia. Recently, too, the bizarre and selective bombing of Libya authorized by the UN ostensibly to save Libyans from being massacred by Muamar Kadaffi—no evidence of any massacres was actually presented—suggests that the UN seriously needs its head examined as events continue to unfold. So, too, do students of genocide and holocaust studies—whose publications have been coming out thick and fast in the last half-century—need their so-called objectivity examined for ignoring the Igbo experience. Nowhere in the anthologies of genocide is the Igbo experience included, the overwhelming documentary sources and contemporary publications notwithstanding.⁸ The latest *New World Encyclopedia* is also silent about the Igbo, mentioning only Congo and Rwanda as examples from Africa. The aim of this paper is to explore the reasons for this rather strange historical amnesia and lack of moral outrage by those who should have been outraged.

The Organization of African Unity (OAU), Pan-Africanism, and Islam

Our exploration must start with the OAU. Created some three years before the beginning of the genocide, the organization was still fragile and it was feared that an improper handling of what was happening to the Igbo would destabilize it. The survival of the organization rests on two controversial foundations, namely, first, the provision that the inherited colonial boundaries shall be left intact, even where they made no geographic or ethno-cultural sense; and second, the provision that there shall be no interference in the internal affairs of other states, even when such crimes as genocide is committed by any state of the union because of fear of balkanization of the continent. The implications for the Igbo genocide were therefore clear: The OAU would not support the

secession of the Eastern Region of Nigeria for any reason whatsoever, and condemnation of Nigeria was out of the question because it would have destroyed the young organization. In the Kampala and Addis Ababa peace talks that took place in August 1968, the leader of the Nigerian delegation, Anthony Enahoro, made these points perfectly clear. He even went on to stress that what was happening was an example of the virus of “tribalism” to which all African nations were afflicted⁹, points that were later stressed *ad nauseam* by the Gowon administration during the civil war: “Ojukwu’s rebellion [is a] tribal” affair that had no justification, and could not therefore be supported by any African government because every African government “is plagued by tribalism [and] any African country which supports Ojukwu’s tribally inspired and tribally sustained rebellion invites similar dismemberment.”¹⁰ This argument that was silent on the genocide resonated well with most members of the organization. President Taubman of Liberia summarized their position succinctly: “I refuse to recognise Biafra because it is founded on secession which is rebellion.”¹¹ He was also conveniently silent on the genocide that led to the secession.

The Pan-Africanists, especially those in the African diaspora in the Americas and in Europe—individuals who were outraged by killings of blacks by agents of white governments in Kenya, Rhodesia, South Africa, Europe and the United States and so forth—somehow saw nothing wrong with the massacre of the Igbos in northern Nigeria by agents of a black government; or if they did so—I saw no evidence that they did—remained uncharacteristically not outraged. Interestingly, the masses in Europe and the Americas, unlike their governments, scholars and intellectuals were generally outraged. The only position I could deduce from my discussions with some of the black academics

and political activists I have spoken with over the years on the issue may be summarized thus: While we sympathize with the Igbo for lives lost during the massacres, we are strongly opposed to the balkanization of black people for any reason whatsoever. In other words, even if the Igbo experienced genocide during this transitional period in Africa's early postcolonial history, that would be the Igbos' sacrifice for the oneness of Black People! Ali Mazrui even went further to write a novel in which Christopher Okigbo, an Igbo and Africa's greatest poet who died fighting for Biafra during the civil war, is subjected to trial in the afterworld for betraying his craft in the service of Igbo ethnocentrism!¹² Mazrui apparently expected to be taken seriously and must, indeed, have been taken seriously by his publisher and probably by those who bought the book. Apparently, too, he did not reckon that Okigbo, like his Igbo kins, could have been genuinely outraged by the coldblooded massacre of their people in northern Nigeria. In any case, the Igbo were not amused by such curious reasoning that smacked of callous indifference to what happened to them. Mazrui also has been accused of not being outraged by what happened to the Igbo because he is a Muslim and has Islamic sympathies.¹³ I have no evidence to support such an accusation. I have known and interacted with him for over forty years both as a university colleague and family friend. I believe that his unrepentant support for Nigeria despite the massacres was based on some vague higher, incomprehensible and misguided idealism, and not because of his religion or anti-Igbo feelings; but I do believe, however, that that support was not seriously thought through and was consequently wrongheaded. For example, his explanation that the East seceded because of oil—a belief stressed in his popular educational documentary *Africa: A Triple Heritage*—was based on no solid research or on

