

AWO

ON THE
NIGERIAN
CIVIL WAR



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OBAFEMI AWOLOWO

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FOREWARD

THE book, AWO ON THE NIGERIAN CIVIL WAR, is being published at a time when the horrors and agonies of that fratricidal carnage have become but a fading memory with the passing of years.

A war is never waged by reason of one single incident or spontaneous provocation, but as a result of the parties in conflict having reached some breaking point within a variable period of mounting tension and worsening hostility. So it was with the 1967-70 Nigerian civil war, sometimes referred to as the Biafran War.

It all started from a tragic mistake made by the British imperialist administration in Nigeria after the Amalgamation. This stemmed from the erroneous belief that because our Northern brethren were at the time much less exposed to the West European type of culture than their compatriots in Southern Nigeria, it must therefore follow that the former had to be proportionately less civilized, or rather more uncivilized, if not more undomesticated or more ignorant.

In giving practical expression to this wrong notion, the British embarked on a deliberate policy of interfrustrations which could well be described as a balance of injustice. They started by starving the North of modern social amenities and technological know-how both of which were in comparatively fair supply down South. To balance this glaring mischief with an equal dose of injustice, the same British administration craftily ensured that the "educated" South was denied the possibility of heading any central government of Nigeria, this having been manipulatively reserved for the "less educated" North. The obvious aim was to convert Nigeria into a controllable and dependable outpost of imperialism in which the untutored blind would be the king, reigning perpetually over the teeming population of the clear-sighted elite.

This pernicious design was to be achieved by loading the census figures in favour of the North. First, parts of the ethnic South, like the Yorubas of Kwara State and the greater area of Benue State, were arbitrarily excised from their kith and kin and re-zoned, so as to make certain that the North attained and retained a permanent numerical superiority over the South.

Secondly, the population counts were far from accurate since, among their many defects, it was not even possible to reach the women-folk in the Muslim communities up North. This lapse was attributable to some religious prohibitions which, though doctrinally justifiable, offered no valid excuse for inflating the Region's female number far beyond normal estimates. It was clear that the British were unshakably determined to forge this in-built system of Northern majority as an imagined counterpoise to Southern revolutionary

nationalism whenever it emerged.

And true to their forecast, the British did witness the genesis of Nigerian nationalism in the South. Herbert Macaulay, Dr. Adeniyi-Jones, Nnamdi Azikiwe, Obafemi Awolowo. These men became the leading proponents of the country's political revolution. All four were at various times victimised and repressed by the British. Two spent terms in jail, Herbert Macaulay at the oppressive hands of imperialists, and Awolowo through the vindictive ego of the nation's independent but pro-colonialist Federal Government.

But the British hope of transforming the North into an anti-nationalist citadel for the prolongation of imperialist stranglehold on Nigeria proved to be absolutely unrealisable. Contrary to foreign calculations, the Northerners were neither untutored nor blind. Which was why the entire people joined the swelling ranks of freedom fighters as Nigeria marched resolutely and defiantly to her political manumission, to independence and sovereignty. Ahmadu Bello, the Sarkin Daura of Sokoto, who himself had experienced imperialist persecution in 1948 while serving as Supervising Councillor for Works in the Sokoto Native Authority, led the North into this perilous maelstrom of the Nigerian liberation struggle. Other eminent participating patriots of the Region included Zanna Bukar Dipcharima, Aminu Kano, Habib R. Abdalla, Sa'ad Zungur, J.S. Tarka, Kashim Ibrahim and J.S. Olawoyin.

With the attainment of Nigerian independence, the colonialists quickly reorganised their forces for a renewed assault upon the nation's unity and solidarity. In the Western Region, the Speaker's mace was smashed up by an irate opposition legislator. This was followed by an apparently pre-planned declaration of emergency in the area by the federal authorities. Next came the treasonable felony trials which culminated in Chief Awolowo's imprisonment.

This meant that another front-line nationalist from the South was once again immobilised, even if for a time. An overwhelming majority of Western Nigerians were angered by this act of humiliation on their leader. Two festering years later, they reacted by mounting road-blocks on Ikorodu Road, the only highway out of Lagos. They beat up a great number of people, killed some others and dared the law to do something about it. But like the old order, the unperforming law had passed away, yielding place to active anarchy as a new code of living. The survival of the baddest was its name. That was in the half of 1965 up to January 15, 1966.

The overall prospect for the continuing existence of the republic had become practically nil. The Federal Government, already castrated through neo-colonialist machinations, was even too weak to be conscious of its total impotency.

It was left to the armed forces, on January 15, 1966, to certify the First

Republic as dead, and then try to implant a new masculinity into its successor. In the process, the army played into the hands of lurking British neo-colonialists, who then pounced upon the unstable situation and exploited the ethnic grievances in the North, not only over the civilian leaders killed in the coup, but more so in view of those not killed. Then followed the pogrom of May to October, 1966 in Northern Nigeria, with Igbos as the massive victims in their thousands.

Meanwhile, Chief Obafemi Awolowo fondly called Awo had been released from prison in August 1966 and invited to participate in the Federal Military Government of Lt. Colonel Yakubu Gowon who succeeded Major General J.T.V. Aguiyi Ironsi, killed in the July 29 counter-coup. It was widely known that Chief Awolowo led the campaign in the Western Region against any attempt to kill the Igbos during that tempestuous, blood-letting period. And it is well known to this day that no Igbo man, woman or child was done to death by the Yorubas.

The visit to Enugu on May 5, 1967 by Awo, and his conversations with Colonel Odumegwu-Ojukwu, Military Governor of Eastern Nigeria, have been the subject of continuing public debates ever since. Incidentally, I had the opportunity of holding some informal discussions with the Chief for three hours on the morning of May 6. In fact, we concluded our talks at 10:50a.m., only ten minutes before his first meeting with Ojukwu. And I happened to be around in an adjoining room when their private conversations took place on that and the following day, May 7.

I should therefore be in a position to testify from first-hand knowledge that at no time during that turbulent crisis did Awo harbour any thoughts or take any actions other than those calculated to encourage the continuing identification of the Igbos as an integral part of Nigeria, even if for a trial period of confederal linkage. At the same time, I felt certain then, after listening to him, that should the Igbos be pushed or forced out, he would be willing to lead the West out too, and with the East, Mid-West and Lagos, help to organise a Southern Condominium.

Perhaps, the most striking declaration made by Chief Awolowo during the first day of his talks with Ojukwu was the assurance regarding the safety of all Eastern Nigerians in the West and Lagos.

The transcript of that recorded statement of May 6, 1967 is as follows: "Nobody can tell when life will be lost, but I think, speaking the minds of the entire people of Western Nigeria and Mid-Western Nigeria, that if anybody can at this stage take the life of an Ibo man or an Easterner; or If any outstanding Easterner loses his life by the act of someone else, the whole of the Western Region and the Mid-Western Region will take it as the end of Nigeria. I can give that assurance on behalf of Western Nigeria and Lagos".

It is now left to the people of the Eastern States, particularly the Igbos, to bear witness to the fact that Chief Awolowo did indeed fulfil his promises in this crucial matter of life and death, and pogrom.

Furthermore, there was no doubt about Chief Awolowo having given a solemn undertaking that under certain expressed conditions, the West would also pull out of the Nigerian Federation were the Eastern Region to secede. But contrary to widely held belief, especially in Igboland, he did not make that pronouncement at his meeting with Odumegwu-Ojukwu. The transcript of their conversations contains nothing of the kind.

Rather, the undertaking was given by Awo at a meeting of the Western Nigeria Leaders of Thought held at Ibadan in May, 1967. In it, he said. "The Eastern Region must be encouraged to remain part of the Federation. If the Eastern Region is allowed by acts of omission or commission to secede from or opt out of Nigeria, then the Western Region and Lagos must also stay out of the Federation".

In view of the above record, Chief Awolowo could have been rightly accused of having committed a breach of his undertaking were he to have reneged on one or more of the following three propositions as contained in the very significant statement under reference:

1. Proposition to encourage the Eastern Region to remain part of the Nigerian Federation.

2. Proposition that the Western Region and Lagos would also stay out of the Federation if the Eastern Region was "allowed" to secede.

3. Proposition relevant to the phrase "acts of omission or commission" as a factor governing the Western Region's commitment to secede from the Federation should the Eastern Region be pushed out.

Every available evidence so far has exonerated Chief Awolowo on all counts. Unlike Pontius Pilate, the accusers of Awo on this secession issue ought to be bold enough to admit that they were wrong and consequently, should relieve him of the heavy cross of false charges that he has so unjustly been made to bear in connection with this rather hyper-sensitive question.

And again, did Chief Awolowo declare that "starvation is a legitimate instrument of war?"

In his usual frankness and truth-telling characteristic, he admitted making a similar statement, but added that it only referred to those actually fighting in the civil war. In other words, the soldiers. He maintained that it would have been preposterous for him to allow food to reach his potential killers in a period of war. But he would never have supported nor propagated the starvation of civilians particularly women, children and the aged.

Chief Awolowo also disclosed that at the end of hostilities, he as the Federal

Commissioner for Finance, caused N900,000 in the form of rehabilitation fund, to be sent to the East Central State monthly without the prior authorisation of the Executive Council which some months later, was obliged to endorse his action retrospectively. He was certain that the Igbo member of the Federal Executive Council during the period would confirm this disclosure as being true.

Awo is in no doubt that he has never taken any action calculated to injure the Igbos for whom he nurtures nothing but an affectionate disposition, together with all other Nigerians everywhere. Nor would it be fair were the brethren east of the Niger to continue holding the view that Awo's occasional misunderstandings in the First Republic with a certain Igbo-speaking political leader could be tantamount to a transmittable quarrel with the people as a whole.

A foreword to a monumental book of this nature cannot be a suitable forum for any kind of political propaganda. Assuredly therefore, this prefatory effort is not intended to propagate or promote any political cause or doctrine. Not when the extraordinary stature of Chief Obafemi Awolowo would at all times tend to dwarf and enfeeble even the most powerful propaganda. Accordingly, a book on or about him cannot but be destined to outlast and outshine the raging political events of contemporary Nigeria which being partisan for the most part, are invariably of little impact upon the course of history. On the other hand, Awo's place of honour in the council of the immortals remains unchangeably guaranteed because of his outstanding and often unprecedented achievements for Nigeria as well as his remarkable contributions to aspects of African growth and global scholarship.

A WO ON THE NIGERIAN CIVIL WAR lays bare the thinking and utterances of this great leader about the Biafran war, including the period immediately before. It provides a further conceptual insight into the orderly consistency of his unruffled mind in times of communal disorder or full-scale war as in those of established peace.

Perhaps, one may like to contemplate the extenuating irrelevance of having to speak about a book which more than speaks for itself.

M.C.K. Ajuluchukwu
Nnewi, Nigeria
August, 1981.

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INTRODUCTION

THIS book is a response to the spate of misconceptions over the role played by Chief Obafemi Awolowo on the Nigerian Civil War. It contains the speeches made by him before and during the course of the War. But the publication has more than the speeches made by the Chief. It includes the memoranda of the two day meetings held between Lt. Col. Odumegwu Ojukwu with his aides on the one hand and the delegation of the National Conciliation Committee led by Chief Awolowo on the other.

The book is divided into three parts. The first part contains the speeches made by the Chief before the Civil War. Part two consists of the memoranda of the meetings with Lt. Col. Ojukwu, while the last selection comprises the speeches he made during the War. They are in chronological order.

We find this three tier partition necessary in order for our readers to understand the context as well as the events that occasioned them. Part One starts with the 'Prophecy about war and the befalling darkness', the allocutus of Chief Obafemi Awolowo before Justice Sowemimo in the historic treasonable felony trial case, which we find necessary to include because of its prophecy and fulfilment. It is in fact a part of the chain of events which culminated in the Civil War.

The speech titled: 'The most realistic approach to our constitutional problems' should be understood in the context of the occasion in which it was made. Chief Obafemi Awolowo, a staunch proponent of Nigerian federalism, in this speech, pleaded for temporary confederalism not as a blue-print for a permanent solution but as a temporary architectonic structure for a nation in want of a habitat capable of accommodating its centrifugal forces at the time.

The period is best understood in the words of Chief Mariere, a member of the National Conciliation Committee when he said in their meeting with Lt. Col. Ojukwu that 'the context of the current situation in the country changes as events unfold themselves and it may well be that whatever solution one considers proper at a given point ceases to be so when a new situation develops in a different context. That is why we seem to be moving forward and backwards'.

The Speech:- 'Permit me to withdraw from Ad Hoc Committee' is a restatement of the case for a temporary confederation in protest against moves from quarters who have settled among themselves what type of constitution they would force on the entire nation. One can only add that the alternative to a political solution which confederalism was meant to prevent, was only found at the war front.

At the close of part I, we have the 'Four Imperatives which has had more

than its fair share of misinterpretations. Many of the Chief's critics have not even taken the trouble to quote him correctly. They often, at best, quote the Chief as having said 'If the Eastern Region is allowed by acts of omission or commission to secede from or opt out of Nigeria, then the Western Region and Lagos must also stay out of the federation' without the proposition that the 'Eastern Region must be encouraged to remain part of the Federation'. Very often, they seemed to find it convenient to omit the important phrase: 'acts of omission or commission'.

The Memoranda of the meeting between Lt. Col. Odumegwu Ojukwu and members of the National Conciliation Committee form Part Two of this book. The memoranda speak for themselves and Chief Awolowo left no one in doubt as to his own position. He told Ojukwu *inter alia*: 'Our main concern is to ensure that Nigeria does not disintegrate, and at this stage I have to project my own person further and I did say that I would like to see Nigeria bound together by any bond because it is better than breaking the whole place up because I think each unit will be the loser for it. The economy of the country is so integrated that I think it is too late in the day to try and sever them without risking the death of one or both of them. So we have come, therefore, to appeal to you to let Eastern representatives attend the meeting of the Committee'.

Going through the memoranda, there is practically no statement suggestive of any covenant between Chief Awolowo and Lt. Col. Odumegwu Ojukwu which the former's critics accuse him of breaking.

In fact Chief Awolowo in his bid to convince Ojukwu of his need to send representatives to the Conciliation Committee meeting went to the extent of defending the masses of the people of the North as he said, "the masses of the people in the North do not share what their leaders goaded them to do". He even went further to separate between the feudalists and the oppressed people of the North as he said; "I would not like to treat the North as one for this purpose, there are certain elements in the North who want to dominate not only the East, the West and the Mid-West but also certain sections of the Northern Region. These are the people who constitute the enemies of Nigeria and we really would like to give them a showdown. But this does not mean military actions; we do not want any more coups, friction and so on".

Chief Awolowo showed clear concern about the plight of the Easterners as he said: "some people wanted to make trouble with the Easterners in the West the other time and I invited them and told them that they must not do so. The Easterners in the West are at most 15,000 but we had about 20,000 Westerners from the North and still we cannot cope with their problem. How then is it justified that you want to send 15,000 Easterners home only to add to the 2,000,000 they already have on hand? You can't do that".

Part Three consists of the speeches made by the Chief after the declaration of war. As a staunch believer in the Unity of Nigeria, Chief Awolowo had no alternative but to support, with his characteristic doggedness, the cause he believed in: the task of keeping Nigeria one.

Chief Awolowo is a well known prime mover through whom events are perceived and interpreted in the Nigerian polity. His utterances are always so replete with candor and clairvoyance that not even his most vicious adversary can afford to ignore them. Chief Obafemi Awolowo had made many speeches which have been compiled into books, and there can be no doubt that many more will be published. Even then, only a very few can match 'Awo on the Nigerian Civil War' in historical value. This publication is therefore intended to put the records straight and to enable our readers place these historic documents in their proper perspective.

Our thanks go to M.C.K. Ajuluchukwu for writing the Foreword and for his keen interest in seeing the project through. We are much indebted to Ofeimun Odia, Chief Awolowo's Private Secretary, for supplying the materials that have made this publication possible at this time.

On our part, if this publication adds to the list of what Chief Obafemi Awolowo once described as: 'Research made easy', we shall feel totally satisfied.

10th October, 1981.

Bari Adedeji Salau,
Editor,
John West Publications.

From the very beginning, from the time that I knew that the Federal Government was going to wage war instead of trying to put things in check, I made up my mind I wasn't going to participate in the ad-hoc conference which was going on at the time, and I stated quite clearly that one of the reasons for my resignation was that they were preparing for war instead of reconciliation.

And Jakande also followed suit and resigned from the ad-hoc conference and that brought about the end of the conference. When now the National Conciliation Committee asked me to lead a delegation to Ojukwu, I saw it as an opportunity and seized the opportunity very firmly. I asked Ojukwu again and again: he shouldn't go to war. It's not good for Nigeria.

He wanted a southern dominion. I said very well; if you want a southern dominion - if you want the south to separate from the rest of the country, just go to the conference - to fight it out there. I said your grievances are our grievances. We can't settle these grievances by going to war. Let's go to the conference. Let the section of the country which does stupid things know that two regions don't approve of their policy and attitude to Nigeria. That should be enough. If then at the conference they refused to change we could then decide what to do to put them in check.

In any case all that is in the publication, I did everything that any human being could do to see that there was no war. And I think I can claim that I was the only Nigerian leader of pre-1966 era who took that stand and did it firmly.

May I add this - in that connection - Gowon thought that I took a lot of risks to my life by taking that attitude as an individual at the time; he feared that I might have been detained. There was a point where I told Ojukwu off. He made certain derogatory remarks. I made a certain point and he said all that was platitude: And I had to retort that I never talk platitudes.

When Gowon listened to the discussion: (I didn't know that Ojukwu was taping all that we were saying; I saw a shorthand but I didn't know he was taping the discussion. The recorder was captured after Enugu fell). He thought it was a lot of risk for me to take.

That was it. I did everything in my power. I never even encouraged him in the slightest degree to go to war or to secede. All I said about secession was that if the Ibos by any act of commission or omission were pushed out of Nigeria, then we won't stay. But all my calumniators will always make sure they take out act of commission or omission when quoting me. They would even omit that I said "pushed out". If they left voluntarily, that would be another matter. If they were pushed out by any act of omission or commission, a different situation would have arisen.

--AWO

(Excerpt from 'AWO AT 72', a Daily Times Publication)

PART ONE

**SPEECHES MADE
BEFORE THE WAR**

1. THE PROPHECY ABOUT WAR AND BEFALLING DARKNESS

MY Lord:

I MUST say with respect, and this may have to be taken up with a higher tribunal, that I do not agree with your lordship's verdict, and the premises on which it is based.

For upwards of 30 years, I have been in politics in Nigeria; during this period I have operated in various important theatres in the life of this great Federation, I have, with others, fought against British imperialism with all my might, and with all the talents that it pleased God to give me.

Together with other nationalists, some of whom are with me and many of whom are not with me here, we have successfully thrown out British imperialism and enthroned Africans in positions which, 20 or more years ago, they never dreamt of occupying.

I have been an unyielding advocate of a Federal Constitution for Nigeria, I have all along, with other leaders of this country, been a very active and constructive participant in all the constitutional conferences which have taken place since 1953, and which have culminated not only in the attainment of independence but in the production of a Constitution of which Nigerians are very proud.

This Constitution is now being gradually violated.

I have also fought against anything which savours of injustice. It is thus an irony of history that, as one of the architects of Nigeria's independence, I have spent almost half of Nigeria three years of independence under one form of confinement or another.

Since 1957 I have fought, as your Lordship remarked with vigour against the feudal system in the Northern Region and for its eradication. I have also fought to prevent the spread of this evil political system to other parts of Nigeria.

During the same period I have strongly advocated the breaking up of the Northern Region into more states in order to have true federalism in Nigeria, to preclude the permanent subservience of the people of Nigeria to the autocratic ruling caste in the North, and to preserve peace and Unity in the country.

*** An address delivered by Chief Obafemi Awolowo on 11th September 1963 before Mr. Justice George Sodeinde Sowemimo in the Lagos High Court, at the close of the treasonable felony trial.**

In-short, I have always fought for what I believe, without relent and regardless of consequences to myself. I have no doubt, and I say this without any spirit of immodesty, that in the course of my political career, I have rendered services to this country which historians and the coming generations will certainly regard as imperishable.

Naturally, Sir, in the course of my long, turbulent and active political life, I have attracted to myself a sizeable crop of detractors and political adversaries. Similarly, I have in the course of this long career seen both triumphs and setbacks; and I have met them with equal mind.

Peter, not Peter the Apostle; but Peter hero of High Walpole's novel entitled 'Fortitude', said: 'It isn't life that matters but the courage you bring to it'.

After life had done terrible things to Peter he heard a voice that said to him among other things: 'Blessed be all sorrow, hardships and endurance that demand courage. Blessed be these things: for of these things cometh the making of a man'.

In the words of Peter, therefore, my Lord, I declare (not that I have heard a voice): Blessed be your verdict; and I say in advance, blessed be the sentence which Your Lordship may pass on me.

I personally welcome any sentence you may impose upon me. At this moment, my only concern is not for myself, but that my imprisonment might do harm to Nigeria for three reasons.

First, the invaluable services which I can still render will be lost to the country, at least for a season.