documentary evidence. Innuendos and hypotheses do not constitute historical evidence. In a sense if some Igbo people accuse him of anti-Igbo feelings, for whatever reason, he has himself to blame because he left himself vulnerable to such an accusation because of his obvious lack of compassion.

There was also the Islamic factor. Another reason why the OAU did not take the initiative in condemning Nigeria for the targeted killing of Igbos was because all the six Islamic states of North Africa—Egypt, Libya, Tunisia, Algeria, Morocco, and Sudan—important members of the organization, were unwilling to condemn a government ruled by an oligarchy of fundamentalist northern Nigerian Muslims.¹⁴ And nor would Saudi Arabia and the Gulf Emirate States with whom the northern Nigerian religious and political leadership had cordial relationships support any condemnation of Nigeria. For them what was happening became nuanced as a contest between Islam and Christianity, which it was not.¹⁵

The Geopolitical and Economic Factors: Cold War Politics

If the Igbo genocide had occurred toward the close of the 20th century, for example, there is no doubt that a great deal would have been made of it. But it took place during a period in world history when the Internet Revolution was not even dreamed of, and when the Cold War impacted Africa significantly. The major players were Britain, France, the Soviet Union, and the United States.

Anglo-Igbo relations throughout the colonial period were anything but cordial.¹⁶ On the other hand Anglo-Hausa-Fulani¹⁷ relations were most friendly.¹⁸ This friendship, deliberately cultivated by Frederick Daltry Lugard and his fanatical disciples following

the capitulation of the Emirate governments in 1905, was continued throughout the colonial period and on to the 1966 massacres. Igbos believe strongly that some British officials still serving in northern Nigeria in 1966 helped to plan the genocide and that Harold Wilson's government in London knew what was going on but turned a blind eye to it. They also believe that that government deliberately covered up incriminating evidence.¹⁹ I have no documentary evidence from my research to back up these accusations. It is general knowledge, however, that British political officers in northern Nigeria during the colonial period and in the early years of independence disliked the Igbo intensely. Among the reasons for this negative attitude were the stereotypical view of the Igbo as an uppity lot, and the fear that after the end of colonialism the Igbo would be pushing to take over their jobs. Their fear was real, indeed, because the northern Nigeria government, also fearing Igbo domination or what they believed would amount to a black imperialism of the Igbo, had retained many of these officers in their positions until northerners were trained to replace them. Those Igbo who wished to remain or join the northern Nigeria Civil Service were given contract appointments. It is clear, therefore, why these officers were absolutely loyal to that government and why they had no reason to care for the Igbo. The official mind of the British government during the transfer of power was that a federal government controlled by the north would best protect their economic and other interests in Nigeria than one controlled by the East or the West. That was why in spite of the inconclusive independence election in 1959 Britain's last Governor-General in Nigeria, Sir Hugh Robertson, unilaterally appointed Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa, leader of the Northern Peoples Congress (NPC) party, Nigeria's first independent Prime Minister, ignoring the protests of the National Council of Nigeria and

Cameroon's (NCNC) party led by Dr Nnamdi Azikiwe, an Igbo and the Action Group (AG) party led by Chief Obafemi Awolowo, a Yoruba.²⁰ Britain, therefore, was determined to preserve its preminent position in Nigeria during the Cold War for geopolitical and economic reasons. It was not sure that it could do so if Azikiwe and his NCNC, or if Awolowo and his AG controlled the federal government. There was also the interesting case of Ireland. While the Irish people were outraged by what was happening—most Igbos are Catholics—the Irish government was disinclined to offend Nigeria because it feared for the safety of Irish priests and nuns in Nigeria and also because it wanted to protect its economic interests in the country.

The French and the Soviet Union posed the greatest threats to British interests in Nigeria. During the scramble and partition of West Africa France was Britain's major competitor. And although France acquired more territories than Britain, British territories were not only vastly superior to France's in terms of population but also in terms of economic wealth. France's acquisition of Togoland and the greater part of Cameroon after Germany lost World War 1 did not change the position. France's jealousy of Britain was well known, but France did nothing officially to condemn Nigeria for the Igbo genocide despite the fact that most Igbos are Catholics. It did not do so also for geopolitical and economic reasons, and probably, too, because the French government did not wish to alienate its former West African colonies that were ruled by Muslims, with the exception of Ivory Coast, who saw the crisis as a Christian-Muslim conflict. When French public opinion probably forced their government during the civil war to offer Biafra some help what was offered was too little too late. Nigeria deftly exploited the French offer of assistance for diplomatic advantage. France was accused of prolonging

the conflict unnecessarily because of its interest in Biafran oil. The reason for the secession and war was deliberately ignored. The Soviet Union had no major economic interest in Nigeria. However, it needed Nigerian support and that of the OAU during the Cold War. Thus, for geopolitical considerations Russia and its satellite states ignored the Igbo genocide and actively supported Nigeria during the civil war.

The United States' support for Nigeria surprised many Igbo who had expected that the Lyndon Johnson administration would have publicly held Nigeria accountable for the targeted massacres of Igbos in northern Nigeria. They naively believed that what was happening in Nigeria was against what the United States stood for. I have no evidence that the United States—assuming that it was disinclined to intervene unilaterally—summoned the Security Council and requested that Nigeria be called to account for the massacres; and nor did it act through the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) or the OAU to ask Nigeria to stop the massacres and bring those responsible for them to justice. The United States government was well aware of what was happening through various sources. Far from doing anything, like the Soviet Union, it supported Nigeria during the civil war. The conventional explanation for the United States' policy is that in African colonial and postcolonial matters it followed Britain's lead. In the case of Nigeria, Britain colonized the country and was supposed to know more about its problems than the United States, a rather lame explanation since what was at stake was a targeted massacre of defendless human beings in northern Nigeria. That had nothing to do with how much Britain knew about Nigeria. If the United States doubted the validity of the sources, it was in a position to undertake its own investigation without necessarily going through diplomatic channels. I have no evidence that it did so. The more plausible

explanation is that the United States believed that if it alienated Nigeria, it would drive the country right into the warm embrace of the Soviet Union during the Cold War. It also feared that a radicalized and angry eastern Nigeria if it seceded from the country might also nationalize its economic investments in the region and, perhaps over time, reach a rapprochement with the Soviet Union. Since the devil that one knows is better than the devil that one does not know, sticking with a rather politically moderate Nigerian federal government under the leadership the gentle Lt-Col. “Gentleman Jack Gowon” was a safer bait to make than taking a leap in the dark with supporting the Eastern Region government under the leadership of the brilliant and pompous Oxford educated Lt-Col Emeka Odumegwu Ojukwu, who opponents deliberately portrayed incorrectly as a red-eyed radical firebrand with a strong socialist and nationalistic temperament.