Second, there might be a heightening of the present tension which has lasted for fifteen months, and has done incalculable injuries to the economy of the country.

Third, for some time to come the present twilight of democracy, individual freedom and the rule of law, will change or might change into utter darkness.

But after darkness - and this is commonplace - comes a glorious dawn.

It is, therefore, with a brave heart, with confident hope, and with faith in my unalterable destiny, that I go from this twilight into the darkness, unshaken in my trust in the providence of God that a glorious dawn will come on the morrow.

My adversaries might say who am I to think that if I am imprisoned the country might suffer? What if I died?

The point, of course, is that I am still alive and will not die in prison. Furthermore, the spirit of man knows no barrier, never dies, and can be projected to any part of the world.

This being so I am confident that the ideals of social justice and individual liberty which I hold dear will continue to be projected beyond the prison walls

and bars until they are realised in our life time.

In this connection, I must stress that in this very courtroom, indeed in this dock and in the entire Federation of Nigeria, the spirit of a new Nigeria is already active and at work, This spirit, working through constitutional means which I have spent the whole of my life time to advocate, is sure to prevail, before very long, to the delight, freedom and prosperity of all and sundry.

Before I close, I must say that in spite of the delay of the past few weeks on the part of your Lordship in giving judgement in this case, and in spite of my disagreement with your verdict which I have just given expression to, I must acknowledge Your Lordship's patience throughout the trial of this case.

Particularly I want to thank Your Lordship for the due and special consideration which you have always accorded me and the other accused persons.

I thank Your Lordship; and I am prepared to abide by your sentence.

2. THE MOST REALISTIC APPROACH TO OUR CONSTITUTIONAL PROBLEMS

WHEN I concluded the writing of this book at Calabar prison in the early hours of 12 June this year, I was not sure that I would be able to take part personally in any deliberations that would lead to the emergence of a new constitution for Nigeria. Nor did I envisage that the unitarians would ever have cause to move to the extremity of advocating confederalism, as they now do.

A confederation can easily be distinguished from a federation. Whilst all the governments in a federation are coordinate, and independent of one another, in a confederation, the central government is dependent on the will of the regional or state governments. In other words, in a confederation, the central government is neither coordinate with nor independent of the regional governments. For all practical purposes, it owes its existence to the sufferance of the state governments.

The issue with which the country is now faced is not unitarianism versus federalism, as before, but confederalism versus federalism. Nonetheless, my thesis remains valid, namely: "that, since Nigeria is a multilingual and multinational country par excellence the only constitution that is suitable for its special circumstances is a federal constitution." I am, therefore, of the opinion that, in a permanent sense, a confederal constitution is just as unsuitable for Nigeria as a unitary constitution. There is no known precedent of the successful operation on a permanent basis, of a confederal constitution. It had ten years of uneasy existence in the United States, from 1776 to 1786. It had not fared better in other parts of the world, before and after the eighteenth century. In this connexion it must be pointed out that the Swiss constitution is confederal only in name. It is, in fact and by definition, a federal constitution.

As a temporary measure, a confederal constitution is probably the only way out of the present political impasse in Nigeria. It 'will take about two to four years for our self-inflicted wounds to heal, and for all the Nigeria leaders to forgo their, in amity and mutual trust, to administer the affairs of the country. But it would be an illusion born of ignorance or self-deception to pretend that the central government established under this temporary arrangement can lay the remotest claim to being effective. At its best it would be weak and uninspiring. It would end up, like its counterparts in history, with the constituent units going their separate ways as sovereign states, or coming closer together in a true federation.

***Supplementary Preface to 'Thoughts on Nigerian Constitution related by Chief Obafemi Awolowo at Ibadan on 8th November, 1966.**

Equally, it must be borne in mind by those concerned that, unless there is a radical change of heart on the issue of creating more states, the existing constitutional problems of Nigeria will afflict and agonize both the North and the East, where majority and minority ethnic groups live together under what amounts to a unitary system. The Midwest, though ethnically heterogeneous, is a collection of minority groups. To this extent, and granting the requisite statesmanship, it would be likely to be free from the political ills which are inherent in a society in which diverse ethnic or linguistic principle which I have enunciated for the creation of states in Nigeria, applies with equal force to the rest of Nigeria, other than the Western Region which is ethnically and linguistically homogeneous.

The forecast to which this brief analysis leads me is this. Both the North and the East will spend a good deal of the period of experimentation with confederalism in coping with the strains and stresses which ethnic or linguistic diversity in a unitary system automatically generates. And there is the danger that these regionalised strains and stresses might in their turn impose, to the point of snapping, further strain on the tenuous bond which keeps the present four Regions together.

The most realistic approach to our constitutional problems is, therefore, clear. If we would save the federation from complete disintegration, and the constituent units from mutual destruction, we must embark now on a four or five-year venture of confederalism. At the same time, if it is our earnest desire to emerge from the venture more strongly united than we went in, then one or two things must be done. Either we apply the linguistic principle to the creation of states in the federation before we proceed on the venture, or the North and the East should conscientiously apply the linguistic principle to the creation of states in their respective territories, during the period of the venture.

I would like to stress, once again, that in writing this book and this supplementary preface I have tried to present my case with the objectivity of a political scientist, and not with the partial affection of an ambitious Nigerian politician of Yoruba origin. *Verbum sat sapient est!*

3.

PERMIT ME TO WITHDRAW FROM AD HOC COMMITTEE

Mr. Dear Col. Adebayo,

1. CONFEDERLISM

IN a Supplementary Preface to "Thoughts on Nigerian Constitution (See 'The most realistic approach to our Constitutional Problems') written on 8 November, 1966, I said inter alia as follows:

"The most realistic approach to our constitutional problems is, therefore, clear. If we would save the federation from complete disintegration, and the constituent units from mutual destruction, we must embark now on a four or five year venture of confederalism. At the same time, if it is our earnest desire to emerge from the venture more strongly united than we went in, then one or two things must be done. Either we apply the linguistic principle to the creation of states in the federation before we proceed on the venture, or the North and the East should conscientiously apply the linguistic principle to the creation of states in their respective territories, during the period of the venture".

This statement did not receive wide publicity at the time it was made. But I did send a copy of it to the Head of the Federal Military Government along with a complimentary copy of my book.

Apart from the fact that some writers and speakers on our constitutional problems misquoted and misrepresented what I had said, the Head of the Military Government himself administered to me and those of my school of thought a mild but unmistakable rebuke on 30 November 1966 in the following words:

"I should emphasize that the idea of a temporary confederation unworkable...."

However, by courtesy of the Editors of the 'Daily Times' the 'Daily Sketch' and the 'Tribune', I got the widest possible newspaper publicity for my view on 13 January 1967. I seized the opportunity thus afforded to add three short observations. Only one of them is relevant and it is to the effect that nothing has happened since November 1966 to make me change my stand on the need for and the workability of confederalism as a temporary measure. Indeed, I added:

"On the contrary, subsequent events have strengthened rather than weakened my views." At this juncture, I would like to make three brief remarks. First, a dyed-in-the-wool federalist myself, I was impelled to advocate confederalism as a temporary measure; after a most careful and realistic assessment of the political situation in the country, especially as regards the relationship between the North and the East, both of which are, in my judgement, important and indispensable units of the Federation of Nigeria.

Second, I must confess that, whilst I don't think I am, by any means a coward, I was in this instance emboldened to give public vent to my view, because of the following passage which occurred in the Opening Address of

*** A letter written by Chief Obafemi Awolowo to Col. RA. Adebayo, Military Governor Western State on 24th April, 1967.**

the Supreme Commander to the first plenary meeting of the Ad Hoc Conference on Constitutional Proposals for Nigeria:

"It is very dear to me that it will be economically and political suicidal to harbor any idea of a complete break-up of the Federation. Therefore, we seem to be left with the alternatives of:

- (a) A Federation with a strong Central Government;
- (b) Federation with a weak Central Government;
- (c) A Confederation.

On the other hand, it may be that through your deliberations which commence here today, we may be able to devise a form of association with an entirely new name yet to be found in any political dictionary in the world but peculiar to Nigeria."

Third, whilst the Head of the Federal Military Government remains faithful to his later view on confederalism, I have had no cause whatsoever to alter my original standpoint on the same subject.

II. POSTING OF ARMY PERSONNEL

On 9 August 1966, Representatives of Regional Governors met in Lagos and made the following recommendation, among others, to the Commander-in-Chief and Head of the Federal Military Government:

"As far as possible the Army personnel should be posted to barracks in their Regions of Origin with immediate effect as an interim measure".

It is on record that this recommendation was implemented with immediate effect in respect of the East and the Midwest. Up till now it has not been implemented, even partially, in respect of the West and Lagos.

On 7 November 1966, I headed a high-powered deputation of Yoruba people in Western Nigeria and Lagos, which strongly urged the following requests on the Head of the Federal Military Government:

"(I) All troops of Northern and non-Yoruba origin should be withdrawn from the West and Lagos, with the proviso that the Supreme Commander's Bodyguard should consist of such men and be of such men and be of such strength as the Supreme Commander himself may from time to time decide:

(2) All troops of Western Nigeria and Lagos origin should be posted to these territories;

(3) Any shortfall in the existing strength of the troops in Western Nigeria and Lagos and the number of Yoruba soldiers in the army, should be made up by the recruitment and training of an equivalent number of Yoruba troops.

On 7 December 1966, a resolution to the same effect was passed by a large and representative gathering of Yoruba people, which was convened and declared open by your good self and later chairmanned by me.

On 5 January 1967, the Nigerian Military Leaders recorded one of the agreements at Aburi as follows:

"In respect of items 3 (b) of the Agenda, implementation of the agreement reached on 9th August, 1966, it was agreed, after a lengthy discussion, that it was necessary for the agreement reached on 9th August by the delegates of the Regional Governments to be fully implemented.

In particular, it was accepted in principle that army personnel of Northern origin should return to the North from the West. It was therefore felt that a crash programme of recruitment and training, the details of which would be further examined after the Committee to look into the strength and distribution of army personnel had reported, would be necessary to constitute indigenous army personnel in the West to a majority there quickly.

Since 7 November 1966, and more particularly since 7 December 1966, I have been accused by several persons, mainly of northern region origin, of hatred and hostility towards Northern soldiers in particular, and northerners generally.

Nothing can be further from the truth; I do know for certain that the majority of Northerners, in all walks of life, had sympathy for me at the time of my tribulation, and still, even now, cherish my friendship and leadership. For a number of reasons which I do not wish to recount here, I do value the friendship and affection of my fellow-Nigerians whatever may be their Regions of origin.

But there are powerful reasons in support of this demand.

(1) It was in pursuance of the decision of a meeting of Representatives of Regional Military Governors which had been implemented with immediate effect in respect of not only the East, but also of the Midwest.

(2) It was also in pursuance of one of the decisions taken at Aburi on 5, January 1967.

(3) The consensus of opinion among the vast majority of people in Western Nigeria and Lagos is that Northern troops in the two territories constitute an Army of Occupation, and that their non-removal has virtually reduced the said territories to the status of a "Protectorates". These views have been repeatedly

expressed in the Press.

(4) There is a growing disaffection and bitter resentment towards Northerners because of the presence of Northern soldiers in the West and Lagos.

(5) In view of the facts contained in items (3) and (4) above, I am anxious that nothing more should be done to strain the relationship between the North and the West and Lagos, which relationship has suffered so much unwarranted and avoidable affliction during the past five years.

(6) Speaking for myself and some of my fellow delegates to the Ad Hoc Conference, I must confess that we did labour under some inhibition because of the subtle but effective use which some people made of the presence of these troops in the West and Lagos. In other words, the basis of absolute equality which was needed for a free and fair exchange of views was not there in full measure.

(7) One of the conditions - the most important and about the only one which remains unfulfilled - which Lt. Col. Ojukwu stipulated for attending a meeting of the Supreme Military Council convened for a venue in Mid west, West or Lagos is the withdrawal of Northern troops from the West and Lagos.

(8) Because of the non-implementation of this simple request of the West a request which had been readily granted in respect of the East and Midwest without any ado at all the country is now rapidly approaching a stage of military confrontation, between one of its constituent Regions and the Federal Government. This much is disclosed by a memorandum published in the "Nigerian Outlook" of 23 April 1967, which I read this morning, which memorandum was purported to have been dealt with at the last meeting of the Supreme Military Council.

Even if military clash is avoided, it is clear that an economic warfare of a kind is already in progress. It is my considered view that, before long, every section of our country is doomed to suffer the grave effects of this warfare. It is also my considered view that both the projected military and the prevailing economic warfares could be avoided if it is possible for Lt. Col. Ojukwu to attend meetings of the Supreme Military Council in Nigeria. And it is believed that this will be possible if the Agreement reached in Lagos on 9 August 1966 and re-affirmed in Aburi on 5 January 1967, in respect of the posting of army personnel, is implemented.

On the other hand, if after the implementation of these Agreements, the Military Governor of the East continues to be absent from the meetings of the Supreme Military Council, then he would be having the rest of the country, without exception, ranged against himself for deliberately setting out to destroy the Federation.

III. WICKED ACCUSATIONS

Already, as you yourself know very well, some dreadful but blatantly false accusations have been leveled against me. Two of them are worth mentioning.

Firstly, I have been accused of having teamed up with Lt. Col. Ojukwu in his campaign against the Federal Military Government. Specifically, it has been said times without number in authoritative Government circles that I was in regular touch with Lt. Col. Ojukwu by phone calls and personal visits to Enugu, to perfect our joint plans.

Secondly, Photostat copies of two Special Branch Police Reports have been posted to me by unknown person or persons in which it is stated that I together with Dr. Sam Aluko, Messrs L.K. Jakande, Ayo Fasanmi, Bola Ige, Dele Ige, Major Ayo-Ariyo and some other persons whose names I do not now recall, have been organizing illegal guerilla training at Ikire, Ipoti and Ore.

With regard to the first accusation, I aver that I have not been in any kind of communication whatsoever with Ojukwu since October 1966. I also aver that since my release I have not gone an inch beyond the boundaries of Western Nigeria and Lagos. With regard to the second, I should have thought that my adversaries had their fill from May 1962 to August 1966. In any case, I positively deny the allegation and regard it as a wicked and infernal lie, matched only by 'the one told against me by the police in 1966 that it was I who master-minded the January coup of that year from Calabar Prison. As a result of this piece of lie, the inconveniences of prison life were made a little more inconvenient for me and my occasional visitors.

IV. WITHDRAWAL

In view of the foregoing, and for additional reasons which I will state presently, I hereby ask you to permit me to withdraw from the membership of the Ad Hoc Committee.

In the first place, I have no doubt in my mind that the Eastern Region is on its way out, and that the Federation of Nigeria is threatened with imminent disintegration.

In the second place, it appears to me that what some people with influence in Government circles, now want is to help the Eastern Region out of Nigeria, and to try and form a new Federation, on terms which are already cut and dried by them, from among the remaining units.

In the third place, my appearance in Benin at this time is bound to evoke a lot of public attention. And it is on record that some highly-placed persons frowned very much on the limelight which the meetings of the Ad Hoc Conference in Lagos gave to politicians:

In the fourth place, I have no doubt at all in my mind, having regard to certain circumstances which I believe are not known to you, that if I had not been a member of the Ad Hoc Conference it would in all probability have had a permanent and effective Chairman. If this had been the case, the work of the Conference would have been conducted with greater dispatch, and it might have fulfilled all its assignments before the tragic event of 29 September 1966. Who knows, perhaps my absence at this stage might make the election of a permanent and effective Chairman possible; which will be to the good of all of us.

v. EXPLANATION

I owe you an explanation for writing this letter at all, and for sending copies of it to the Press.

Yesterday when I saw you, I agreed to attend the resumed meeting of the Ad Hoc Conference in Benin, but in view of the purported text of a Supreme Council Memo which I read in the "Nigerian Outlook" this morning and having regard (1) to all the circumstances which I have narrated above, and (2) to the documented tension which is now growing between the Yorubas resident in the North and their Northern hosts, which was the subject matter of the interview which I in company of two Yoruba delegates from the North had with you yesterday - in view of all these, I am unable to see in what way I can make effective and constructive contribution to the deliberations at the Conference. The inhibition which I suffered last year will even now be worse inhibited by these facts:-

(1) The decision by the Supreme Military Council at its last meeting that on no account should members of the Ad Hoc Conference discuss any subject or matter relating to the Army.

(2) The certainty that the East will not attend the resumed meeting the Ad Hoc Conference.

(3) A shrewd guess which I have entertained for some time, and which is reinforced by recent events that somewhere, unknown to you and me and indeed to all of us, some people have settled it finally in their minds the sort of constitution they consider suitable for the whole country, or such part of it as may be left after the East shall have opted out of the Federation.

Besides, the points I have made are not only of public interest, but it is essential that I should make them public in order to avoid wild and unfair speculations which my absence from Benin may occasion, without some reasons for it publicly stated.

Furthermore, I would be lacking in candour and honesty, if I were to withdraw from the AD Hoc Conference without giving you, as fully as possible,

my reasons for doing so.

With best wishes; I am assuring you of my continued and never-failing co-operation in the very good work you are doing for the uplift of Western Nigeria, and the unity and progress of Nigeria.

I remain,

Yours very sincerely,

(SGD). OBAFEMI AWOLOWO.

4. THE FOUR IMPERATIVES

The aim of a leader should be the welfare of the people whom he leads.

I have used the word "welfare" to denote the physical, mental and spiritual well-being of the people:

With this aim fixed unflinchingly and unchangeably before my eyes, I consider it my duty to Yoruba people in particular and to Nigerians in general, to place FOUR IMPERATIVES before you this morning.

Two of them are categorical imperatives and two are conditional.

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

TWO: The Eastern Region must be encouraged to remain part of the Federation.

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

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

I would like to comment briefly on these four imperatives.

There has of late been a good deal of sabre rattling in some parts of the country.

Those who advocate the use of force for the settlement of our present problems should stop a little and reflect.

I can see no vital and abiding principle involved in any war between the North and the East.

If the East attacked the North, it would be for purpose of revenge, pure and simple.

Any claim to the contrary would be untenable.

If it is claimed that such a war is being waged for the purpose of recovering the real and personal properties left behind in the North by Easterners, two insuperable points are obvious.

Firstly, the personal effects left behind by Easterners have been wholly looted or destroyed, and can no longer be physically recovered.

Secondly, since the real properties are immovable in any case, recovery of them can only be by means of forcible military occupation of those parts of the North in which these properties are situated.

On the other hand, if the North attacked the East, it could only be for the purpose of dominance in the country.

If it is claimed that an attack on the East is going to be launched by the

Federal

***An address by Chief Obafemi Awolowo delivered to the meeting of Leaders of Thought of Western Region and Lagos at the Western Hall, Agodi, Ibadan on Monday 1st May 1967.**

Government and not by the North as such, and that it is designed to ensure the unity and integrity of the Federation, two other insuperable points also become obvious.

First, if a war against the East becomes a necessity, it must be agreed to unanimously by the remaining units of the Federation.

In this connexion, it must be remembered that the West, Midwest and Lagos have declared their implacable opposition to the use of force in solving the present problem.

In the face of such declarations by three out of the remaining four Territories of Nigeria, a war against the East could only be a war favoured by the North alone.

Second, if the true purpose of such a war is to preserve the unity and integrity of the Federation, then these ends can be achieved by the very simple devices of implementing the recommendation of the Committee which met on 9 August 1966, as reaffirmed by a decision of the military Leaders at Aburi on 5 January 1967, as well as by accepting such of the demands of the East, West, Midwest and Lagos as are manifestly reasonable, and essential for assuring harmonious relationships and peaceful coexistence between them and their brothers and sisters in the North.

Some knowledgeable persons have likened an attack on the East to Lincoln's war against the Southern States in America.

Two vital factors distinguish Lincoln's campaign from the one now being contemplated in Nigeria.

The first is that the American Civil War was aimed at the abolition of slavery - that is the liberation of millions of Negroes who were then still being used as chattels and worse than domestic animals."

The second factor is that Lincoln and others in the Northern States were English-speaking people waging a war of good conscience and humanity against their fellow-nationals who were also English-speaking.

A war against the East in which Northern soldiers are predominant, will only unite the Easterners or the Ibos against their attackers strengthen them in their belief that they are not wanted by the majority of their fellow Nigerians and finally push them out of the Federation.

We have been told that an act of secession on the part of the east would be a signal, in the first instance, for the creation of the COR States by decree, which

would be backed, if need be, by the use of force.

With great respect, I have some dissenting observations to make on this declaration.

There are eleven national or linguistic groups in the COR States by decree, which would be backed, if, need be, by the use of force.

With great respect, I have some dissenting observations to make on this declaration.

There are eleven national or linguistic groups in the COR area with a total population of 5.3 million.

These national groups are as distinct from one another as the Ibos are distinct from them or from the Yorubas or Hausas.

Of the eleven, the Efik/Ibibio/ Annang national groups are .3.2 millions strong as against the Ijaws who are only about 700,000 strong.

But when you have substracted the Ibo inhabitants from among them, what is left ranges from the Ngennis who number only 8,000 to the Ogonis who are 220,000 strong,

A decree creating a COR State without a plebiscite to ascertain the wishes of the people in the area would only amount to subordinating the minority national groups in the State to the dominance of the Efik /Ibibio /Annang national group.

It would be perfectly in order to create a Calabar State or a Rivers State by decree, and without a plebiscite

Each is a homogeneous national unit.

But before you lump distinct and diverse national units together in one state, the consent of each of them is indispensable.

Otherwise, the seed of social disequilibrium in the new state would have been sown.

On the other hand, if the COR State is created by decree after the Eastern Region shall have made its severance from Nigeria effective, we should then be waging an unjust war against a foreign State.

It would be an unjust war, because the purpose of it would be to subordinate them to the dominance of the Efik /Ibibio /Annang national group.

I think I have said enough to demonstrate that any war by the North against the East, or vice versa on any count whatsoever would be an unholy crusade, for which it would be most unjustifiable to shed a drop of Nigerian blood.

Therefore, only a peaceful solution must be found, and quickly too, to arrest the present rapidly deteriorating imperative, it is my considered view that whilst some of the demands of the East are excessive within the context of a Nigerian Union most of such demands are not only well-founded, but are designed for smooth and healthy association amongst the various national

units of Nigeria.

For instance, the East has demanded.

- (1) the creation of separate Regional Monetary Authorities;
- (2) the diminution of the appellate jurisdiction of the Federal Supreme Court and
- (3) the dependence of the Federal Government on financial contributions from the Regions.

These and other such-like demands, I do not support.

Demands such as those if accepted, will lead surely to the complete disintegration of the Federation which is not in the interest to our people.

But I whole heartedly support the following demands, among others which I consider reasonable and which are already embodied in our own memoranda to the Ad Hoc Committee:-

- (1) that mines and minerals should be residual subjects;
- (2) that revenue should be allocated strictly on the basis of derivation, that is to say, after the Federal Government has deducted its own services, the rest should be allocated to the Regions to which they are attributable;
- (3) that the existing Public debt of the Federation should become the responsibility of the Region on the basis of the location of the project in respect of each debt, whether internal or external;
- (4) that each Region should have and control its own Military and Police Force and

(5) that with immediate effect, all military personnel should be posted to their Regions of origin.

I can advance cogent reasons in support of these demands.

But as the time for such an exercise is not available today, I will confine myself to bringing to your notice certain facts relating to our Public Debt as a sample of the cogency and reasonableness of the above demands.

Under the current Six years plan which ends next year on March 31, the summary of the location, value, and External Debt element, of project is as follows:-

LAGOS - Total value of project £36.79 million External Debt Element £12.80 million. In addition, expenditure on aircraft and warships £10.9 million with external debt element on that £2.8 million.

WEST:- Total value of projects £5.88 million, External debt element £3.7 million.

EAST:- - Total value of projects £28.75 million, (including the Niger Bridge)

NORTH:- - Total Value of Projects, £127.21 million (including Kainji Dam External debt element £60.1 million.

MID-WIST:- - £6.95 million (excluding Niger Bridge) External Debt

Element - NIL.

If we are to live in harmony one with another as Nigerians it is imperative that these demands and others which are not here related, should be met without further delay by those who have hitherto resisted them.

To those who may argue that the acceptance of these demands will amount to transforming Nigeria into a federation with a weak central Government, my comment is that any link however tenuous which keeps the East in the Nigerian Union, is better, in my view, than no link at all.

Before the Western delegates went to Lagos to attend the meetings of the Ad Hoc Committee, they were given a clear mandate that if any Region should opt out of the Federation of Nigeria, then the Federation should be considered to be at an end, and that the Western Region and Lagos should also opt out of it.

It would then be open to Western Nigeria and Lagos as an independent sovereign state to enter into association with any of the Nigerian units of its own choosing, and on terms mutually acceptable to them.

I see no reason for departing from this mandate.

If any Region in Nigeria considers itself strong enough to compel us to enter into association with it on its own terms, I would only wish such a Region luck.

But such luck, I must warn, will, in the long run, be no better than that which has attended the doings of all colonial powers down the ages.

This much I must say in addition, on this point.

We have neither military might nor the overwhelming advantage of numbers here in Western Nigeria and Lagos.

But we have the justice of a noble and imperishable cause on our side, namely:

The right of a people to unfettered self-determination. If this is so, then God is on our side; And if God be with us, - then we have nothing whatsoever in this world to fear. The fourth imperative, and the second conditional one, has been fully dealt with in my recent letter to H.E. the Military Governor of Western Nigeria, Col. RA. Adebayo, and in the representations which your deputation made last year to H.E. the Head of the Federal Military Government, Lt. Col. Yakubu Gowon.

As a matter of fact, as far back as November last year, a smaller meeting of Leaders of Thought in this Region decided that unless certain things were done, we would no longer participate in the meeting of the Ad Hoc Committee.

But since then not even one of our legitimate requests has been granted. I will, therefore, take no more of your time in making further comment on a point with which you are well familiar.

As soon as our humble and earnest requests are met, I shall be ready to take

my place on the Ad Hoc Committee.

But certainly - not before.

In closing, I have this piece of advice to give.

In order to resolve this long-standing crisis amicably and in the best interests of all Nigerians, certain attributes are required on the part of Nigerian Leaders - military as well as non-military leaders alike - namely: vision, realism, and unselfishness.

But above all, what will keep Nigerian leaders in the North and East unwaveringly in the path of wisdom, realism and moderation is courage and steadfastness on the part of Yoruba people in the cause of what they sincerely believe to be right, equitable, and just.

In the past five years, we in the West and Lagos have shown that we possess these qualities in a large measure.

If we demonstrate them again as we did in the past, calmly and stoically we will save Nigeria from further bloodshed and imminent wreck, and at the same time preserve our own freedom and self-respect.

May God guide our deliberations here, and endow all the Nigerian leaders with the vision, realism and unselfishness, as well as the courage and steadfastness in the cause of truth, which the present circumstances demand.

PART TWO

**MEMORANDA OF THE MEETINGS BETWEEN HIS EXCELLENCY,
LT. COL. ODUMEGWU OJUKWU AND A DELEGATION OF THE
NATIONAL CONCILIATION COMMITTEE LED BY CHIEF
OBAFEMIAWOLOWO.**

First day Session of the meeting held at State House, Enugu on Saturday 6th May, 1967. It started at 5.15p.m. and adjourned at about 8.25p.m.

5.

FIRST DAY SESSION OF THE MEETING

Time: 5.15p.m.

His Excellency: This is a very important day and I would like to be a little bit formal. I think the first thing is to congratulate you, Sir, for your good health. Since your release we have not really had the opportunity to meet although I have been looking forward to it for a long time. I would also like to thank Chief Mariere and Chief Onyia for this trip. And, of course, I will not forget to thank my old friend, Professor Sam Aluko. It is a pleasure to have you all with us today.

Having said that, I would like to introduce the people who are with me here. (And he introduced Lt. Col. Imo, Lt. Col. Effiong, Lt. Col. Kurubo, Mr. C.O. Majekwu, Mr. N.U. Akpan, Professor Eni Njoku, Dr. Nwakanma Okoro, Dr. P.N.C Okigbo, Mr. C.A. Onyegbale, and Mr. Ndem).

When I heard that you were coming on this delegation, as usual, I halted everything and then started to think. I thought of it the whole of yesterday up to this morning trying to see really how to conduct this discussion.

You all realise the difficulty in which we are placed in the East. We have been virtually isolated since July so that we do not know what is happening very much on the other side. Indeed every day makes us more isolated. So, we do not really understand the platform and the reason for this type of Committee. I, therefore, finally decided that the answer would be to leave you, sirs, the visitors, to let me know perhaps in more detail the reasons or the points which you want us to discuss. It is only after that, that perhaps we would be in a position to really join in the discussions. At this stage, I would like to welcome you once again. We are very happy indeed to have you with us.

Chief Awolowo: We thank you very much indeed for the cordial way in which you have received us.

Four of us here were invited to a meeting of what was later described as the National Conciliation Committee and before we went to the meeting we were made clearly to understand that the purpose was to try and find ways and means of bringing an end to the present impasse in the country. At the meeting we tried to get the purpose properly defined but we did not go very far even with that because the East was not represented or may I qualify that a little bit, because there were two natives of the Eastern Region at that meeting, but we felt that they could not properly represent the East because they have not been here for quite a long time.

At the meeting, the convener was able to give us some ideas of what he had in mind. Briefly, he said that he convened the meeting for the purpose of going carefully into the demands of all the Regions, such demands as to make them

work with other units in the federation. I think the dispute in the country has reached a stage now when it is necessary to sit down and find out what each Region would like to see done before we go forward again.

He said he would like us to go into the question of compensation (no reference was made to any Region about compensation), the losses incurred, and who is to pay compensation, as one of the matters to be discussed when we meet. Another point is the question of allocation of revenue, what principles should govern the various formula; fear of domination; and of course, elections. There were no comments at all at the meeting on these four subjects. He raised also the question of the economy of the country.

I had a number of matters in my mind in addition to what the convener had stated but we felt that if we proceeded with the points raised at the meeting we might fail because we were not properly represented. We felt that the East must be present and so we decided not to proceed further with the meeting until we have succeeded in getting the Eastern Region representatives at the meeting.

The purpose of this visit, therefore, is not to go into another detail as to what your grievances are because these are political issues and the solution must be political. Of course, I agree with my friend Chief Mariere, that there are also human problems and there must be human approach to them. Instead of going into the grievances we felt it would be easier to have a list of what each Region would like to see done in order to resolve the friction and fears of the past and then work together in some form of harmony. Our main concern is to ensure that Nigeria does not disintegrate, and at this stage I have to project my own person further, and I did say that I would like to see Nigeria bound together by any bond because it is better than breaking the whole place up because I think each unit will be the loser for it. The economy of the country is so integrated that I think it is too late in the day to try and sever them without risking the death of one or both of them. So, we have come, therefore, to appeal to you to let Eastern representatives attend the meeting of the Committee.

You are in no way committed and, if my word is worth anything at all, I would like to assure you that you are in no way committed to any particular course of action. Whoever represents the Eastern Region will let us know on what terms Eastern Region would like to participate in future Nigeria. Of course, each Region would have to state its own terms, and then it would be the duty of the Committee to know that these are the lines we propose to pursue and to assemble those lines and then move from Region to Region; and there will be a time when we shall come here again to discuss details to see what will suit us. If we consider any of these terms to be excessive then we shall come here to see if we can reduce it to a minimum and try to see how to reconcile all the demands, and in the end it is our wish that it should be possible for the

Military Leaders to meet here in Nigeria and say, "this is that, I can understand your feelings in this matter.

I do not know what reasons you have to insist that Heads of African States should be present at the future meeting of the Military Governors, but when our Military Governor of the West visited you at Onitsha and told me what transpired between you, I told him that if I were you I would hesitate to meet with the Military Council without making sure of a guarantee of my safety, but to invite African Heads of State is entirely a different matter.

I think that now that we have started this, and with your co-operation in the early stage, I feel that the Supreme Military Council can meet in Nigeria without the presence of any African Head of State.

At the moment, what we have come for is to appeal to you to attend the next meeting of the National Reconciliation Committee and to assure you that if anything is done at the Committee which tends to compromise your stand or commit your people of this Region, there are some of us who will have the courage to get out of the Committee before it is too late.

So, these are the reasons for our visit.

His Excellency: I would like first to clarify certain points. Throughout, you kept talking of the convener. I do not know who he is.

Chief Awolowo: There were two or three of them. I should have said conveners. Two persons came to me, and they were Mr. Timothy Omo Bare and Dr. Fabunmi. Then at the meeting the Federal Chief Justice also was introduced as a member of the group.

His Excellency: I was going to ask who were the members and the composition of the Committee.

Chief Awolowo: Professor Aluko and myself represented Western Region of Nigeria. Chief Mariere, Chief J.I.C. Onyia and Professor Yesufu represented Mid-West. Lagos was represented by Chief Rotimi Williams, Chief Adisa Bajulaiye (The Eletu Odibo of Lagos), Alhaji W.A. Elias, Chief G.B.A. Coker, Dr. Babs Williams, Lecturer of Political Science in the University of Lagos. Northern Nigeria was represented by Sir Kashim Ibrahim, Alhaji Zana Bukar Dipcharima, Dr. Dikko and Dr. Audu the Vice Chancellor of the Ahmadu Bello University. The East was represented by Mr. Godfrey Amachree and Arikpo. The Federal Chief Justice; Mr. T. Omo Bare and Mr. Abiodun Akerele were the organisers.

His Excellency: It does appear to me that there are two main issues in this matter. The first one is the matter of our Eastern representatives going to the Reconciliation Committee; then, of course, the main thing is the problem of Nigeria.

If I may, I would like to deal first with the question of our representatives

going to this meeting. This point really, by virtue of the term, does not arise because they are not representing us. They cannot in any way be our representatives, and one starts wondering how the names were arrived at. I say this knowing full well that this Nigerian problem started ever since we conceived Independence and was only held up in the past year, and certainly has been boiling since July till now. I find it difficult to consider any Nigerian not involved. Certainly I feel every Easterner is involved. I feel too that for any objective consideration to be given to this, one really needs completely new areas because, as you said, the Eastern stand is well known, and the Western stand has been made quite clear, indeed, in a very classic manner. The Mid-West stand, I am not quite sure of since the latest developments. The Northern stand has been made crystal clear.

Now, in this situation as I was saying, there is nobody that is a Nigerian who can say he can be dispassionate. And, therefore, to discuss the future of Nigeria, it would appear to me that those who should discuss must have the mandate of the people.

The second point arises from your introduction of the membership of the Committee; the way and manner the people were elected, and who they were show that again there was a design to make it impossible for Easterners to attend.

A point which we feel very strongly about here in the East is the point about the judiciary. Here we feel really that the judiciary is sacrosanct. We have made a point about this and we do not feel the Chief Justice of the East (indeed he finds it difficult) should go into this thing. As the Justice he just does not play, and I think you are aware too that the difficulties Nigeria is suffering now came through two justices getting involved in politics and trying to solve the Nigerian problem. They have tried twice and failed.

I think the other invitee to the Committee was Sir Francis, my Adviser. Now, I am the Military Governor. As you see, I am a young man and Sir Francis is my Adviser. I do what he advises me. If I steal, you can be sure that he advised me to steal, so I don't see how he can fit into this; circumstances make it impossible for him to be associated with this.

That is why I said that it seemed designed to preclude Easterners from attending, but certainly, those two personalities just have no place in such a Committee.

Sentiments do run high. The point that led me to asking who convened the meeting was, Sir, anything that has Sir Ademola's name in it, the East 'is out.

Now coming to the wider question of the East attending, if it is a Reconciliation Committee then it must be reconciling warring parties. A Reconciliation Committee cannot have the parties within, somehow, it does not

work, unless, of course, they have already agreed on the major issues, because reconciliation is to stay in the middle of the warring parties. And one thing is so clear in the Nigerian situation; certainly the North and the East are warring. For any Reconciliation Committee to do any justice to the East It should not have Easterners and Northerners in it. That is one point. I find it very difficult to accept that it could even have Mid-Westerners. How does the Reconciliation Committee expect us to go to Lagos? Can you, Sir, imagine Sir Kashim Ibrahim coming to the East to meet and discuss? So, in fact we will have a separate Committee that will go to the East, a separate Committee goes to the North. To me, feudalists being what they are, there is bound to be a lot of misunderstanding arising from that division. Apart from that, the critical point of the Eastern stand is that the East cannot go to any place where there are Northern troops. That tells its own story.

Furthermore, with all due respects, it would appear that the Reconciliation Committee already has taken sides. The reason why I say this is quite clear - the Reconciliation Committee nominated members from everywhere, indeed over my head for the East, that held its first meeting in Lagos under Gowon's protection which implies that this reconciliation committee has indeed sought Gowon's permission; if he is not the prime initiator, certainly he was aware of it, and he gave it his blessing. In the circumstances which we find the East, any Committee under the patronage of Gowon cannot work.

Reconciliation Committee, Easterners being allowed to go, how do they go; certainly we cannot fly. It might even be dangerous to drive, and our men have not got the energy to walk. What I am driving at is that right now the people of the East are being strangled, we are just about getting enough air to keep us alive. Under these circumstances, what are we going to do? The only reconciliation I can see in this is for us to accept that the strangulation is sufficient and we are now going to die. Under these circumstances, I am afraid we find it impossible to be involved in any such exercise.

Then, of course, after looking at the composition of this Committee one immediately starts wondering who they are. Sir Kashim Ibrahim, Dipcharima, those two, certainly we know who they are. To balance then we know Amachree and Okoi Arikpo, people definitely not acceptable to the East. And then to crown it all, Sir Adetokunbo Ademola. I think perhaps in the course of our discussions we might in fact get to know reconciliation can be done if we agree that it is necessary. I will not belabour that point longer.

I now come to the Nigerian problem. Forgive me, Sir, if I get passionate over this; I have lived with it day and night since July till today. I started thinking about it one morning at breakfast and continued right through after work and did not finish till 4a.m. Then I laid down and thought about it for two hours

before I got up. The crisis as far as Eastern Region is concerned is me. I am the crisis and the crisis is me. You will agree that certainly we of the East have been aggrieved, I will not go into the details. I have discussed this matter with Chief Mariere on several occasions, indeed one night we discussed it at the Niger Bridge. The East feels rightly that we have been kicked out of the North. We have been subjected to a whole lot of brutalities and we have counted the loss and noted its enormity, and have decided that perhaps the answer is to forget the loss and turn our back on it, roll our sleeves, buckle down and work to build anew. The problems of the East are problems not really imaginable outside the East. A lot of people outside will not understand two million people coming back. My analogy is pulling down Lagos and Ibadan and rebuilding them just to house the refugees alone. These are problems and then, of course, if housing means that, how do we maintain orphans? How do we get these refugees back into the stream of our economic and social life? All these you will agree, Sir, are not matters for compensation, they are not matters of relief. As I said in establishing the Rehabilitation Commission, it is pure rehabilitation, getting them back into the stream of our economy. If we counted cost I am afraid £100,000,000 will not be enough. So the people of the East today feel that there are two factors in the crisis. Factor one is North versus East which the good Lord has solved for us, it does not exist anymore. Then the question of the South. This is particularly why I am so happy this afternoon because once I have shown you the burial ground and the memorial for the dead (disagreement between the East and the North) having offered your condolences, then there is room for us to discuss together as we have done in the past. If I can put it in another way, the only form of association between the East and the North, we believe, must be based on details. We think there is a great deal of room for close co-operation.

The question which seems to bother us is the question of Nigerian unity. Can there be unity in Nigeria? Has there ever been unity in Nigeria? To those two questions my answer is, "No". Throughout there has been association not unity. I will not go into the history because, after all, you are probably better equipped than I am because you lived through it and you saw it and resolved against it. You fought them to a stand-still as an individual. Like you were, Sir (Awolowo), some years back to the North, so it is my privilege and honour to be to the same North today. I don't mind, I feel that what I am fighting for is the only way in which our people can live and have real freedom.

The North has made it abundantly clear that no association in which they are not controlling the central machinery is acceptable to them. Even in the face of the resolutions of the South, the Emirs, feudalists Emirs, had the audacity to dictate to the South, first, that they will not allow the Northern troops to leave

the West until they are satisfied that the West has got sufficient troops. It sounds a little like Arthur Richards, it is precisely the situation. The North in the face of the South says that the only form of government suitable for this country is a Federal government with a strong centre.

A line has been drawn very firmly and clearly. The only thing for us to do now is to rally round and see what steps to take against the North.

I think I have said enough on even this second point to give clear indications of the way our minds are working over here and I think perhaps not to monopolise the discussion, I will stop at this juncture.

Chief Awolowo: First of all, I have to thank you very much for your frankness. I will take your points in the order in which you raised them, so I start with Sir Ademola the Federal Chief Justice. I am sure that you will be wondering yourself why I should sit at the same meeting with him. As a matter of fact, that is the talk of the Western Region now. But this problem has to be solved and my attitude, quite frankly, is that it does not matter who convened the meeting. If the purpose is to bring an end to this stalemate I will attend, knowing full well that I have clear ideas as to the way I think the thing should be settled. Not that I am rigid in my ideas, but I cannot be dissuaded or taken for a ride by anyone. But I must say in this connection that I was myself surprised at the presence of Sir Adetokunbo Ademola at that meeting. I have never been at a meeting in which he took part and I was quite impressed by the sincerity and honesty with which he spoke at the meeting. I have never paid him such a tribute before.

If I am not flattering you, I think that because of your resolved attitude there has been a rethinking all over the place. The other member was Mr. G.B.A. Coker; he was sitting on my right and Professor Aluko on my left. Mr. Coker was invited to the meeting but he originally declined but when Professor Aluko wrote him a letter and reminded him of the Coker Commission of inquiry, he agreed to attend and did in fact attend. If you hear the tape recording of the meeting you will be quite surprised yourself. I was surprised that these people, after doing what they did, could come quite in the open and speak so freely in the meeting. I am seeing that there is a handwork of God in this matter; and if that is so, we want the need for such a meeting to continue. I know the feelings of the Eastern Region in this connection, but I think in this particular instance I would not like you and our people to be put in the wrong at this stage. Somehow, the people of Western Nigeria and Lagos, and Mid-West look upon this Committee to work some sort of miracle if it is given a chance, and the only person who can give that Committee a chance is yourself. I would therefore, appeal to you to overlook the fact that Ademola is a member. This is not to minimise what you have said which, of course, will be relayed back to the

Committee. If the Committee thinks it is necessary, some modifications can be made in its composition.