Finally, there was the United Nations Organization (UN). The Ojukwu government believed that racism accounted for the UN’s decision to ignore the massacre of the Igbos. They were convinced that if the Igbo were of European stock, the United Nations Security Council dominated by the West would have been up in arms and would have acted promptly to stop the genocide.²¹ Perhaps a more plausible explanation may be that because of political problems and economic cost of intervention, the UN tends to act when it is sure of the backing of the Security Council. But such backing is not always determined by racial considerations; often geopolitical, religious, and economic considerations are more paramount than racial. For example, in 1966 Britain, the United States, and the Soviet Union would have vetoed any condemnation of Nigeria for the reasons already stated above. Consequently, the UN did not respond officially to the complaints—with massive documentation—the Ojukwu administration officially

addressed to it and its agencies.²² It is, indeed, strange that an organization whose 1948 Convention on genocide was blatantly violated chose to do nothing to enforce its stipulations, or at least to investigate the allegations. That was why Igbo people felt that they were abandoned by the world and decided, therefore, to take their destiny into their own hands.

Holocaust and Genocide Scholars

In my discussions with a wide range of scholars over the years regarding why genocide scholars have ignored the Igbo experience, the response has generally been that genocide is a complex subject that is difficult to define. And yet some of these scholars, all of them non-Igbo, were quick to talk about the “so-called Igbo genocide.”²³ And yet I am not aware of any evidence from the historical literature that individuals of this persuasion as well as genocide scholars generally have undertaken any study of the subject by seriously examining critically the available sources²⁴ to justify this cavalier, unscholarly reaction. This attitude is the most frustrating aspect of writing about the Igbo genocide. One would have thought that the scholarly thing to do for those unhappy with the available sources is to ferret out information from archives and other sources that contradict them and use them to provide their own narrative. These sources when available will also be subjected to scholarly scrutiny. For those who believe that genocide is too complex to define, the response is that the UN *Convention On Prevention and Punishment of Genocide* adopted by Resolution 260(iii) of the General Assembly on December 9, 1948 is the international gold standard for determining what constitute genocide both in time of peace and war. The onus would be on them to prove that the

Igbo experience does not apply. Because they cannot logically do so, a conspiracy of silence is a way of escape for them. But like dead bodies such crimes are difficult to hide forever. That was why I called out students of genocide studies in my recent book and in a forthcoming article²⁵ and that is also why I decided to come to this conference to hear what they have to say. Of course, academics, like politicians, are subject to personal, ideological, political, and ethnic/nationalistic pressures, claims to objectivity notwithstanding.

Conclusion

The Igbo genocide (1966-1970) constituted the greatest tragedy the African Continent experienced during the early postcolonial period. It occurred in two episodes: May to October 1966 (the subject of this paper), and 1967-1970 (the civil war years) - the civil that has been described as “the bloodiest civil war of the twentieth century.”²⁶ As it has also been pointed out: “More people died in Biafra than the United States lost in all the conflicts it has fought in the course of its entire history, including the American Civil War (1861-1865).”²⁷ The Igbo genocide was the climacteric of the traumas that afflicted postcolonial Africa, prefabricated traumas imbedded in the partition of Africa. It dwarfed the Congolese killings of the early 1960s, the Tutsi genocide, and the Darfur genocide, in its hatred, planning, intensity, ferocity, barbarity, and the number of people killed or affected. And yet genocide scholars have totally ignored it despite the impressive documentation of what happened. Historians of Nigeria also write as if the civil war was not a significant episode in their country’s history.²⁸ Hopefully, this paper may help to cause historians and genocide scholars to revisit what happened to the Igbo between 1966 and 1970, and perhaps explain why the Igbo feel the way they do today.²⁹ A loss of over

3.1 million people out of a population of 12 million within four years is not something to be treated with levity or benign neglect.