Now I take another point which you made - the point that people who attend such a meeting must have the mandate of the people. I do not know exactly what you mean by the "mandate of the people". If you mean by that, sponsorship of the Military Governor of a particular Region well, I would say that that is what we have in mind. But if you are thinking of some other means of giving mandate to delegates, please let us know what views you have in mind.

In case you want to know how some of us attended the meetings, I was approached personally, Sam Aluko was also approached personally. In fact it was only yesterday that the Governor of the West was informed by Sam that he would be going to the East today. I think what the conveners had in mind was to invite people to the meeting on personal reasons. I do not want to say what some of us did behind the scene before the meeting took place. I approached one or two persons myself and I did not hesitate pointing out that Messrs. Okoi Arikpo and Godfrey Amachree could not be representing the people of the East. That reminds me of what happened during the colonial revolution. The Army Heads were interviewing some young boys. They asked the boys, "When last did you see your parents?" "Well," they replied, "When last did you go home?" We should not deceive ourselves in saying we are trying to reconcile because those people do not represent anybody in the East. We know that anybody who represents Eastern Region must have the backing of the East otherwise he could not properly claim to represent the Eastern Region.

With regard to the involvement of all the members of the Committee, you have rightly said that every Nigerian is involved in this crisis. And if a settlement is to be brought about, then we might as well recognise that we are all involved in a little bit, otherwise we have to invite outsiders. In this connection, I must congratulate you for the part you played during the meeting of the Supreme Military Council at Aburi, Ghana, in January. I told the Supreme Commander after you returned that although the Military Leaders have gone to Ghana to resolve your differences, I thought that on no account should we ask outsiders to come and intervene in our domestic dispute. I think we can resolve this problem ourselves. And I think in the case of Eastern Region you have already built a goodwill for yourselves. At this time last year, certainly, Eastern Region was not enjoying the amount of goodwill it is now enjoying, even five months ago. Most people had no opportunity of coming to Eastern Region to see things for themselves, but as time went on the story spread and people now know the amount of loss you have suffered in lives, property and goodwill all over the place. But I think that the East should relent a little and see what it can do with the co-operation of other men of goodwill and determination in the

country.

When I was a small boy I used to wrestle a lot and we had a rule that if you can knock a person down three times you are the winner. In those days, as soon as you knock somebody down, you stand up and let him get up for another fight. If you knock somebody down and sit on him then you will not have the chance of another fight. I feel that if we are satisfied in the justness of our cause, I think we should be prepared to participate in any meeting which is convened for the purpose of resolving the differences.

I can see that the judiciary is getting involved in this matter and if I may say this, I think the Chief Justice is the architect of his own fortune now. The Supreme Military Council should meet regularly but I think civilians have an idea of what they will do in future. But at the moment I think you better allow every Nigerian who wishes to participate in this debate of finding a solution to this problem to do so. And if we insist on having somebody outside because of his particular profession or calling we might be accused of trying to be bossy.

You have talked about Easterners and Northerners trying to go to the same meeting and bring about reconciliation because they are the two warring parties. I do not think the fight is between the East and the North alone. It affects all other parts of the country save that there is no quarrel between the East and the West and between the East and the Mid-West. The fight involves all of us. The West at this moment, has its own complaints against the North. The fact that we went there particularly so soon after my withdrawal from the Ad Hoc Constitutional Committee must assure you that we are resolved to find a solution to this. That leads me to the resolution passed by the Northern Leaders of Thought. I can say this for certain, that I think, first of all, that the newspaper report about the Northern Leaders of Thought having decided that Northern troops should not be withdrawn from Western Nigeria is a mere speculation. Secondly, that the Commander-in-Chief was reported to have made a statement to the delegation of the Baptist Convention. I got in touch with the Military Governor of the West and he assured me that the Commander-in-Chief did not make such a statement. I spoke to Gowon himself yesterday and he assured me that he had been misquoted and that the truth was going to be made known. In this connection, I want to assure you that we have taken an irrevocable stand, we have taken a decision not to participate in any further discussion about the constitutional future of the country.

It may be something you think incompatible with my attendance at this Reconciliation Committee particularly after my withdrawal from the Ad Hoc Constitutional Committee. The Ad Hoc Committee had no terms of reference. The terms of reference were withdrawn by the Supreme Military Council on Thursday preceding the week that we were to go to Benin. This Peace

Committee has definite terms of reference - to find ways and means of bringing an end to the present impasse. Those ways and means are definite. A number of demands have been made and we are to look into them and see which one would be best for future Nigeria. So, I would not like you to take too seriously the resolutions said to have been passed by the Northern Leaders of Thought, and may I say something in support of that.

Well, you have seen the memoranda submitted by the North from beginning to end; now whilst they keep on talking of effective central government they are, at the same time, insisting on Members of Parliament at the centre being chosen by the Regional Assemblies, and the Headship of Government at the centre to be held in rotation by the Regions I cannot see how such a government can have a strong centre.

I said to our Leaders of Thought at Ibadan that we have to stop using phrases which will bring a lot of trouble. What we want in Nigeria is a house to be built which will be big enough to accommodate all of us without friction, without trouble. Let us have a plan made, let us get an expert contractor to build the house. When the house is completed to our satisfaction, let them call it what name they like, what is important is that the house should be big enough to accommodate all of us comfortably, without friction and without trouble. Let us see what the contents are going to be. Once the contents are stated then we will allow political scientists to give it a name they like. The name does not matter to us as long as we are satisfied that this is the sort of thing we need to make us live together as Nigerians.

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

Today, the question is whether Easterners can go back to the North, and you must not forget that the North has its own strains and stresses, that if things are

done the way they want it that justice will be done, which will, as a result, make it free for Easterners to live anywhere in the federation. It will take three or four years before the wounds are healed and before Easterners can go to the North but we want to make it possible.

That is why I feel that it is unrealistic for anyone to talk of a lasting solution. May I emphasise that I am personally speaking for myself now and not for the delegation. I am not looking for a lasting solution because it would be impossible in the circumstances now. I think it was at this meeting that I said we better think about ourselves first, how we are going to live happily, before we think of posterity because if we kill ourselves there will be no posterity. So, I do appeal to you and to all our friends in Eastern Region not to abandon the hope of units of Nigeria uniting in some form of association I will accept anything that will make me to go to Eastern Region without having to get a travel certificate, and make it possible for goods to move from place to place without customs barriers.

You have also spoken about closer association amongst the people of the South. Well, I think the association is already there. It is natural for people in the South to work together because they share common political ideals and I do not think we need to make that a condition for settling this problem.

I think I have spoken about the Northern troops. I think the soldiers in Western Region are determined to move. That is all I wish to say at this stage.

Then you said something about our meeting being under the protection of Gowon. We were not. There was no Police protection at all. There were one or two Policemen here and there but they were not detailed to protect us. As far as I know, there is no doubt that Gowon knows about what is going on because he is nearer to Lagos than you are and I think also that he likes the move that is now being made and he gives it his blessing. But the point I want to emphasize in this connection is that no trap is being set for anyone at all and no attempt is being made to get the East to abandon any legitimate points or terms that you may have.

As a matter of fact, the four of us who come here have been chosen because of our well known attitude to the Eastern cause. I can assure you that we certainly will not be party to any attempt to compromise your stand or to make the Easterners or other people of Nigeria tend to do things that will renew the old friction and causes of tension. Our duty is to recognise all those things that brought about this crisis which has lasted so long. Having recognised them, it is our duty to use them to our body politic and do something that will make it possible for us to live harmoniously together, and then as time goes on, to keep closer together until we reach a state and then as time goes on, to keep closer together until we reach a state where the United States of Nigeria will be as

strong as the United States of America; it may be in twenty years' or thirty years' time. You are more likely to see that than myself but I pray that it may be in my life time. What I want to see in my life time is that Nigeria remains together. I hope you will do your very best to see that this remains. That bond can only be made to remain if your representatives come to that meeting. Four of us want to assure you that you lose nothing by it; as a matter of fact, you gain a lot in prestige and status.

You have spoken about the means of transport to the place. We could have come by air up to Benin and by land to this place, but I have made up my mind not to travel in any plane in Nigeria. If the window is broken there will be such rush of wind that will overturn the whole thing. I am not taking that risk. Even at that meeting when we were expecting your delegates to arrive before 2p.m. I said, "how can they come, they are not coming by air. The Military Governor is not going to send them by air in view of what has happened. So, they can only come by land and you cannot expect anybody to travel from Enugu today and arrive Lagos before 2 p.m. So there is no doubt that they will not come. The Federal Government will not send any plane to the East (you had invited them to come and collect the one that is here but they did not come, they will not take that risk) but they can come by land. If you say that the meeting can be held somewhere else other than Lagos, that can be arranged and we will go back and say, "very well, our friends in the East are attending provided the meeting will be held at Benin, Ibadan, Akure or Ifo, and their safety is guaranteed.

Nobody can tell when life will be lost but I think, speaking the minds of the entire people of Western Nigeria and Mid-Western Nigeria, that if anybody can at this stage take the life of an Ibo man or an Easterner, or if any outstanding Easterner loses his life by the act of someone else, the whole of the Western Region and the Mid-Western Region will take it as the end of Nigeria. I can give that assurance on behalf of Western Nigeria and Lagos. So, they can come and we will sit down together.

At that meeting somebody suggested that some of us were partisan. I said all of us were partisans, but I would try to be as tactful as possible and see what we could do. We are appealing to you to give us this bit of chance, may be through this means what you want for the East will be satisfied. It is better we conduct this business negotiation if possible.

I can see one little bit of contradiction here. It may be argued that if you are able to attend the Reconciliation Committee meeting in Lagos why can't you send people to attend the Ad Hoc Committee meeting? I will answer that, I have withdrawn from the Ad Hoc Committee and here I am in the Reconciliation Committee. The Ad Hoc Committee was to try and work out a constitution, but this one is to see how the demands of the people can be met. They are two

entirely different bodies with entirely different objectives. I appeal to you very strongly, and my colleagues, I am sure, join me in this. Send three or four people that can represent Eastern Region to come to Lagos, they lose nothing by it, instead you gain a lot.

I am surprised for the progress you have made in this place. If I have a chance I would like to have a chat with Dr. Okigbo because it is amazing the way you have survived up to this day. But surely you have clearly in your mind what you want and nobody can divert you to go out of your path unless you find that that diversion is not only in the interest of yourself but of the whole of Nigeria.

Some people wanted to make trouble with the Easterners in the West the other time and I invited them and told them that they must not do so. The Easterners in the West are at most 15,000 but we had about 20,000 Westerners from the North and still we cannot cope with their problem. How then is it justified that you want to send 15,000 Easterners home only to add to the 2,000,000 they already have on hand? You just can't do that. I must congratulate you for the able way you have tackled your refugee problems.

You must not forget that your problems are Nigerian problems. We cannot sit down and see the East strangulated. We have friends here. When we got to Onitsha, my friends were having lunch and a gentleman walked up to me and we started chatting. Many of the gentlemen who sit down here are my friends. I do not want to have travel certificates in order to come here. I would not like to see the East strangulated. We can ease the tension and if there is suspicious that somebody is doing this so much the better for this cause. May be this Committee is required to help us save our faces; we have committed ourselves too much in the open that we need a little bit of something to help us retrieve. You can help us.

The whole world has heard about this delegation. The B.B.C. carried it and I am sure that the British Press will carry it, and I would not like anyone to say that the thing has failed. I hoped that it does not fail, but if it fails, I would not like you to be accused of being the Chief cause of that failure.

Chief Mariere: I think we have reached a stage where I want to come in not because Chief Awolowo has not sufficiently covered all the grounds in connection with the purpose of our delegation, and I want to say that I am not out to cross the Ts and dot the I's because as a member selected from the National Reconciliation Committee I am in agreement with all the points Chief Awolowo made and also with the plea that he has put forward on behalf of the delegation. I want to touch, of course, one or two points.

The main one would be the doubts expressed by Your Excellency as to the role of the Mid-West in view of recent developments. In the course of Your Excellency's speech, you did say, "as far as the North is concerned their mind is

already known, you also know about the West, but about the Mid-West, owing to recent developments, you do not know".

Before I go to that, I wish to associate myself with Chief Awolowo to thank you for the warm reception accorded us and the frankness with which you addressed us. It was because of these two factors that I thought Chief Awolowo should open the discussion because earlier in I had enjoyed this warm reception and frankness which I regard as already a natural quality of yours, and I have come again to enjoy them for the second time. I thought that someone who has not seen your Excellency since all these developments, in the person of Chief Awolowo, should also answer back in order to confirm whether the impressions I had when I visited you before about your frankness and warmth of reception, are the same he has got on this occasion of coming to see Your Excellency, I am happy that he has the impression which I had previously.

At the National Conciliation meeting, (although Your Excellency tried to regard it as "Reconciliation", I do not see it as Reconciliation because this is a matter in which we are all involved, a matter in which we are all involved, a matter in which we all have stake and there is no need reconciling one to the other; I think the designation "conciliation" appeals to me more than Reconciliation" (which punctuated Your Excellency's speech) we felt as so do now that to talk about the affairs of Nigeria without the presence of the people of Eastern Region, and without the knowledge and consent of the Governor of Eastern Region, was not, in our view, a conference to look into the affairs of this country. We felt that any discussions in Lagos in the absence of the East would amount to the feeling from the East that they are being pushed away from Nigeria, or that some parts of the country are aiding and abetting the push. Nigeria, therefore, cannot be regarded as complete without the East.

The next point was how to get the East to be present at a conference table, even if it is by people not necessarily delegated by the Government, to talk about the problems facing us in the country, at least civil servants, and leaders of the people. If we have a thing together, all the owners of that thing should sit together and discuss about it. And in this case, your Excellency made a point which has already been answered by Chief Awolowo, and that is about the convener and your opinion about Sir. Ademola. Your Excellency categorically said that the East will not send representatives to any meeting initiated by Sir Ademola. I wish to say that I do not subscribe to the view that he initiated this meeting.

Some gentlemen made contacts, one of them came to me and asked whether if there was a body of Nigerians picked from the different Regions and I am one of them, whether I would be willing to serve so that we can resolve the present impasse in the country. I said certainly I will, I am prepared to serve

anywhere I am required to do so. He was very glad but I did tell him that I would have clearance with my Government first. The gentleman left me and I think he contacted other people. He told me then that he was coming to the East. Later I was informed that Chief Onyia was also contacted and two others. They got clearance from our Governor and attended the meeting in Lagos. I want to dispel any impression that this was the doing of the Commander-in-Chief, Lt. Col. Gowon, passed to my Governor, and passed to me.

I think we will have to regard Sir Adetokunbo Ademola as a Nigerian who also has a stake in the fortunes of this country; and if there are cases where certain people had indulged in doing things that render their name a bit objectionable, it may well be that, like Paul, in the Biblical story, who carried out a lot of damage and destruction and when it came upon him as an assignment as if to say he had never had a hand in destruction previously. Well, one can say that it is God that makes certain people who previously had given the appearance of doing objectionable things to be used by God to do acceptable things. We may look at it from that angle, Your Excellency.

Coming to the role of the Mid-West which seems to be in doubt as expressed by Your Excellency, I want to make it abundantly clear that even though I have not come now on this occasion as a delegate of the Mid-West but as a delegate of the National Conciliation Committee, I still want to dear this point which affects the Mid-West because I am Mid-Westerner and also the Official Adviser to the Military Governor of the Mid-West, and in addition to that, the Chairman of the Mid-West Consultative Committee, and therefore responsible enough to accept a blame if it is one, on my Region, or to defend it if there is reason to think that its role is being misunderstood, and if there is any doubt about the role which the Mid-West has so far played. We feel that it is better to keep the image of Nigeria which we have all built up and we try to do our best not to ally ourselves to any particular group. We also frown against any attempt to interfere with our territorial integrity and so we made it abundantly clear that we will never allow any Region to use our area as a battle ground.

We did say that our role is to try to see whether we can live together and retain the name Nigeria and we found ourselves using the words "loose federation," we want loose federation, we want loose federation. We used it before when Your Excellency was kind enough to grant us an audience and have repeated it a few days ago when the meeting of the Consultative Committee of the Mid-West had discussions on it. It may be difficult for us to define what is loose and what is tight, but what we meant was that we wanted a Nigeria where one group will not dominate the other where even if we have a centre it will be on equal representation; where certain powers will be transferred from the centre to the Regions so as not to make the centre too strong. We do not quarrel

with whatever name it is called; we are carrying out our God-given assignment, small as the Region is in size and population. But if in carrying out our assignment we are swallowed by the big fish, we will be prepared to go into its belly and perhaps fortunately the big fish will vomit us in Nineveh. We feel we must come out, small as we are, to see how we can make our feelings known and see whether we can tie Nigeria together if not with what we call Marine rope or Wire rope, at least with a thread: that will be a miracle, Your Excellency This is what we should do, and what we are doing.

Having told the world that we will not allow our area to be used as a battle ground, that explains that we are not really pitching our tent with any group particularly except the group that says, "let us have Nigeria, but take this out or that, so that we can freely move to all the area in the country and still retain the image of Nigeria".

I came to the East first in 1928 (I was at Aba during the Women Riot in 1929) and I have been in and out of the Region since then when I was in politics and when I was the First Governor of the Civilian government of Mid-West. I have enjoyed the friendship and kindness of almost everybody that I know in the East and I would like this friendship to continue, and so everybody feels in the Mid-West. I think we have come to a stage where no one can browbeat us, we cannot be carried away by somebody using us to gain a purpose.

You are frank and one has to be frank with you, Your Excellency, and I think it is only those who are good that can see goodness in other people. If we say that the feelings of the East are not injured enough to get the sort of reaction that we get now, then we have not assessed the situation correctly. Our feelings too have been injured, of course, not in the same proportion, but somehow one has to attempt and see whether we can forget the past and build anew.

I have always wondered why the church people do not say "peace at all times", I cannot understand why they say, "peace in our time". Chief Awolowo has made the point that we should talk about peace in our time and let posterity that will come after us take care of itself. Surely some of us have children, in fact I am now a grandfather, but I would not like to see my children living in fire as I move out. I would like them to enjoy the kind of friendship which I have enjoyed since 1928.

When Chief Awolowo, Chief Onyia, my humble self and Professor Aluko accepted to serve on this delegation in order to plead with you, Your Excellency, to allow us to have this Committee sitting along with people who can come with Your Excellency's consent and make the points, we were very happy. If we succeed in persuading Your Excellency, we thank God, but if the contrary is the case, we will comfort ourselves by knowing that we have made an effort; that in itself is a spiritual satisfaction:

Chief J.I. Onyia: I wish to associate myself with the remarks made by my other colleagues. It is quite true that we are all involved in the Nigerian crisis, but I wish to say that if we go by our traditional culture we will not be sorry for any action we have taken because there are times when conflict between two towns are resolved by the people themselves despite the fact that both sides are involved. If we succeed in spite of our involvement in resolving our crisis, it will be a great honour to all of us. I also wish to say that nothing gladdens the heart of an old man as to find that when he is leaving this world he is leaving it better than he found it. It was that motive that made me accept to serve in this National Conciliation Committee and nothing more. And in accepting it, Your Excellency, I realise that if someone who is causing destructions finds that destructions are going to engulf him and others dear to him and calls upon us to help him, I will give the help.

Before going to this Conciliation Committee I was aware that we were being summoned by Sir Adetokunbo Ademola but I accepted. But if I had the feeling as others do that some of us can go together as better spirited men (and there are a lot of them everywhere) are allowed to come together in order to try and find ways and means of resolving our crisis, we should help them. If we allow nothing to happen at all, at long last we shall resolve the issue. If it is possible to resolve the issue now before more harm is done it will be to our credit. There is no one in Nigeria, except one with prejudice, who does not know that the stand of the East is our saviour today in the Nigerian crisis; but then we still need the help of the East to resolve our crisis.

The East maintained, and still maintains, that until the agreement reached on the 9th August for repatriation of Northern troops from Lagos and Western Region is implemented, it would not send any representative to any meeting. I can see the principle involved in continuing to attend any meeting anywhere in Nigeria until that agreement had been implemented, but if you consider perhaps any other town we can meet in a place like Benin, and consider the attitude of the West as explained by Chief Awolowo perhaps you will reconsider that principle and see whether some people will be allowed to help their fellow Nigerians. Asaba is a good suggestion too so that your delegates can attend from Onitsha and return every day. I am only putting this as a suggestion.

I will ask your Excellency not to take very seriously the stand of the North as indicated recently. If the North says it wants strong centre and the view is not shared by other Regions, I do not see how the view of one will prevail over others when we are finding a settlement to our crisis. When we come together perhaps the views of the majority will dominate. If the North wants to stand alone perhaps it is at such a meeting that a line of demarcation will be drawn

between the North and the South.

Thank you, Your Excellency:

Professor Aluko: I did not attend the meeting of the Leaders of Thought of the West because I was ill although I wrote my views to Chief Awolowo, and when I got the invitation to the one in Lagos I was still ill. Really if I know that it was Ademola who convened it I would not have gone because I made two resolutions sometime ago. One was that I would never sit in a meeting or talk to Chief Akintola. Fortunately that resolution is not necessary now. The other resolution was that I would never sit in a meeting or talk to Ademola, and that the C.J. could be the first to be sacked if I have any authority. So when we got there I queried the conference. I said, "What authority is behind this, who is calling this meeting?" I also opposed those who were at the panel. So, really, I share your views, and if the delegation of the East had come in that afternoon I was going to challenge the C.J. and ask him to give his place to real civilian. I will say, "supposing it is recommended that Chief Awolowo should be tried for treason for the speech he made, you are going to try him and you are also the Chairman of this Committee". I was telling some of my friends that if the East knows that the C.J. is convening the meeting they will not come.

As for me, I got the invitation to the conference at the conference hall. I think, as Chief Awolowo said, that is a minor issue. I remember that story that a woman was expelled from our university; I said that that was because perhaps her name was Akintola (not a relation of the ex-Premier), but if her name were something like Adeniji or some other name she would not have been expelled. I think many people in the West will be embarrassed that Chief Awolowo attended a meeting called by the C.J.

We have a terrible country where a lot of rumour is being carried. I understand that even the Northern soldiers occupying the West would have gone a long time ago but for the rumour that if they go Eastern soldiers will come and dominate us.

I remember that in my letter to Chief Awolowo I said that our own Army Officers should declare themselves. They go to their Military Council and talk about going to fight, they come and tell us that we do not want to fight. They should declare themselves so that we know whether to drop the demand for the removal of Northern troops or not. I do not know whether the Governor of Western Region delivered our resolution to the Supreme Commander. We do not need soldiers in the West to protect us; we have 10 million soldiers. You do not fight only with guns, you can fight with sticks, stones, bottles, fire-wood and others. We can fight with those; we are not afraid to die just as a soldier will die if I take a gun and shoot him. I think these people do a lot of blackmail when you are not there and that is why they spoil every approach we make. It is good to

keep the dialogue going so that these hide-and-seek people will come out. As long as you cut off this dialogue they will say that we have come to the East to make private bargains.

They say that I go to the East every week and that I am receiving instructions on how to train fighters, I cannot shoot a gun. I am ashamed that I cannot shoot even a gun because I have always advocated for compulsory military service. If you do not go to this conference, there will be no means of cooperating with other people in order to obtain your objective. It is only when you discuss at the conference table that you can put forward your views and possibly convince even your opponents. I remember that there was a certain delegation which Chief Awolowo refused to go because he was accused of teaming up with the East, but I advised him to go and he went. If the West makes a stand the Mid-West will vacillate. Mid-West is between the East and the West and if we take a stand today I am pretty sure the Mid-West will not say no. For that reason, I do not see how we can take a stand in the South and the North will say no.

Hassan told me that they do not want to withdraw their soldiers from the West because they will be blockaded from the sea and I said, "where is the sea access of the Chad Republic?" I always write to him.

I remember when I went to the North someone said that they were going to fight the East. I told him that America has 450,000 troops with several millions worth of military equipment in Vietnam and yet they have not been able to conquer them. I must have written some letters which must have annoyed you a bit:

I am sorry for it but that is how we write. This country belongs to us and not to any feudal Emir or Oba. The time has come when we shall sit down and tell these people how we feel.

In the letter I wrote to Chief Awolowo, I said that my own impression is that some people in the North want to use us to push out the East from Nigeria. I was pretty sure of that and I know that the balance of advantage is with you. But now that we feel that you have won the battle and other parts of the federation have come to beg you, if they know that you will leave us they will feel disappointed.

I would appeal to you that we should keep this dialogue going. I do not see anybody causing confusion. I do not know of anybody occupying the West. One night some people came and said we should not sleep at home, that they were going to stage a coup, my wife was very frightened, but I parked my car with the EE plate number in front of the house and slept inside the house soundly, I know that if there is trouble the whole of the Nigerian Army cannot overrun Ekiti because we have so many hills there and even if they overrun us they

cannot rule there effectively. The time has come when we shall meet together.

I have been to the North twice since the crisis and a few people there speak our language and they are coming more and more, but there are many who do not speak our language. Some of them are living in the century Before Christ and there are others in its 20th century. We have to recognise that. So, I really feel that we must have to take our stand clear. It was very courageous of Chief Awolowo to make a stand and we now know where we stand. Perhaps you are a soldier and you fear the effect of the gun, but I think that as a soldier you should be able to say, "this is where we stand and no more".

I think the civilians, that is, those who are now meeting in Lagos, would like to say, "this is where we stand in the country; if the authorities do not accept it, we will leave them". If it is possible for this committee to continue to meet whether in Lagos or in Benin, or anywhere, I will welcome it because there are some of us who really want to have an opportunity to talk to some people. Some people feel that the whole of Nigeria belongs to them but it is not true.

I talked to some Northern people and they said that the Northern troops were not really useful in the West but they might be useful in Lagos. It therefore seems to us that everybody is frightened and nobody is really in control.

His Excellency: I thank you very much. As I said, what I intend is in fact to hold a brief discussion with you in order to give clear indications of the whole spectrum of the discussion we shall go in to tomorrow. But before we finish I feel that for this meeting to yield fruit we really must understand that we cannot really take postures or talk in elliptical terms, that we really must get down to the crux of the matter. I do not believe anything can be achieved when you go into a dirty room, lifting the carpet and sweeping the dirt under it. For that reason, I would like to make certain points partly by way of clarification, and partly to complete the picture.

The first thing that occurred to me through this afternoon is, with all due respects, that we are getting ourselves again involved in platitudes. Men of goodwill forgive and forget; those sorts of terms do not mean anything in this crisis. Talk about a house for Nigeria to live comfortably in. A house is a house. Perhaps when you talk about a house you think it should be a complete house like this where you move up and down; my attitude to a house might, in fact be a duplex with definite walls dividing the two; even in that we can live together. We have talked about the question of representation, delegates and things. Let us take it home. Supposing I sit here and decide that a Conciliation Committee should meet with Oba C.D. Akran and Fani Kayode representing the West. What happened? It means a lot to us. We talked about delegates, do you realise that the formation of this committee with the election of the delegates is absolutely a vote of no confidence in me, my administration and my Government?

The West at the Ad Hoc Constitutional Committee had you (Awolowo) as the leader of the delegation selected by the Governor. The Mid-West had you, Sir, (Mariere) selected by the governor. These people are found acceptable. The North had Sir Ibrahim selected by the Governor; Ojukwu's delegates to the Ad Hoc Constitutional Conference are all useless and should be brought near. There is no member of my Ad Hoc delegation in this one.

We talked about national disgrace. The disgrace is there already; all we are looking for is the facility with which we can continue to move together. What is the East looking for? I will not go to that today but I would like to make a point - that the only parallel in history to what happened in Nigeria is, in fact, what happened to the Jews, and the solution to the Jewish problem came when the Jews became Israelites; in that, they found solution. That is a historical experience from which we can draw.

You talked about free movement, children moving from one place to other. I am told that Nigerians move in and out of Western Germany without visas, so that, really, that is not the point at issue. There are arrangements in which you can still move from one place to another without a visa.

I am very happy indeed that my stand was very well vindicated by the irrevocable stand of the West on certain points. That proves that in a crisis there are certain points which a group must state and consider irrevocable. I think that the East has taken certain irrevocable stands. I think the East was right in taking these stands. Tomorrow when we meet you will find that the East will put forward realistic points to ensure our survival and to ensure that what happened in 1966 never recurs, and finally, so that we may fully understand what we are about, I will talk about this Conciliation Committee.

After my deadline of 31st March, came April; I took certain actions. The America Ambassador and the British High Commissioner cabled back (one good thing about the East is that we have ears) for further instruction from their home Governments. Britain thought that the solution to the problem lay in immediate parity between the North and the East. The U.S.A. cabled back that the solution would lie, in order to protect their investments, in checks and balances so as to continue the exploitation of our oil. After this, the British High Commissioner and the Ambassador met and they kept together for a period of some four hours after which the American Ambassador started taking the initiative. What they decided was that the country was on the point of disintegration and that the only way to deal with this thing is to delay so much as possible the East from any further action that might completely disintegrate Nigeria. It was as a result of that, and the posture of Britain that it was decided that the initiative must be taken by Messrs Omo-Bare, Fabunmi and Yesufu who started meeting some individuals and tried getting some individuals to meet

together, having cleared that with Gowon. So that when we discuss the Conciliation Committee, the child of that conspiracy, you must realise that our interests are not really being considered; the interests being considered are American and British interests.

I started off this struggle in July with 120 rifles to defend the entirety of the East. I took my stand knowing full well that by doing so, whilst carving my name in history, I was signing also my death warrant. But I took it because I believed that this stand was vital to the survival of the South. I appealed for settlement quietly because I understood that this was naked struggle for power and that the only time we can sit down and decide the future of Nigeria on basis of equality will always be equality of arms. Quietly I built up. If you do not know it, I am proud, and my officers are proud, that here in the East we possess the biggest army in Black Africa. I am no longer speaking as an underdog, I am speaking from a position of power. We have really got to find a solution to our problem. It is not my intention to unleash the destruction which my army can unleash. It is not my intention to fight unless I am attacked. If I am attacked I will take good care of the aggressor. That is why I really believe that our future must be for the people of the South to halt a while and think, so that whilst we are catching up something which is already written to the core, that is association with the North, we do not lose more of the things that keep us in the South together.

In November I wrote to my colleagues and told them what I saw and warned them that this thing does not increase by arithmetical progression but by geometrical progression; that very soon we would have a monster which would swallow us.

I went to Aburi as a Nigerian (I am glad that there is complete record of our meeting). I did not ask for compensation; I asked for a solution to the Nigerian problem. What I asked for in Aburi was share of power in Nigeria. It is significant that you said that five months ago we started getting popularity, May I add to that, that what is happening today in this country is precisely five months late. This is the position. A thing which will hold us, tomorrow, if I am allowed to say it, is this question of meeting, dialoguing for dialogue sake.

I notice today that the main difficulties precluding the participation of the East have not been touched. I said that we were being strangled; anybody would then expect that the first thing to do is to take hands off this people's throat before anything else.

Chief Awolowo: You were speaking figuratively.

His Excellency: Do I have to enumerate all the things, the economic strangulations and all that is being imposed on us by Gowon.

Chief Awolowo: We cannot go there and be the advocates of the East. I was

selected to represent the West and therefore, it will not be right for me to go there and advocate for the East.

I refused to be on this delegation because I was accused of speaking to you on the telephone every day. Gowon himself told me that I visited the East several times and on one occasion you threw a cocktail party in my honour.

I do not want to put myself in a position where I will be treated as an advocate of the Eastern cause. Let the Eastern delegates go there, make their case, and then as a member of the Committee I will get up and say I support this entirely. But for me to go there and say that this is the grievance of the East is wrong. I enumerated to you what I have in mind. I have a lot of things in mind.

May I make a correction here, please, I do not indulge in platitudes. I am sure that when it comes to demonstrating our sincerity we shall certainly not fail. This is different from what happened last year when your delegates came to Lagos: this time we are faced as it were, with reality and we have to face them or be swallowed up and time is running against us because you said you were being strangled and I know what you mean. If we get back to that meeting and your people are represented, I know what ought to be done immediately to ease the situation on all sides and I have made my views known about certain Regions of the Country.

Many years before this crisis started in 1962, if only some of my contemporaries had united with me in my attitude, I suppose all this would never have happened; but we are making history and we can count ourselves as lucky for having the opportunity of making history. Since we are meeting tomorrow I think it is good to sleep over this.

You have spoken of some irrevocable stands that you have taken. Has the East taken an irrevocable stand not to have anything at all to do with the North? Because you spoke of the house which can be partitioned, we want to know whether somebody else will not be able to move to the other side. Is this stand of the East (because it will be good for us to know the stand of the East), not to have anything to do with the North revocable or not? Can we have circumstances or conditions under which the East can deal with the North? I believe if you still want an association among all the units of Nigeria, that will satisfy the yearnings of the South, including the East. I would like to know whether it is your view that the East will secede from the rest of Nigeria. I would like to know all these so that we will be in a position to make constructive contributions.

His Excellency: On the specific question of whether there is a possibility of contract with the North, the answer is at the battle field. On the other question of secession, it will never come from me that we wish to secede from the rest of the country, that is, I am really thinking of the South.

I believe very strongly that there is a great deal we can do together and believe me, Sirs, if we have to opt out then it will be because we cannot get together in the South, that is, opting out of the remaining of the South.

There are other stands we have taken such as where there are Northern troops we are not safe; we have said that a number of times. There are such things as whilst we are being strangled economically, we will not take part in any discussion. It is far better to die near the battle field than going too far away.

I was taken in by the appeal to the East to help save the country. I wonder; on whose shoulders will that help be? It worries me but let us leave it for the time being, it has been a long day.

I think really indications are quite clear about the line our discussions will take. We shall meet tomorrow morning and if we do not finish we shall continue after lunch. I hope you will all accept my invitation to lunch tomorrow.

Chief Awolowo: Except me, I do not take lunch.

His Excellency: I understand.

Meeting adjourned at about 8.25p.m to resume the following day 7th May, 1967.

Second day session of the meeting held at State House, Enugu on Sunday, 7th May, 1967, It started at about 11.50 a.m and adjourned at about 2.15p.m

6.

**SECOND DAY SESSION
OF THE MEETING**

His Excellency: I think we may start now. We had a very good meeting yesterday and certainly the sum total gave us plenty to think about and indeed, those of us who do not take supper actually did have quite a lot of food for thought. I think if we can go on from where we left off and that is again having cleared our minds of various attitudes, to think about this question of the peace committee.

It was established yesterday that the Peace Committee as composed was not desirable, that is from the Eastern point of view. It was neither desirable nor had it any chance of success. We said that there was need to discuss but we did not establish what and who should discuss and I think that actually would be the starting point for today.

We talked very sketchily about relative positions of the various regions and we projected a possibility of an understanding between the Southern Regions of Nigeria. The last two questions on which we closed were, first, the Eastern attitude to the North which I said was one where there could only be a meeting on the battle field. The second question was the Eastern attitude towards future association. Here again, I said that: "the East does not intend to secede but if pushed would not hesitate to take the challenge knowing full well that the East is in a position militarily and politically within itself to take this decision and not be pushed or helped. I think on that really the meeting came to a close and we thought that today we would go on.

I talked a great deal yesterday and did lot of thinking too. I think it would only be fair if I again/leave the floor open for your respected delegates to put up suggestions for this Peace Committee.

Chief Awolowo: Thank you very much, I have two or three submissions to make. First, of all, I think that there is no doubt that the Regions south of the country have always been working together and have shared common ideals by and large, and that the only thing that has bedeviled Southern Solidarity in this past was individual ambition. But individually we can bring that solidarity about by working together in the same bodies and meetings. How do we bring about the solidarity if the East and ourselves have no chance of meeting?

There is a good deal of suspicion right now, and we want to avoid it as much as possible, that some of us are in conspiracy with you and you know that that is not true. I have been accused of talking to you on the telephone but I think the last time I spoke to you on the telephone was in October last year; and this is my first visit to the Region since my release in August last year. Not that one is afraid of being accused falsely, but certainly I do not want to put myself in a difficult position where I could not exert some influence to bring about a final settlement to the present stalemate. That is why I want to avoid anything that

will make people suspect me of being in conspiracy. But here we have a chance of meeting. Chief Mariere and I have not had a chance of meeting since my release. We met casually at Ado Ekiti when we went for the funeral of Lt. Col Fajuyi, but since this meeting we have talked together several times and this morning we had preliminary discussions and exchanged views on what happened yesterday and it surprised me that the areas of agreement between the West and the Mid-West are very wide. What brought this about? It is the Peace Committee meeting. If I did not attend the meeting of this Committee, I would have been accused of conspiracy, of being against either the North, the Mid-West or the East. But this Peace Committee gives us a chance of meeting and talking together. I have no doubt that if your delegates come to the meeting, after the meeting, it does not matter who were at the meeting, we can then say, "what about meeting at such and such a place tomorrow morning", and there we sit down and see how we can bring about Southern solidarity.

I said to Chief Mariere and Professor Aluko last night that if we can afford to go to this meeting and say this is what we want for a new Nigeria whether temporarily or permanently, and the North says "no, we are not going to have it", I will go out and address a World Press Conference and send our case to that body and say this is what we have done and the North has turned it down. I will then take any step that is necessary to bring into effect what we want. But certainly this cannot be done if only the Mid-West and the West and Lagos are represented at the meeting. It will be a plain case of conspiracy.

Not that I take some of these newspaper comments seriously, but a lot of things are written in the "Post" which is a Government sponsored paper. When I said that I have not been to the East they said: "What about Professor Aluko, what about a school teacher who goes regularly to represent you?" These are the sort of things said but the thing is that we want to have a chance of meeting and we want you to give us that facility. We want you to allow the East make its own case before that body.

You said yesterday, that that body is being sponsored by the Americans and the British. I do not trust that. If I have something to do in this country today, I will take Nigeria out of the Commonwealth within 40 hours, I do not want to go to the reasons now. I will have nothing to do with the British. They are full of prejudices and they have not learned from history, and having nothing to teach anybody. I recently refused to talk to the British High Commissioner. You have the patience to talk to them. The other day he sent a message through that he wanted to come and see me and I told him that there was no chance because we have no common interests. As for the Americans we know that wherever they sink their dollars their interests lie. They have no principle in their activities. But let them be behind convening this meeting. They did that with Alhaji

Tafawa Balewa before; where is he now? They did that also with Chief Akintola; where is he now?

I have no doubt that truth will prevail no matter what you do, the side of truth will be equally vigilant. Once that is the case, one shall never lose. If you are on the side of truth and you are careless and unintelligent or lazy, then you lose by default. So, that is my first appeal.

I have no doubt that you believe in Southern solidarity, but we cannot bring it about if the East cannot associate with the West. So, forget about Sir Adetokunbo Ademola and other members of the Committee; we dislike them more than you do, but the thing is that this meeting will provide a forum for regular contact between your people and our people.

The second observation I want to make is this. I noticed that you feel very strongly about the presence of Sir Adetokunbo in that meeting. I think we all appreciate your position. We certainly will take that back but from what I noticed of him in that meeting I am inclined to think that if we get back and say, "You are not wanted in this meeting", he will fade out especially if we say, "Here are Eastern delegates, and here we are from the West and Mid-West and we think that you should fade away in this meeting. (We do not need to put it in the paper that you are here) otherwise, we will not be able to go on with this meeting", he will fade out.

If you also insist, that is the third point, that we should have this meeting in Benin, it will only depend on how soon. If Sir Francis is one of your delegates, he is welcome anywhere in this country: if it is Professor Njoku who was a member of the Ad Hoc Committee (because you made that point yesterday about delegates who were members the Ad Hoc Committee); Professor Njoku is welcome anywhere in this country. No harm will come to your delegates. But if you insist that it should be in Benin, we will come to Benin. Yesterday Chief Onyia suggested Asaba. I think that would be asking too much from the Northern delegates. So, we want you to give us the chance of presenting the case of the South in a concerted form to the North. I would not like to treat the North as one for this purpose; there are certain elements in the North who want to dominate not only the East, the West and the Mid-West but also certain sections of the Northern Region. These are the people who constitute the enemies of Nigeria and we really would like to give them a showdown. But this does not mean military actions; we do not want any more coups, friction and so on. We want to maintain the link among all the Regions. But if we present the case of the South and they say, "no, this does not suit us", very well it suits the South and we take the appropriate action.

His Excellency: If I might come in there. There is a persistence on this and the impression is that if the South says this and the North says the opposite, you

know, we start feeling that then the crisis really starts.

Chief Awolowo: The crisis is already on. What has not taken place so far is that the North has not been in a position of being presented with the United front of the South. The East has been speaking so far, the Mid- West has been speaking, and the West has been speaking, but there is no concerted action among us. If the North understands that the South is united, it would make a lot of difference.

His Excellency: This leads to the next point of observation that, therefore, the only way for the South really to present that united front is for the South to meet and hammer out that united front. It is a point which must be cleared first before proceeding to make a statement of whatever it is. That is why, to my mind, at the present stage of the crisis the ideal thing is for the Southern people to meet in any platform and discuss and hammer out any difference they might have. Then going further, it would then mean that to do this the South to meet; because if we wait for their permission, we wait forever. We have to think of the crisis objectively, realise our vital interests and take the bull by the horns. I see no reason indeed why the South should not come together. We have been suggesting this for so long, that the Southern leaders could in fact meet in Benin; I have also suggested that the Southern leaders could meet at Asaba too. Once we do this, there is hope for the future.