Endnotes and References

1. See Herbert Ekwe-Ekwe, *Biafra Revisited*. Dakar: African Renaissance, 2006; cf. A.H.M Kirk-Green, ed. *Crisis and Conflict in Nigeria: a Documentary Source Book*, cited in Philip C. Aka, “Prospects for Igbo Human Rights in Nigeria in the New Century”, *Howard Law Journal*, 44, 1(2004), 201.
2. See G.N. Uzoigwe, *Visions of Nationhood: Prelude to the Nigerian Civil War, 1960-1967*. Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 2011; cf. *idem*, “Forgotten Genocide: The Igbo People and Genocide Studies”, in Chima Korieh ed., *Ghosts of Biafra: War, Genocide, and Memory of the Nigeria-Biafra War*. (Forthcoming)
3. See Major C. Nzeogwu’s National Broadcast, January 15, 1966.
4. See Uzoigwe, *Visions of Nationhood*, 318-327 for some excerpts of these reactions.
5. See Anthony Enahoro, “Statement By Leader of the Federal Delegation” to the Nigeria-Biafra Conflict, Addis Ababa, 12th August, 1968 reproduced in full in Uzoigwe, *Visions of Nationhood*”, 246-263; cf. *idem*, Presentation at the Kampala, Uganda Peace Talks earlier in 1968.
6. See Uzoigwe, *Visions of Nationhood*, chapters 6 & 11 for details.
7. For some of the sources see *The Meeting of the Supreme Military Council at Aburi, Acrra, Ghana, 45 January, 1967* (both Nigerian and Biafran documents); *Nigeria-Biafra Peace Talks, Kampala, Uganda, 1968* (both Nigerian and Biafran documents); *The Nigeria-Biafra Conflict: Addis Ababa, Ethiopia Peace Conference, 5-15, August, 1968* (both Nigerian and Biafran documents); Republic of Biafra, *Memorandum on the Deliberate and Continuous Contravention by Nigeria of the United Nations Charter Provisions On Human Rights and Her Practice of Genocide* addressed to The Chairman, Third Committee of the United Nations on Human Rights, reproduced in Uzoigwe, *Visions of Nationhood*, 285-334; Anthony H.M. Kirk-Green editor, *Crisis and Conflict in Nigeria: A Documentary Source Book, 1966-1966-1970*(1971); Eastern Nigeria, *January 15th—Before and After: 1966 Crisis, Volumes 1-7* (1966), especially volume 3; Government of Biafra, *The Ahiara Declaration* (1969); *The Eastern Nigerian Declaration of Independence (May 30, 1967)*; Oha-Na-Eze Ndi Igbo, “The violations of Human and Civil Rights of Ndi Igbo in the Federation of Nigeria, 1966-1999: A Call for Reparations and appropriate Restitution. A Petition to The Human Rights Violations Investigation Committee, October 1999”, submitted also to the Justice Oputa Panel; documents in appendices in S.K. Panter-Brick, editor, *Nigerian Politics and Military Rule: Prelude to the Civil War* (London, 1970); interview I had with General Gowon (London 1978); several interviews I had with Dr. Michael Okpara (Dublin, Ireland, 1970s); several interviews I had with some survivors of the genocide soliciting only their personal experiences; Foreign Press Eyewitness Reports on the 1966 Genocide; Eyewitness Accounts of Survivors of the Genocide. The secondary sources consulted include: Foreign