There is a slight alternative; if we find it impossible because people are going to label us conspirators, and I can understand the reason for the feeling, then the alternative may be for the South in their groupings to say the same thing. After all, the whole of the South has been consulted on the platform of different units making their points and indeed, Sir, when you spoke and made your statement, first your letter, then your statement, the report abroad was that the East and the West were united. There is no question of saying that an individual said the same thing with the East; the report was that the East and the West were united. If the Mid-West considers that the stand which the East and the West have taken is the stand which they ought to take and say the same thing, then outside they will say that the South is united. If this cannot be achieved, then perhaps the only alternative is for the East to decide its own fate and perhaps to move out of the Federation for the West, finding Northern protection intolerable, to equally move out of the Federation, and for the Mid-West once again finding itself in the throes of the North, to decide to eat out of it, and for us knowing our vital interests, to meet and hammer out a form of association. Sometimes that appears rather attractive because it starts on the basis of absolute equality and we meet and freely put into the melting-pot things we think we can afford to put into it. I find that quite interesting.

Finally, the question of venue, I notice how all talks about venue point to the

Mid-West. If there is a true feeling that there should be peace, after all these people claim to have a sizeable following in the East, in view of our own suspicions and things making it difficult for all the people we would like to be present at such meetings to be held, since there are just a few who can in fact be welcomed anywhere, then perhaps in their so called stronghold of the minorities. We can hold meetings in Calabar, in Port Harcourt which they say is Rivers; I am sure we can hold a meeting in Ogoja, which is quite near the North. So there are places in the East where these meetings could indeed be held, but talks of venue for meetings are exclusive of the East; I wonder why.

Chief Awolowo: It is also exclusive of the North. Could I put in a word here now? I do appreciate the points you have made, especially the suggestion that the South could take the bull by the horns, convene a meeting of its leaders and work out its salvation. Well, I must say that a number of factors have been overlooked in this regard. I would be quite willing to attend any meeting convened by the leaders of the South in the South, but it must be realised that we in the West are in a very difficult position and there is such thing as tact in this type of matter. Last year when we went to the Ad Hoc Committee we, or the West laboured under a lot of inhibitions and we had to move rather cautiously because courage does not lie in someone lying on the road and having all the traffic to run him over. At that time all the members of the body-guard of the Military Governor were Northerners; there were over 36,000 soldiers in the whole of the West, most of whom were Northerners, and all of them carried arms. It was under such circumstances that we attended the meeting in Lagos. It is natural that all these soldiers also have their fears occasionally, though they are trained to be fearless. Our Governor was also under some inhibition. At one stage during the Course of the Conference I had to speak out against the North because I felt that they thought that because they were in control they could do just what they liked. But in spite of the fact that we laboured under those inhibitions, we did summon up courage, and we did not know why the meeting of the Ad Hoc Committee was postponed before the 17th. It was not because the East was not coming but because I led a delegation to Lt. Col Gowon on the 7th and at that interview I made it clear on behalf of the West that if the soldiers of Northern origin were not removed from the West we would not attend any further meetings of the Ad Hoc Committee. Then he said between then and the 17th he would do something. Of course, he didn't and decided to postpone the meeting indefinitely. Well, even now we run a lot of risks by calling upon Northern soldiers to go. This morning I got a word from Ibadan, from the Commanding Officer of the Battalion in Ibadan. We passed our resolutions and Col. Adebayo did very well and gave us certain Yoruba officers with whom to go and deliver the petition to Lt. Col. Gowon. I did give him an

ultimatum up to the 15th of May to remove these Northern soldiers from the West. Of course, he agreed to remove them by the 31st of May, but by the time we returned to Ibadan, Northern soldiers had taken up arms and wanted to kill me, to kill Adebayo and all the others. Just now Adebayo does not sleep in his house. Somebody told me that he has not been sleeping in his house. The populace, of course, turned against the Northern soldiers. They now want to send away their wives and children before they themselves finally leave; I understand they are waiting for transport. I don't know why Adebayo should issue the release that soldiers should not be taunted. But this is the way we have been doing our own quiet fighting. You are remote from the West; you have advantages which we do not possess. We cannot rush without rushing to our death at the same time. We are not cowards in the West but we have to move cautiously, because if we do not do, that you might not have us alive; you would only have monuments all over the place.

And may I say in this connection of Southern solidarity - I am sorry to go into what has happened in the past - in 1953 there was an understanding between the banned N.C.N.C., and the banned Action Group; we entered into an agreement, which I hope would be used sometime, to the effect that if the North remained intransigent we would declare a Southern Dominion. This was signed by myself and Zik and I still stand by it. I don't think you need assurance from me that we have a lot in common; but we prefer that you should send your delegates to this meeting, so that we should, known to everyone, enter into negotiations among ourselves and present a common front to the North. Then nobody can accuse us of conspiracy or trying to divide the country into two parts. We want to work for one Nigeria on certain basis which would be agreed to by all of us. You did say that when I spoke people said that the East and the West are united. That is a manner of speaking. There are certain points which you hold dear on which we do not agree but if we are able to have a dialogue, certainly there is need for dialogue between the East and the West on the one hand, and between the West and the Mid-West on the other, I think it will help us to have a common basis. It is not enough for us to say that we do not like the North. That is a negative approach. I think a positive approach will be for us to meet. Unity will last only if it is based on common understanding among us and the basis will start with this meeting. If the North is stupid enough to turn down our demands at that meeting, then it would be faced with opposition and then we shall go out and tell the whole world that this is where we stand. And if it is misconstrued then we can hold our meeting initiated in the South. This is the way I see it.

I want you to look at it from our point of view. If there were no Northern soldiers in the West the position would be different. And even if by the time I

return home the Northern soldiers have gone I still do not want to be accused of perfidy.

According to the Western Area Commander, Nigeria Army, they are now arranging for transport and my attitude is that if they are anywhere in the West, I will not attend any meeting anywhere even if their cap is left. So, we want you to appreciate that point. As I said before, I want you to give me a chance of meeting your people regularly and Sir Adetokunbo Ademola has provided the forum. Let us resolve our differences and get, what we want and quickly too.

His Excellency: If the reason is to get a platform for a meeting between the Southern leaders, I agree very much that we should try and find a platform and here we seem to be presented with a fait accompli. The Southern leaders are here, so the main thing is to go on and discuss.

Now on the question of conspiracy, if you are living in a street and today a burglar went to No.1 and did some havoc, and tomorrow the burglar goes to No.5, I think it would really be terrible for you living in No. 5 to say you must not discuss with the man in No.7 in case the burglar will say you are conspiring. The answer really is to find the best way quickly to defend what is your own. In this, matter, the North is a burglar and surely they will come. For 20 years they have been burgling quite successfully. The East now says we will not be burgled. We feel the others must say so.

Chief Awolowo: What happened if the burglar says no, he is not going to do it.

His Excellency: Yes, but having said that and did the opposite we now understand what our predecessors were fighting for. Now, coming to the question of association with the North, I must stress it again. You said what if we were asked to go to the North on certain conditions. Let me take it on that line. Certainly the East is prepared to work in the North provided the Northerners are not there in the North. This is our general attitude that we cannot deal with them any longer.

Chief Awolowo: The masses of the people in the North do not share what their leaders have goaded them to do.

His Excellency: Let them refuse.

Chief Awolowo: It takes an enlightened community to do what the East did last time. The people of the Mid-West are capable of doing it too but the mass of the people of the North is definitely incapable of doing so. You have lived in the North and you know that they are very ignorant. So I would not like us to visit the sins of these elements who will wither away soon on the future generations of Nigeria. My belief is, let us go back and discuss. It will be something near fraud for us to sit down here and discuss in terms of the South especially as this delegation was sent here by a body consisting of the Northern delegation. I

must say that two or three people have spoken in support of this delegation. We must go back and report and we will report faithfully, but let us have that chance.

I think there are some people who sit behind the throne and think that they can use this platform to thwart the aspirations of the Southern people. They are deceiving themselves. They will fail.

You did say that the rest was facing the issue of being pushed out but if we can get what we want by means which are easier than being pushed out, by all means let us take it, but if every effort which we put forward to get what we want fails, then we shall be prepared to fight for it. We want to adopt an easier line first. We know your needs. We know that you are being strangled. We know that steps are to be taken if the East is to survive and all of us to survive. All of us are fighting for survival. We want to move with speed but we certainly want to have a chance and if you gave us that chance we shall be happy, and you will certainly find that you have not made a wrong decision.

His Excellency: Talking of chance, I thought that in fact one of the key points that made this thing difficult was the fact that the West felt that it had not sufficient military personnel. It is because of this military inadequacy of the West that I asked that Colonel Banjo should be here as a sort of living reminder of something which I consider vital to the Western position, something that could ease the Western position. There are a number of Western officers here; these officers could, in fact, be in the West and could influence very significantly the position in the West. There is another one in Warri prison. He could very much turn the scales within the Military, and I feel really that if the West wants to move, then a prerequisite is that all the forces they have at their resources should be ploughed back and concentrated in the West.

Chief Awolowo: The difficulty is there. If he comes to the West now and his arrest is ordered, what happens? In any case he has to work with the Northern soldiers at present. They can either attack him for having killed Maimalari or somebody like that; I mean, that will be their charge. Why did they kill the Eastern traders? That is the point.

His Excellency: If a point like this is taken up by the Western Delegation as a first step, it will be worthwhile.

Chief Awolowo: I took this up personally with Lt. Col. Gowon on the 17th of last month. I had five hours discussion with him. I did ask him to release them, including Nzeogwu and others. I said as far as we are concerned in the West, Akintola was killed but our people feel that by removing Akintola they have been saved from other killings. That is the truth of the matter. They feel that those people are liberators; they killed the devil that would have swallowed them. So I did ask him to release them, for there was no need saying that if they

released them they would fight back. But what if we want to bring them home and then suddenly find that there is a big trouble starting as a result? Because if they dare touch them there would be trouble. The Yoruba swear that if a Northerner touches another hair of any Yoruba man there would be trouble; we would use all the force and the masses that we have. So that is all settled and as soon as they come they will be absorbed. But if they tried to touch them, there would be trouble.

Sir Francis Ibiam: Chief Awolowo, I wonder if you could tell us, from the information you received recently, how soon do you think the soldiers from the North will eventually leave the West?

Chief Awolowo: We gave them a time limit, an ultimatum for the 15th of May; they wanted to start trouble, to come and kill me and others, and I know why they put two policemen with two rifles in front of my house the other day. Of course, I rang up and said I wanted them removed. There were policemen in front of Sardauna's house but they did not save him. What my informant told me is that they are now arranging their transportation home. They have sent their wives and children home and are waiting to move; they are waiting for transport.

Sir Ibiam: When that happens, you will be prepared to call Victor and others?

Chief Awolowo: Yes.

Sir Ibiam: Have you asked for the release of the officer in Warri?

Chief Awolowo: We asked for all of them, including Ikoku.

Sir Ibiam: People detained in Warri, will they be released by Lagos or by the Government in the West?

Chief Awolowo: Let the Northerners go and these chaps will come back home. There are some means by which they come out here anyway, and I think those means are not yet exhausted.

Sir Ibiam: The other point is, who are the representatives of the North in the Peace Committee?

Chief Awolowo: Dipcharima, Sir Kashim Ibrahim, Diko and Audu. I said I have worked closely with these people; take the influence of Sardauna away and they are very good people.

His Excellency: This country has been drifting for so long without the influence of Sardauna and Balewa, but these very people have not found it necessary to check the drift, have not been able to do something.

Chief Awolowo: It is not easy in the circumstances in which they are.

His Excellency: They could help.

Sir Ibiam: I wonder if you could give us the trend of their own argument when you discussed.

Chief Awolowo: We did not discuss much. First of all we discussed the question as to whether or not there should be an address. The West and the Mid-West said no address should be delivered. The North agreed. Sir Kashim said they did not agree that we should proceed without the East. After listening to some arguments that we should go on without the East, then he discussed with Chief Mariere and said we could not go on without the East; and they joined in persuading me to be on this delegation. And the atmosphere there generally was quite good. As I said here yesterday, they approached the issue with some detachment which I did not even expect from our friends from the North.

Dr. Eni Njoku: Your Excellency, as I understand it, the delegation is asking Your Excellency to nominate Eastern representatives to the Conciliation Committee. The question which I have been trying to resolve in my mind is whether it will not be anomalous if those representing the East in this Committee are nominated by the Eastern Government where as all the others are there on the invitation of the conveners. Would it not be better for the thing to be one thing or the other? Either it is entirely those invited by the conveners or it is entirely those nominated by Governments, because it would seem to me that, there may be ways of explaining it, but it may look as if the East is being difficult; we are trying to do what we think is good for the people of the East. If all others are invited on their own basis and it is only the East that is sponsored by the Government I think that the image of the Committee would be difficult to explain so that if the Committee is composed entirely of those nominated by their Governments, it might then be possible to see that those nominated by the East could attend such a meeting, provided all the usual conditions for such a meeting are met. At present, I do not understand the composition, and I do not know whether I misunderstood the thing, but I seem to think that they are asking this Government to nominate delegates to represent the East. Is it intended to revise the membership on this basis?

Chief Awolowo: What happened was that we were at this meeting on Thursday and the Eastern delegates who were invited, mainly Sir Francis and Sir Louis, were not present, and telephone calls were put through at one stage, we were told that there was a meeting in progress attended by the two proposed delegates and that we would hear from them after that meeting. Later on, we were told that there was a message that the East would not be coming. We tried to get in touch with them and eventually we succeeded and were told that the Eastern delegates would not attend. Sir Adetokunbo got someone who told him that they were not coming until the atmosphere became conducive. Those were said to be the words of the Chief Justice of the East, and we came to the conclusion that maybe the Governor of the East had something

to do with their not coming; because they said the meeting which two of them attended was a meeting which was held with you. That was why we decided to come and see you, otherwise we would have gone to Sir Francis and Sir Louis. And since yesterday we have been discussing and there is no doubt that you feel very strongly about your delegates coming to Western Nigeria.

Coming to the suggestion of Prof. Njoku, I think the way to go about it is for your delegates to come as having been invited by that body. If it is your wish that some other people should take their place, it should be a suggestion that instead of these people coming, it would be Messrs so and so who would attend. We are members of the Peace Committee and if you wanted to suggest the Vice Chancellors, I can go there and suggest it. Even Dr. Aluko's suggestion was that all Vice Chancellors should be invited because Dr. Audu was there. We do not want to make it strictly official. We are in search of peace and I do not think we would get the peace we want without the Military Governors being involved in it. As I leave here I am driving straight to Adebayo to tell him what has transpired in this meeting. I think we cannot get peace in this country without taking the Military Governors into confidence. They are in charge and in control. So it does not matter really how the people are selected. It is a Peace Committee, people meeting to try and find ways of resolving our problems, provided it is with the knowledge and consent of the Military Governors.

Dr. Aluko: If you feel that the Committee should be recomposed to make it effective, that the members have to be sponsored by their Governments, in which case the Governor of the West may nominate Chief Awolowo and myself or somebody else, we could put forward the suggestion.

His Excellency: I think that we started with the basic principles involved in this and we shall readily get into trouble if we continue with this: I think there is need to seek avenue of peace. Now, to get this peace, there is need probably for a third party to try and get the warring factions round and we should now concentrate on finding criteria for selection of this third party who will be acceptable to all.

This Conciliation Committee has started off completely on the wrong premises as far as the East is concerned. Any attempt to patch it up will continue to bring up a lot of embarrassment. Really to my mind, and I think most people are agreed, one should put a pencil through the Conciliation Committee and then start thinking about how to get mediation which would yield a peaceful result. If we address our minds to that and find a way, we have achieved something; and then when you go back, Sir, (Awolowo) perhaps your duty would be to tell them exactly what we have discussed and the principles we have enunciated and agreed here and get them to agree to disband and start again to form a sort of association.

Consider this little personal thing. Having nominated Amachree and Okoi Arikpo, if I say I have to send some other people, the question is; how do you tell whether Amachree and Okoi Arikpo will not attend? The sum total of it is that there will be embarrassment. Already we are trying to save his face. He withdraws but it must not be known that he has withdrawn. That immediately destroys the purpose because the East therefore will not know, only the privileged few will know that he has withdrawn, and these things create difficulties.

Professor Njoku: That is the main point - the question is membership and composition - and the delegation might wish to consider that now they are going to look for different basis. Even with the present one, they should think about the embarrassment to the members and the difficulties about the principles involved and how many delegates from each area should attend (one does not know how two or four was arrived at), and various members for different areas. But perhaps what is also much more important is, even if the basis of membership was arrived at, the question of time. We know that in September we spent three weeks in Lagos hitching and fencing. The problems now are not easier than they were in September last. How long will the East take this position? How long will this conciliation come while the East is still suffering all these strangulations? How are we sure that this is not going to be another long delay while we go on gasping for breath in the East? These are the implications. Although Chief Awolowo is a businessman and would like to get things done in a business-like manner, what is the guarantee that others would like to get on in a business-like way?

Sir Francis Ibiam: I would like to know what is the ultimate aim of the Conciliation Committee? After it has come to certain kind of decision and agreement, what is the next step?

Chief Awolowo: It has not been decided but it will be decided when you send your delegates to the meeting.

Professor Aluko: If there is any agreed or suggested mechanics of convening another meeting that can do some useful work, I think it will be a sort of achievement if you let us know about it now. I raise an objection on the basis of the meeting first because I saw the Chief Justice there, and I did not see any other Vice Chancellor of our Universities. But if really His Excellency or some members here, because I am quite impressed by the way the argument goes, feel that another meeting to be worthwhile has to be started in a particular way, (either it should be representatives of the Regional Government or it should be by three or four members from each Region), we shall be glad to know about it. We, in the University of Ife, met and wrote a letter to the Federal Government saying that all Federal economic blockade should be

dropped because we do not believe in economic strangulation of a Region. Sir, if we agree that there should be a meeting, then we have achieved something and then we can go and say that the East feels that this is the best way of conducting this sort of meeting and if you really insist on making peace we should disband and reconstitute ourselves in a better way. If the CJ refuses then we will know that he does not want to make peace. I do not want to waste time with old people, in fact, I said so at the conference but when they said that without the old men there will be no young men, I succumbed. So, if there is a way of doing it, it will be an achievement. We shall take it to them instead of fooling around. So, I shall be delighted if it is agreed that there will be a meeting of a committee of some sort but that this is the best way of convening it which will take care of the Vice Chancellor's observations.

Mr. C.C. Mojekwu: I thought that a number of points have been made and I have noted here, observations made about membership and composition of this National Conciliation Committee. I am rather frightened that if we have to conciliate and the sponsors happen to be either United States of America or United Kingdom, we have not started right. And quite frankly, on that basis, I would suggest that the present delegates should go back and tell the rest of the members that this will not go with the East. If America and Britain are going to sponsor settlement of the Nigerian crisis they should come out in the open and negotiate with the Military leaders. It seems to me that this is a very cunning way to undercut not only our Military Leaders but also our political leaders. I am quite sure that if some of our political leaders know the people behind this they would resist it right from the start. I think also that the Nigerian leaders both military and political are capable of convening meeting having done it before.

The Military leaders agreed on the Ad Hoc Constitutional Conference. If, as it appears now, that the Ad Hoc Constitutional Conference has outlived its usefulness, then the military leaders should agree again to try another meeting call it Conciliation or any other name. Again, they will be in a position to send delegates. If they want the East to state its case more than what has been stated in the various newspapers and the Press Conference, the East will no doubt be in a position to restate it.

I think it might be important, if such a meeting is to be convened, for the agenda to be agreed. I listened attentively yesterday and if my notes are correct, the terms of reference which the conveners put to the meeting looked a little bit strange because without discussing the present situation in which we can get peace, the items are: composition, allocation of revenue, fear of domination, economic relations of the country. I am not suggesting that these are not useful points for any agenda, but I would have thought that a meeting of this nature

which has been called and which would not bind any Government as such in whatever action they propose, politically and economically, but to try and reconcile things, should have an agenda of a sort talking about peace and future co-operation, and the basis of future association of the units of Nigeria.

Lastly, the question of venue. It should have been agreed before such a meeting can succeed. I think Your Excellency mentioned that point quite often that it is all right talking of Benin or somewhere else to accommodate the North. Naturally no Easterner will be accommodated in Lagos. Easterners can be accommodated in Calabar, Ogoja, Opobo and possibly Nsukka. So, I think the question of venue is something that must be agreed and it is also fundamental.

Since these observations have been made, I wonder whether the time is not opportune, I am sure that the delegates have made sufficient notes, either for His Excellency to ask us to put the points down or just repeat them but I thought that this would be a good summary. Membership, the Sponsorship of this meeting, the Agenda and the Venue. If these things are put right, then probably the East would consider joining. One fundamental point is, the East would be willing to participate in any discussion that is likely to produce peace in the country, either in this country or anywhere, provided that the pre-requisites for holding such a conference are available. One of them, in my view, is that the East would not participate in any discussion unless the people who are holding us (as somebody said over the telephone to me) "in this bellicose" would withdraw from holding us there; it is quite painful.

Chief Awolowo: You mean you would not participate in any discussion until that is done?

Mr. Mojekwu: How can we?

His Excellency: But I said that yesterday!

Mr. Mojekwu: Sponsorship of this meeting, if it is going to serve any useful purpose, cannot be America or England.

Chief Awolowo: That is not proved. We accept the authority of the Military Governor, East for this information, but certainly we cannot go to the meeting and say that we think this meeting should not be continued because it is sponsored by these people.

His Excellency: Is it not a question of mutual faith and confidence?

Dr. Aluko: If I go there and say that it is sponsored by Britain and America, they will ask for proof, and if I cannot prove it they will say it is not sponsored by Britain and America. Then I sit down: unless Britain and America come forward and say, "Yes, we sponsor this meeting", I have no proof. I think it is a bit difficult, but the only way we can do it is by a revision of the present composition. We can say, if we want to make peace, let us make peace with another composition, which means that if America and Britain are sponsoring

the meeting, then they have failed. We do not want them to pick the people for us; we now want to pick our own people.

The other point made is that we cannot be discussing all these things when the Federal Government is taking certain economic measures against the Region; that the Federal Government should be told, if you want peace, then remove the economic blockades; if you say you are making peace you say aircraft should not fly to the East, and so on, you are deceiving yourself.

His Excellency: I wonder if you realise, contrary to the denial of Gowon, that the Army in the East have not been paid by Lagos and I had to pay them £112,000. As I am today, on principle I have already instructed that my younger brother who is at school in England has to return because there are so many fathers who cannot transmit money to their children Overseas and I would not like to use my privileged position while others are suffering. Do you realise that there are traders who have ordered things abroad and cannot transfer money to pay for those things? These are quite true. This is what we mean by economic strangulation, and on that basis the East has made it clear to this delegation that whilst these things persist, the East will not go and sit down for any discussion. These are points we do not have even to be there to make. Everybody in the country knows these things, and they must be cleared to show that there is in fact an intention to do good. When somebody is on the floor and I said it yesterday and you have got your hand firmly grasping his throat, and then a third party comes in to mediate, you don't start discussing why you grasp his throat; the first thing is, you remove your hand, then you discuss.

Chief Awolowo: Suppose we go there and say to you, "You also abrogate all those Edicts"? The point is that the two of you are trying to do each other harm. If we say, "You allow Federal planes to fly in and out of the Eastern Region", and "You remove all these embargoes and let trade flow", will that be in order? Because you also hold them, may be not as firmly as they have done to you. It is not a question of being accused this time, it is a question of being impartial now, and I would not be doing justice to myself or yourself if I do not say this now. I can go and say to the Federal Government, "You must stop all these things if you want to do good peace business", and at the same time I say to the East, "You abrogate all these Edicts which sort of nationalised or zonalised all the Federal Institutions; release the planes". If you do that I will be a happy man; I will go to the Committee with that and we settle all these things. I can even go further and loan you money. We will do that and publish it to the world. Would that be in order?

His Excellency: What it means is, if we can stop the clock, turn it back to a certain stage, and then start the trouble from there again.

Chief Awolowo: We say they should stop the economic sanctions and at the

same time you release the planes and allow Federal Boards to have Federal control.

His Excellency: Something started this; because if we really start going back like this all the way, I will say: bring back Ironsi, bring back the 30,000 people; I will say: build up the houses. The question of economic blockade is rather an interesting one, because it does revolve itself on the question of the debt which the Federal junta owes to the East. This point has been made abundantly clear. We even went to Ghana with it. There, they saw it, the amount, everything. Lagos said they were not paying us. The first action was taken, the Revenue Edict. Then Lagos, completely vicious, decided to halt plane traffic to the East. In fact, I think the stopping of this plane in the East is perhaps the first action I have taken in support of the Gowon junta, because I was obeying his instructions. Stop plane traffic: If he happens to get his planes here and then we stop plane traffic, why should we quarrel? In any case, we believe that the Nigerian Airways is a Company; it is not the Federal Government. We have our shares in the Nigerian Airways. There was no Board meeting at which it was decided that planes should not go on that route.

Chief Awolowo: I didn't get that right.

His Excellency: Well, because this was not the decision of the Board of the Nigerian Airways. It was unilaterally imposed - that they should not fly to the East. That was immediately after the Revenue Edict.

Dr. Aluko: We do not really know the effect of these Federal-Eastern counter economic actions because some of us who are very critical of the Government in Lagos feel that the Federal Government would lose. Really if they ask me I will say I don't know, but if I would make a guess I would feel that the East would benefit more than they would lose. When we discussed these sanctions in our University I suggested that we should press for their removal. So somebody asked, "How are you sure that these sanctions are not working in the best interest of the East? They would rather prefer that the sanctions would remain because they are gaining". But I said, even if they are gaining, we would wish that they will be prepared to lose some of their advantages in the interest of economic intercourse. I was not aware, for example, that you cannot even transfer money out. I was not aware because they talked of postal orders and they did not talk of P&T as a whole, and Central Bank, and so on: because there are so many ways of transferring money. The only man who can know much is a man like Pius. Really there is a lot of ignorance outside the East about how these things are working, and I am sure if you ask the Federal Government they will say, "Oh we have lost so many millions of pounds". I was going to appeal to the Vice Chancellor if he could allow all the Lecturers to come to our meeting to know how these things are going.

His Excellency: I invite your lecturers to come and hold discussions with our lecturers in Nsukka. Just tell me who will be coming and I will make the arrangements.

Chief Awolowo: I notice your reaction is unfavourable to the suggestion I made but I am going back on it. How you have passed an edict taking over many statutory bodies that were controlled by the Federal Government. I disagree with you in all that except in one, and that is the Marketing Company. I have not made a complete list of all the economic sanctions but if I were going to speak behind the back of the East I will say remove all these sanctions if we are to have a chance of getting peace. Let the Eastern Region market its own produce so that she can take the money and nobody will sit on it. In 1948 I pleaded for the regionalisation of the Marketing Company because I felt that the sale of cocoa was not to my liking. I did not succeed. I feel that you have taken the correct action in this regard. Well, I do not know of any other institution that I can say that you are quite justified. About E.C.N. I do not see why you should not keep the E.C.N. I do not see why one region should be subsidising another region. So if you have a reason for all these things one should be able to look at them objectively, but certainly we must look at the matter objectively. We must look at the matter from the points of view both of the East and of the Federal Government. Whatever we may say, there is still a Federal Government, call it by whatever name. So we are prepared to go back and say that the East is not coming to the meeting unless you do the following things. When you have done that, we shall be coming back to negotiate for them to attend. It would be fair if certain federal services which you now seize are also released, for example, Airways, it was stopped after you seized the federal revenue.

His Excellency: The revenue which we stopped going to Lagos kept completely to the formula. We did not change the existing formula. Secondly, because we were owed money and Lagos made it quite clear that it was not their intention to pay us the money owed, the East then said, "let us ensure that Lagos does not accumulate more debts". What we said was that this revenue should be paid to the Treasury, we take what is rightly ours before anything goes to Lagos - as simple as that. We did not alter any formula at all; either we get our debts paid or we prevent them from accumulating more debts. It is like this: somebody comes to your house, borrows money from you, next month he borrows more money you say, "pay me", and he says "I have no money", then at the end of another month he says, "give me more". The East now says "no". What we have done is really very simple.

Professor Aluko: I know that the Federal Government had a shortfall in revenue of £16 million last year, which is surprisingly small in view of what happened last year.

Dr. Okigbo: There is bound to be some misconception there because this matter was discussed at Accra.

Chief Awolowo: Was it by the Military Leaders?

Dr. Okigbo: No. I am talking about the meeting of the Finance Officers in which the Federal Government was represented by the Secretary, Finance. The issue was not with the amount owed. Each Government delegation had a tape record of the discussions which was produced by the Ghana authorities.

His Excellency: Each Government delegation has a tape which was produced by the Ghana authorities. It is true that there was a shortfall in Federal revenue, as a result of which the statutory allocation had to be adjusted downwards, but even that downward adjustment, it had to be made in the light of actual revenue collected, but even that has not been paid; and in Accra: the Federal Finance man said they owe the East, the West and everybody, and the Accra authorities asked him "How much do you owe everyone? But he said he would not discuss details there, but there was no dispute as to whether or not they owe us. It is not a matter that the expectation turned out to be too high but what they accepted as owing to us is still outstanding.

Dr. Aluko: If they are owing Eastern Region £12m or £16m and the Federal Government has £16m. In the light of what has happened, if we want to behave like people who appreciate problems, I would say let us pay the East because of their problems, but I am saying that people like ourselves don't know these problems. If there is any way in which we can have this information, either through discussion - these are our problems, this is what we are owed - it might be the advice would be, if they are talking of peace first then make a statement that they are going to pay so much. What I know is that this country is ruled by rumour and by lack of fact. If there are people who can give the facts, so much the better. Even in the West, when you talk about these things many of the people do not even appreciate the number of people who have moved to the East; they say it is a lie, how can 1 million people move; and we were able to tell them; then they believe that perhaps it could be true. A majority of people in their villages just don't know what is happening, and that is why I feel that if there is any forum by which we can start discussing these things, then when we know the problem, we could say to Gowon, this is the problem, if you want something, this must be done. Then if he says he does not want to do it, the position will be clear.

His Excellency: What have you done about those things you know? We went to Aburi; we discussed fully at Aburi a number of points and reached agreements; we came back, everybody kept quiet. Then I made the move. Having discussed and reached agreements, I felt that honour would prevail but, unfortunately, those agreements were denied by Lagos. The West said nothing,

the Mid-West said nothing; I was cautioning against it, till there reached a stage when in fact people were beginning to suspect that perhaps I was not telling the truth. Later then the tapes of Aburi were published and everybody heard the voices as they indeed spoke, and what arose from it, why do they find it extremely difficult to insist on those agreements being carried out? That is why each time they say meeting here, meeting there, there are certain meetings that we all know about. Certainly the Ad Hoc Committee one, we know about; members of it are here. So, this is the subtle point, Aburi now we have all heard completely. Implement Aburi, and then further discussions can follow; but these things are quietly brushed aside. Now they say the East has done this, the East has done that. It seems that there is always a gang in the rest of the country which in fact looks for sheer devilry in everything that the East has done.

Chief Awolowo: That is certainly not correct; I am sorry to say it. With regard to Aburi I was taken in confidence by the Military Governor, West and I can assure you that he was quite as valiant as he could in seeking to get the decisions taken at Aburi implemented, and during my recent discussions with Gowon (I told the Military Governor, West, before then) I told him that it was improper, most improper, for any civil servant to sit in judgement over decisions taken by the highest authority in the land. There is always a stage when a final decision must be taken. In the process of reaching the decision you can give your advice as to the implications. But once the decision is taken it is not open to any civil servant to sit down in judgement over that decision. I have met a lot of people in Western Nigeria; not one of them suggested that the stand you took was wrong. On the contrary, they all supported the stand you took. But simply that the Military Governors, West and Mid-West, did not speak out or make broadcasts as you did does not mean that they were trying to depart from the Aburi decisions. In the case of Mid-West, they are a bit remote from centre of Lagos and Lt. Col. Ejoor could speak out his mind more than Col. Adebayo; and you listened to Col. Adebayo's recent address and you could see that he is getting back to his own elements. It is not because he wants to depart from the Aburi decisions but because of the circumstances of the place.

We have spent a lot of time and I think the stand of the East is clear; you are not coming to this meeting until certain conditions are fulfilled, and as far as I can understand these conditions concern membership and composition of the Committee which must be looked into afresh, sponsorship, venue and agenda.

Chief Onyia: I wonder if we would not add time limit, in view of this fear of prolongation of economic strangulation. We can put in a time limit for this Committee to reach some decision. I don't know whether you do not consider that that is desirable.

Chief Awolowo: All these are entirely new to me. We therefore cannot, give

any undertaking here. I would very much like to know what your attitude is to the suggestion which I made about these sanctions because I think it is very important really. All this talk about composition, membership and agenda, I think are minor. What I think is important is economic sanctions because we must live in order to attend a meeting anywhere.

Sir Francis Ibiam: I think the point at issue is whether the East would also stop its economic sanctions if the Federal Government stops. The point is which came first? You see anything Eastern Nigeria has been doing is in order to protect itself against what the Federal Government has been doing to her. As His Excellency has explained, we have had to find money to look after our displaced persons who have come from other parts of the country. It is our place to look after civil servants who have been serving the Federal Government and we have not got the money. We know that the Federal Government has that money and is in fact, owing us. If the Federal Government said, "yes, we owe you and we will pay so much, that could have been very encouraging. But so far what the Federal Government has given to Eastern Nigeria is £550,000 as against several million pounds we have been spending here. We wanted the Federal Government to give the assurance that they will give us the money they owe us and will continue to look after the servants who have been serving the Federal Government. The Federal Government did not do that and would not even give token money. Therefore to protect ourselves we had to stop more money going to the Federal Government from Eastern Region. And the money that goes from here to the Federal Government is not being used properly; it is being used to buy arms with which to conquer Eastern Nigeria. It would be foolish if we allowed the Federal Government to use our money to buy arms with which to kill us. Therefore we took this precaution of keeping our money. Now instead of the Federal Government acting in a sensible way they started economic sanctions. Therefore in the final analysis, it is not Eastern Nigeria that is going to stop and say, "we withdraw our sanctions" because right now it is the big man that is using the big whip. He will stop first before we do something.

Professor Eni Njoku: The crux of this matter does not so much lie on the actual decisions taken. If we have collected any money over and above what the Federal Government owes us, this should be credited back to the Federal Government if you want to say so. They should stop economic sanctions against the East and after the East has reconciled her books she will then return the amount collected over and above what the Federal Government owes her to the Federal Government. I think if it is done that way it will be quite fair; otherwise, to simply say we shall stop collecting money here whilst they are owing us, is not fair. As a matter of fact, the money which is said they are owing us is actually

being used to run things in the North. What we are talking about is the ones that legitimately they should pay us. So that if you want us to make quid pro quo it can only be that we should undertake to return to them any money collected which is over and above what they owe us. To simply say we should stop collecting money and still take over certain responsibilities the Federal Government has abandoned is rather unfair.

I would say that, first, we should widen the membership of the meeting. Names have been mentioned here, I think that is not enough. Secondly, we question the sponsorship of the meeting. We want to know whether this meeting is being sponsored by individuals or Governments so that we can include all this under sponsorship. Thirdly, the question of membership and composition has been raised. Fourthly, this question of agenda is important because to go to another meeting as we did before without agenda and start talking for months, is something which is difficult for most people. Then there is the question of venue. Then let us say sponsorship including whoever is originating this, and membership. After that we shall deal with agenda and the question of venue with all the implications then we shall arrive at the question of sanctions against the East provided the East would return any excess of whatever they are being owed. You can summarise the details. There are other things we did not mention, for example, the fact that some of the money which they jointly owe us is being used in the North to run services at much higher cost than they would have been if Nigerians were running them. But let us take the essential ones first.

Sir Francis Ibiam: Since we are not at loggerheads either with the Mid-West or the West, and since we are not having sanctions against one another, I would like to see a platform where the Mid-West, the West and the East can meet and discuss. A thing that really matters to us is the association of the Southern Regions. It may be that when this matter is put forward to the Peace Committee and if it took upon itself to talk to the authorities in Lagos they might just say, "no, we cannot do that". Then the time must come when since we cannot have this meeting we must have a dialogue with the West and the Mid-West so that as South, we will know exactly where we are going. Because it would appear foolish for us in Eastern Nigeria to stop talking when the Federal Government is pressing her full weight against us. We feel that we cannot go begging our presence in any committee seeking peace since we are the injured party. We cannot go to that meeting to beg for peace.

Our Government has given so many points and made several suggestions about where we can meet together and talk on equal terms. Someone did explain that although the Mid-West did not say anything openly about the Aburi Agreement, they agreed with us silently in their minds. That was a silent

agreement which we could not tell by any means that that was what they were thinking. But what stopped them talking to our own Governor here on the telephone? Why shouldn't the Governor of the West pick up telephone and talk to the Governor of the East and say, "look this Aburi question, we agreed with you that it must be implemented". The same should have happened between the Mid-West Governor and our own Governor so that at least he will know that majority of the people agree even if they did not say it openly. There is a time when you agree openly and state your facts, it does not matter what happens. We in the East have always taken it that the West does not bother with the implementation of the Aburi Agreements.

Chief Awolowo: I am sure that His Excellency has got a copy of a memorandum prepared by the Military Governor, West, on the matter.

As soon as you came back from Aburi, Civil Servants in the West proceeded to implement the decisions and our Governor prepared a memorandum which was sent to Lagos and he was accused of having taken instructions from you before preparing the memorandum, it was not a question of agreeing silently, it was a question of taking a positive steps to see that Aburi was implemented. We are very keen on Aburi being implemented because the Governor of the West was not allowed to do a thing in that place. For example, they wanted to return a Chief Justice he did not want. Some people were detained and he was told that he had no right to detain them. He was completely hamstrung and I am sure you will agree that, that memorandum should have been prepared by you. He showed it to me in my private capacity, so here, I will not defend the Governor of the Mid-West because I do not know what he did. Now, I must go back to this point and I hope I will not be accused of being unduly stubborn. I think and I still believe, that you should allow delegates from the East to attend the meeting. Secondly, I think that that meeting should take first things first. If anybody wants peace, I do not think it is necessary to think about the sponsor. When the meeting took place, I was surprised at the atmosphere. I have never been at any conference with Sir Adetokunbo Ademola before and when I was practising as a Lawyer I did not appear before him, but I was very surprised to see that he was very detached from that meeting. I think he was as detached as anyone could be at that meeting. But if we want to take first things first, economic sanctions should be removed; but I insist and I want to stress that certain acts here should be repealed. But I think also that we should insist (I said this to Gowon before) that immediate steps should be taken to have the revenue allocated purely on the basis of derivation. I have always advocated this. Once those principles are agreed, I think the technocrats can get together and work out the details and say, so much belongs to the East, so much to the West and so much to the Mid-West. How the centre would get its own share for its own

services is another matter. Then there would not be the question of your seizing Federal services. As a matter of fact, in doing the allocations, the Regional Government should be given authority to collect certain revenue, though certain revenue must be collected by the Federal Government. I can see the point that you have been wounded very badly, physically and psychologically. The physical wounds can be healed comparatively very quickly, but the psychological ones cannot heal very quickly; they take a long time. How do you heal the wounds that were inflicted on the younger people whose parents were killed, and so on and so forth? I can see that quite clearly. You cannot revive the dead except on the resurrection day, but that is a long way from here. At the same time we must put into this matter as much objectivity as is possible, otherwise we will go astray. Let us send Easterners there, let us go to the meeting. May I say something here. You have spoken, Pius has spoken, Eni Njoku has spoken, and others. I cannot reproduce what they said, at that meeting; I hope Sam will be able to transmit some. I will say the East is not coming; these are the reasons. But let them come and speak to the hearing of the North; then the North will be able to see the quality of your case; then we get up and say, this is the way to settle this matter. This is the first step, this is the second. This question of revenue must be settled right away, and then that would stop the Federal Government spending the money of the East and the West in the North. And I ask, how on earth would you expect an Easterner to understand this. There are certain prerequisites of Federation. One of them is that all the people live together, those who have and those who have not. How can you expect an Easterner who has one shilling to agree that even one-tenth of a penny out of that shilling would go to the North to assist the Northerners? Not within the next five years at least. That is why I came to decide on confederation. I gave vent to my views and I still stand by those views. We agreed on that and I think the Mid-West is prepared to go by it. I used to be a lawyer, but it was long ago when I argued cases. For me to go there now and argue your case, I will find it difficult. Of course God moves in a mysterious way and may be the circumstances would change.

Dr. Okoro: May I know whether this cannot be done: the East putting forward its own case in differently constituted meeting of Nigerians from all the Regions?

His Excellency: Before that, I don't think it would be necessary for me to reiterate certain points which I made to you yesterday, but I think because of the time, we tend to move away from them. First, the East has made a categorical point. A meeting convened by Ademola is not one that the East can participate in. Secondly, that a meeting in which Amachree and Arikpo are Eastern delegates would not be acceptable to the East. Thirdly, that in the East

we believe that the Judiciary is sacrosanct and therefore, we do not encourage our Judiciary to descend from their lofty position into the realm of politics to discuss such matters as this Committee is likely to discuss. For that reason, Sir Louis Mbanefo himself finds it impossible to push himself into such an organisation. He cannot come. Having gone to this meeting, he seizes to be Chief Justice. He cannot afford to make it. Fourth, my Adviser advises me; if in all these things I happen to be a thief, you can be rest assured that he advises me to be a thief, and therefore, he has no place in this sort of gathering. So then, the whole question of Eastern delegation or composition is dead.

Chief Awolowo: There are other people; we can invite them.

His Excellency: Prof. Njoku went into details about this. This Conciliation Committee started with the wrong foot forward, and Dr. Aluko agrees completely. The first thing to do is clearly to disband the Conciliation Committee and this meeting would achieve something if we use this opportunity to put forward principles which must guide future attempts at mediation for peace. These people I have said cannot be our delegates and be at this meeting which we think must not hold. Your suggestion is that if these people come to that meeting we would then be able to make our points, but I think it just doesn't work because they cannot be there.

Chief Awolowo: Well, what principles have you in mind for constituting the Peace Committee.

His Excellency: For a Peace Committee to be able to hold, or rather I don't like to take it on the basis of a Peace Committee. I would rather suggest what I think should happen next to help us resolve this crisis. I think people who have authority and mandate should meet at a Conference in which the units will be considered absolute equals and to discuss the terms of co-operation between the Regions and possible association between those Regions that can freely associate. To do this the various entities must then set about in their own way to select the persons who would attend such a meeting, and so set time limit so as to ensure that things, or rather to ensure first, that the acts of economic strangulation as visited upon the East by the illegal set-up in Lagos are removed. Only on this basis would any useful purpose be achieved.

Chief Awolowo: I think you will remove the word "illegal".

His Excellency: Well, I can understand your predicament in this, but that is the position.

Chief Awolowo: There will be a lot of legal argument in the West about this.

His Excellency: Sorry, gentlemen, I have rushed on very quickly to enunciate certain principles but if you can do those, that would be all right. Oh! I didn't talk about the military hold; I have talked about the economic strangulation. I think, too, the military hold on other units must also be

released. I think once these are done, then the atmosphere would be conducive to a free discussion.

Professor Aluko: I am myself worried about lack of contact between the Governors. I have been here twice and each time I have also called on the Mid-West Governor. The last time I came the Governor of the East gave me his Onitsha telephone number and told me that there was no contact between him and the Governors, Mid-West and West. He gave me the number and told me that they could call him up at any time either at Enugu or at Onitsha. When I got to Benin I gave the telephone number of Onitsha to the Governor Mid-West, and told him that I was surprised that he was not in contact with the Governor, East. He said he did not want to be accused of collaboration with anybody but promised that he would telephone soon. When I got to the West I gave the number to our own Military Governor and he promised to call in three days time. When I called on him after three days, he said he had no chance to make the call, I cannot compel Adebayo and say, "you must telephone him". I do not know how to deal with military people. If it were a civilian Governor, even if there was crisis I think that he would make contacts. I do not know what we can do about it. The Adviser to the Governor, Mid-West, is here and Chief Awolowo is here; I think that is a job for you. As for me, I always put telephone calls through to the East and whenever I detect they are tapping the line I used to tell them to keep off. I usually speak to M.C.K. and Professor Kalu Ezera. You cannot be talking of the South coming together when the Governor of the West and Mid-West cannot even say, "how do you do" to each other.

His Excellency: An opportunity like this does not come every day. One can say that on this platform, it does not solve your responsibility on the other platforms, you can be represented. We have talked about this platform we know where we are going, let us get down and use this opportunity to talk about other things which we find vital to our continued existence. Here I can see a lot of good coming out. If we miss this opportunity, perhaps we may not get it in another three months.

Professor Aluko: The East also must be a little bit more tactful in dealing with the West and the Mid-West. There are actions the East takes which frighten others. For example, the catching of the plane; it worried the Governor, Mid-West more than anybody else. We do not even know the design against it. What prevents our Governor from being taken away one day. There are other things that worry people, the attempt to break up the Federal Palace Hotel. If the intention was so against the North why didn't you go to Abdallah Hotel in Kaduna? In fact the rumour was that the East wanted to break up not only the Federal Palace Hotel but also the U.C.H. and the University of Ibadan. This type of thing makes people who do not have contact farther apart. You will kindly

contact these people when you want to do something like that in the future.

His Excellency: What happens if I arrest Gowon in Lagos. Would you say that it is a design against Lagos?

Professor Aluko: We shall be happy. But I am saying that in doing other things it would be nice if you talk to Ejoor and Adebayo so as to ease tension.

Sir Francis Ibiam: Do we have confidence in Ejoor? Is the Governor of Eastern Region quite sure that if he said over the telephone, "this is what we are going to do", that it will not leak out? The Supreme Military Council met recently without our Governor. Was there any reason why either the Governor of West or the Mid-West could not telephone and say, "we did meet and this is what happened". If the Governor, East, knows what happened, then he got it through intelligence. Who would have thought that his own counterparts could not tell him that they met for two days and this is what happened? But they don't.

His Excellency: What did I get at one such meeting? I telephoned the Governor of the Mid-West one day that I was coming to see him (and this must be taken in the background of the affairs of the past year), I said, "I must hold a discussion with you". Within a period of 12 hours it was decided. On that telephone call it was decided that I would visit him at the week-end. There I spent some time discussing with the Governor about their previous meeting and other things. Indeed I came back full of hopes. Imagine my utter disappointment when two days later Gowon said publicly that he had been notified of my agreement to visit the Governor of the Mid-West immediately that agreement was made. Did anybody think that that would have been catastrophic? Because knowing that in two days' time Ojukwu would be there, the Northern soldiers could have done anything and that would have ended the East. Since that episode I have never considered again the possibility of going to the Mid-West.

Chief Awolowo: Did you speak to the Governor, Mid-West, about it? Because I doubt if, in fact, he gave out the information.

His Excellency: It is dangerous to expect that the reasonable one will forever be reasonable. I should have thought that he would telephone me and say that he did not do that.

Chief Awolowo: I thought that it was a blackmail by Gowon.

Professor Aluko: I asked the Military Governor, Mid-West and he promised that after the meeting of the last Military Council he would report to you some of the agreements reached. Why he did not keep his words, I do not know. It is only the Chief who can influence things in the West. Some of us are being held down by the Chief because even when we pass resolutions and tell the Governor of the West to take it, he will insist that he must inform Gowon.

Sometimes I feel that he is afraid to go and see Gowon. I do not know what is the position in the Army but we always say in Yoruba that "you are afraid of the man who sends you a message that he is coming not of the man who is going to deliver the message." So I said, "let us clear it with the Supreme Commander". That is why some civilians do not talk because the way civilians talk is quite different from the way Army officers talk.

Most people do not know that you do not talk with them. I am sure the North knows that this dialogue is going on. This is one way in which some people in the East can get over their difficulties.

I wrote a letter to the Governor, North, and I said that he should try and telephone the Governor, East, as often as possible, if you can keep this dialogue open. Your Excellency, it will be very helpful. It must start at the Governors level.

Chief Mariere: We are on a special mission and our duty is quite clear. Having made preliminary observations yesterday, I thought that there was no need to say anything today since Chief Awolowo presenting today would be reinforcing the argument that it is in the interest of the East to join the National Conciliation Committee. But some revelations have been made in which the Governor, Mid-West, has been referred to and I think this is a matter in which he himself can best explain, but I want to give this assurance that the Governor, Midwest, will be the last person to enter into any conspiracy that will interfere with your (His Excellency's) life. I would like the impression that you are not always safe with him to be dispelled from your mind.

I have visited Your Excellency before because at that time I felt that the chain of communication between you and the Governor, Mid-West, was only by telephone and that it was necessary for two of you to meet and discuss matters between yourselves. That visit was successful because I succeeded in getting the Governor, Mid-West, and yourself to meet at the Niger Bridge. In fact you agreed to meet at the middle of the bridge and I accompanied him. When we got to the middle of the bridge we received a message that you wanted us to come to the Onitsha end of the bridge. He turned to me and said, "What do we do"? And I told him that we must go. Then he asked me a question: If it was he who asked you to come to the Asaba end of the bridge will you agree to come? I said: "I don't know".

If you want to clear some of the difficulties that we have, the only proper thing to do is to meet. Therefore the question of the Mid-West attacking the East is completely baseless. How can that happen? In fact our connection with the East is such a thing and so the only way to clear this sort of bad blood in our domestic matters and bring about confidence is to meet. That our meeting at the Niger Bridge was a bit successful was because we met Your Excellency and

we discussed.

I want to add this, and you will please forgive me if you regard it as platitude. The context of the current situation in the country changes as events unfold themselves and it may well be that whatever solution one considers proper at a given point ceases to be so when a new situation develops in a different context. That is why we seem to be moving forward and backwards. I can see that because I felt very happy when the point was made that the East is prepared to take part in any discussion that would bring peace in the country. And at the same time my counterpart, Sir Francis Ibiam, made a point "that the East will not go to that meeting to ask for peace", so I do not know where we are.

Sir Francis Ibiam: I did not say, "to ask for peace" but "to beg for peace".

Chief Mariere: I am sorry I did not get you correctly. Anyway, if we are all interested in meeting together to find ways and means of resolving this problem, surely we must have an open mind that we are going to have peace for ourselves.

I think the points made here are quite clear about the composition of the Committee and those who selected them. In fact there is already one snag with that in that Chief Awolowo, Chief Onyia and Sir Kashim Ibrahim were members of the Ad Hoc Constitutional Conference and are also members of the Conciliation Committee. Of the two members of the Eastern Region, none of them was a member of the Ad Hoc Committee. That knocks the bottom out of the thing.

I think what has been said here already should be enough for the delegation to go back and convey to those who sent us. I feel that the idea of disbanding the whole thing is necessary and to set up a new committee only on the basis of Government selection as representatives of the different regions on equal basis. If that is what will bring us peace, why not have it? I think we have had enough to be able to carry to those 'who sent us.

As I said yesterday, we are very anxious for a peaceful solution to be found to our problems and some people must make some offers. Your Excellency has been good enough to allow us to come and we feel that that in itself is a step forward and that there is some feeling that for us to get together is necessary.

We cannot discuss all our problems in the capacity that we are now although Your Excellency did say that we can still use it to discuss other matters affecting the solidarity of the South. Personally I will not feel very free to enter into that because if I have a mandate to come and present a message and I see that as an opportunity to discuss other matters which I have not cleared with my people, I will not be doing the right thing as far as my conscience is concerned. So, if we might tie ourselves down to the particular Committee which sent us I think we have had enough.

His Excellency: May I take this opportunity to thank everyone very sincerely for the way and manner you have held this discussion. It has brought us a great deal closer. I am rather surprised in the way you got quite clearly the points which have to be taken back to the committee. I have absolute confidence that they will be put before the Committee properly even though you (Awolowo) said you are not a good reporter. I do know that even in discussing here, notes had been taken of the intensity of feeling already between us and I am absolutely certain that this will be equally reflected.

There is one thing I would very much like to ask of you. I would very much like for such group in this delegation to be able to convey to the respective Governors my anxiety for meeting with my colleagues of the South. I would like them to know that I am willing and anxious for that meeting to be at any level whether civil, official, or governmental. I am willing personally to make the facilities available. Perhaps it might be better first for officials to meet. Our officials will be willing to go to the Mid-West to meet Southern officials to discuss points and try to find areas of agreement. I would like you to ask the Governors to please consider this seriously.

We will keep on trying to keep this way of making general peace open but it would be tragic if the South is caught, as it were, unprepared. So our effort should be on two fronts - the national level and the Southern level - so that if one fails we can move into another without very bad disruption.

On behalf of the people of the East, I thank you very much and I look forward to seeing you again very soon when these our points would have been made to the Committee and probably - the reply. Thank you very much.

Chief Awolowo: I want to thank you very much for the cordial reception that has been given us and the time you have devoted to exchanging views with us. We shall certainly do our best to convey your message and your reaction and the reaction of your people to the National Conciliation Committee. I will also convey the last message which you have given to our Governor. I have no doubt in my mind that all these problems will be resolved before very long. What we cannot foresee now is when it will be resolved, but one thing is certain and that is that there will be freedom and the right of self-determination.

I am grateful to you for the enlightened stand you have taken all along - the stand for freedom and equality for all the Regions of the Federation. I hope that we shall succeed.

May I end by praying the people of Eastern Region that there is no doubt that they are suffering not only for themselves but for others and I do pray that their suffering will not be in vain.

Adjournment: 2.15p.m.

PART THREE

**SPEECHES MADE
DURING THE WAR**

NIGERIA'S SHIP IN THE MIDST OF A HEAVY STORM

NIGERIA'S ship is now in the midst of a very heavy storm.

That we have been invited by you at this time, therefore, to lend a hand in piloting the ship, safe and whole, to the happy haven of our dreams, is at once a tribute to our reputed competence and a challenge to our skill.

I think I can speak not only for myself, but also for my civilian colleagues, all of whom I know very well - either personally or by reputation.

Speaking for myself and my civilian colleagues, therefore, I want to assure you that we will, one and all, give of the best that is in us to live up to our individual reputation in seamanship, and be equal to the momentous challenge to our skill.

For our part, we must not entertain any illusions as to our role.

As I see it, we have been invited by you to assist in doing a rescue operation - to do such repairs and close such holes as are necessary in the process, but certainly not to rebuild the ship.

It is in our own individual interest, and in the best interests of the masses of our people that the rescue operation should be successfully accomplished with the utmost possible speed.

Otherwise our ship of state might be irretrievably wrecked by the sheer and unduly prolonged buffeting of the storm.

It is quite clear then that, speed, resolution, and unity of action are of the essence of our grave assignments.

And in the successful and satisfactory discharge of these assignments, we need, in very large and abundant measure, certain sterling attributes.

Among them are: dedication, selfless devotion, courage and faith.

If I may borrow the vivid words of Heyland, we must, during our brief tenure of office, "be faithful to the highest ideals we have known, with no pandering to the second best, no leniency with our lower selves, no looking backward, no cowardice".

We must in humble self-subjection and utter unselfishness serve our peoples of Nigeria to the end that peace and normalcy may be restored to them without further delay; that the Nigeria of their and our inheritance may suffer no further assault and humiliation, or permanent impairment; and that the foundation of their future prosperity, well-being and happiness may be well and truly laid.

We must, furthermore, help to ensure that there is a complete break with the past, so much so that none of its uglinesses, however attractively attired it may be, shall have the remotest chance of rearing its head again.

*** A public address delivered by Chief Obafemi Awolowo in Lagos on 12th June, 1967 after his appointment as Vice Chairman of the Federal Executive Council and Federal Commissioner for Finance.**

Indeed we must individually set an example of public probity, devotion and impartiality which will command the acclaim of the civilized world, and evoke both the admiration and emulation of all our peoples, especially our public men.

If we succeed in all these things, we shall deserve well of our peoples, and of the entire wide world. It must be constantly borne in mind that we just cannot afford to fail.

May God grant us the illumination to see the limelight of Nigeria's salvation, and endow us with the untaunted courage, indomitable will, and the unshakeable faith to follow it, without flinching.

8.

THE UNITY OF NIGERIA MUST BE PRESERVED

THE recent coup in the Mid-West has been followed by a massive propaganda offensive from Enugu, which I consider it my duty to counter.

The Yorubas have been called upon to rise up in arms now and liberate themselves from what the Enugu radio termed the Hausa-Fulani domination. Even Yoruba soldiers have been asked by the Enugu propagandists to desert the Nigerian Army and report to the rebel Headquarters in Enugu or Benin.

From the inception of the country, the Yorubas have consistently stood for the unity of Nigeria, and for equality of status for each of the many and diverse national groups in the country, regardless of territorial or population size.

The Yorubas have never set out to dominate others, but have always resisted, with all the energy in them any attempt however slight or disguised, by others to dominate them. They believe in the Federal Union of Nigerian peoples, and in complete self determination for all the national units in the land.

It is for these causes that they fought valiantly in the past and will fight now and in the future. Indeed it is for these causes that they must now be ready to resist any attempt by rebel forces from the East and the Mid-West to violate their territory and subjugate them.

Some people, possibly well meaning have suggested, and others evilly-disposed are already trying to exploit this false suggestion to win Yoruba support for a disloyal cause, that I am on the side of Ojukwu who represents the Ibo people, and opposed to General Gowon who represents the Northern peoples. Those who make this suggestion also hold the view that the interests of the Yoruba people are better served, by aligning themselves with the North.

The truth is that, in the present contest, I am neither on the side of Ojukwu nor on that of General Gowon as representatives of the Ibos and Northern peoples respectively. For one thing,

Ojukwu does not seem to me to represent the best interests of the Ibos: nor does General Gowon appear to me to be the agent of the Northern section of our Federation. For another, I am absolutely and irrevocably committed to the side of Nigeria, and of the complete self-determination, autonomy, and unity of the Yoruba people and each of the national groups in the country, within the context of a Nigerian Union.

Furthermore, I firmly believe that the best interests of the Ibos, the Yorubas, the Hausas, and other ethnic groups in the country, will be served in a reconstructed and reconstituted united Nigeria. A Nigeria so reconstituted and reconstructed as to make it impossible for any ethnic group ever again to assay

to lord it over the

*** A press statement issued by Chief Obafemi Awolowo on 12th August, 1967.**

others, or to be in a position effectively to incite division and disaffection among the members of the other national groups. Indeed, a Nigeria so reconstituted and reconstructed that every Nigerian citizen will be able, and be consciously enabled by the Governments of the land, to live and move freely and happily in any part of the Federation, and play an equal role in the affairs of the country.

It is imperative, therefore, that the unity of Nigeria must be preserved by any means which the prevailing circumstances dictate. And, of course, the best judge of what the prevailing circumstances warrant is the Federal Military Government, and not the many jarring voices of despair which now clamour for audience in and outside Nigeria.

I have no doubt that after the present rebellion shall have been overcome, a new Nigeria, with the existing boundaries remaining inviolate, will emerge, and that the Yoruba people will retain their liberty of action and enjoy equality of status in the new dispensation.

To these ends, therefore, all Yoruba people, particularly those in the Western and Lagos States which now face the threats of invasion by the rebels from the East and the Mid-West, must not only be as vigilant as ever, but must also lose no time and spare no efforts in giving every conceivable support to the Federal troops in defence of their homeland, and of the Fatherland.

They must do more. They must continue to give support and loyalty to the Federal Government in the prosecution of the present Military operations, so that the rebellions in the Eastern and Mid-Western States may be brought to a swift end, and the honour, integrity, and unity of Nigeria fully restored.

RALLY TO THE BANNER OF THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

THIS is the first meeting of Leaders of Thought in the Western State since the declaration of emergency on 27th May this year, the creation of twelve new states, and the inclusion of civilians in the Executive Councils of the Federal and State Governments.

I want to seize this opportunity to congratulate all those civilians who have been called upon to serve our country at this most crucial and most momentous time in its history, and to wish all of them successful tenure of office.

Also, since last we met, the Federal Military Government has been impelled by an irresistible force of circumstances, to launch a police action, which has now been escalated to a military operation, against the rebel forces in the Eastern and Mid-Western sections of the Federation. Both the police action and the military operation which follows it are unfortunate incidents. The decision to launch them was undoubtedly painful to take. But these actions must not be looked at as an end in themselves. They must be closely and strictly related to the great end which they are undisguisedly designed to serve.

As it is perfectly understood by all and sundry, the end which the current military operation is designed to serve in the unity of Nigeria and the autonomy of its twelve component parts.

If there were those who had doubted the wisdom of employing force for these purposes, events of the past two months or so must have convinced them to the contrary. In complete disregard and contempt of all conciliatory overtures, some elements in the East were implacably bent on taking that Region out of Nigeria, and sub-ordinating the minority national groups there to the permanent rule of the majority.

It must have been clear to everyone by now that this course of action is inimical to the overall interest of Nigeria, because a disintegrated Nigeria could only consist of internecine armed camps in which resources which could have been used for promoting the welfare and happiness of the people would of a necessity be diverted to the purchase, possession and eventual use of destructive weapons.

Besides, our immediate ancestors in Yorubaland, since 1900, as well as those of us who are old enough to take part in political activities, joined at a later stage by other Nigerian patriots, did fight to make Nigeria the united whole that it was, when the British relinquished power over us on October 1, 1960. It would be most disgraceful and dishonourable for us to destroy this heritage. In the case of those of us who are still alive, it is too much to expect us

to respond to an invitation to lend a

An address delivered by Chief Obafemi Awolowo as leader of Yorubas, at the meeting of Leaders of Thought held in Ibadan on Wednesday, August 16, 1967.

hand in demolishing what we have laboured so long and with so much travails to build.

Furthermore, history leaves no one, who cares to see, in any doubt at all, that it is nobler, more rewarding, and more glorious to be on the side of unity and solidarity than to be on the side of division and disintegration.

It is in clear recognition of all these facts, and, as it now turns out, in prophetic anticipation of recent events, that I declared in the first statement which I made after my release from prison, that "the breaking up of Nigeria into a number of sovereign states, would not only do permanent damage to the reputation of contemporary Nigerian leaders but would usher in terrible disasters which would bedevil us and many generations to come".

Also on August 11, 1966, at the inaugural meeting of this body, I said

"It is extremely sad to note that some leaders of thought in the country are seriously suggesting that the so-called four component units of the country should go their own separate ways as so many sovereign states. Those who advocate this course of action are invoking terrible, unknowable, and unpredictable disasters and catastrophes on the heads of the 56m, innocent people of this country."

When after making these declarations it became clear to me, and to you as well, that some influential Nigerian leaders strongly held the view, and were working hard for its crystallization, that the rest of the country could live together and match on without an essential integral part of the Federation, you made your position indubitably clear at one of your meetings, and I re-echoed this enlightened position, in one of my public statements, that

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

I am personally satisfied that the acts of omission or commission which we had feared had not materialised, and that the Federal Military Government, acting on the recommendations of the National Conciliation