- Press Reports on the 1966 Genocide; Eyewitness Accounts of Survivors of the Genocide; and contemporary general books and articles on the events of May-October, 1966. See also Herbert Ekwe-Ekwe, “The most tragic day of Igbo History, 29 May 1966” in *Pambazuka News*, May 19, 2011, Issue Number 30 in which he reproduced the anthem of the genocide as broadcast repeatedly on Kaduna Television and Radio in the Hausa language during the genocide of May 1966.
8. See footnote 7 above.
 9. See Enahoro, footnote 5 above.
 10. *West Africa*, July 8, 1967, p. 904. It is important to note that Tanzania, Gabon & Ivory Coast were not persuaded by this argument and recognized Biafra. So did Haiti.
 11. *West Africa*, August 5, 1967, p. 1030.
 12. Ali A. Mazrui, *The Trial of Christopher Okigbo: A Novel*. New York: Third Press, 1971.
 13. See Herbert Ekwe-Ekwe, “Okigbo, the African State Genocide, and the Peoples of Africa”, paper presented at the Christopher Okigbo International Conference, Harvard University, on September 22, 2007.
 14. During the Nigerian Civil War Egyptian pilots did most of the indiscriminating high bombings that killed a lot of innocent people and which many people considered genocidal. The OAU, the UN, Western governments, and the Soviet Union were conveniently mute.
 15. Arab military and financial support for Nigeria was widely publicized during the war.
 16. See, for example, G.N. Uzoigwe ed., *Foundations of Nigerian Federalism, 1900-1960*. Abuja: NCIR Publication, 1996; *idem*, “The Igbo and the Nigerian Experiment: A Prospectus for Future Association” in Chima Korieh ed., *Against all Odds: The Igbo Experience Postcolonial Nigeria*. Glassboro, NJ: Goldline and Jacobs Publishing, 2011, 15-34; Adiele Afigbo, *Ropes of Sand: Studies in Igbo History and Culture*. Ibadan: University Press Limited, 1981; cf. Trevor Clark, *A Right Honourable Gentleman: The Life and Times of Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa*. Zaria: Hudahuda Publishing Company, 1991.
 17. Although the Hausa and the Fulani are two major subnationalities in northern Nigeria, the popular usage of “Hausa-Fulani” is because of their diffuse collaboration in political, social, and economic issues in modern Nigeria history that has rendered them almost indistinguishable.
 18. See Sir Bryan Sharwood-Smith, *But Always As Friends*. London: Allen & Unwin, 1969; Clark, *Right Honourable Gentleman*. Both served in northern Nigeria as Lt. Governor and as a top colonial civil servant respectively.
 19. See the papers submitted by the Biafran government to the peace talks in Addis Ababa reproduced in Uzoigwe *Visions of Nationhood*, chapter 11; Ekwe-Ekwe, *Biafra Revisited*; Colin Legum, the London *Observer*, 16 October 1966; Walter Partington, the London *Daily Express*, “The Carnage I saw”, 6 October 1966.
 20. See Clark, *Right Honourable Gentleman*.
 21. Republic of Biafra, *Ahiara Declaration*, 7-9.
 22. See footnote 7 above.

23. These discussions are ongoing and are reconstructed from memory.
24. Two of these sources are reproduced in Uzoigwe, *Visions of Nationhood*, chapters 10 & 11.
25. See *ibid*, and Uzoigwe, “Forgotten Genocide.” I must, however, acknowledge here the writings of Herbert Ekwe-Ekwe—an Igbo, a political scientist, and an independent scholar—who, more than anyone else, has spearheaded the study of the Igbo genocide in the last few years. Although he is no historian and his approach is advocatory, and most of his writings concentrate on the war years (1967-1970), his mastery of the subject deserves to be more appreciated.
26. Aka, “Prospects for Igbo Human Rights in Nigeria in the New Century”, 201
27. Aka, “Igbo Human Rights”, 201.
28. For many Nigerians the word Biafra is taboo, and the civil war is treated as an aberration. The civil war is not even taught in schools and universities. The result is that “no lessons are learnt, once the horror is over” as Colin Legum predicted in 1966 because of the efforts he saw the federal government of Nigeria, the government of northern Nigeria and the British government made to coverup the monumental atrocity. See Uzoigwe, *Visions of Nationhood*, 107-108.
29. Genocides and civil wars are as old as nation-states. What happened to the Igbo set no precedent. Covering them up or ignoring them will not make them go away. The restiveness of the Igbo in Nigeria today, the militancy of the Movement for the Actualization of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB), and the rise of such Pan-Igbo organizations as Oha-na-Eze Ndi Igbo, Biafra Activation Forum (BAF), Ozo Emene (“Never Again”), and many more are a testimony to my point.

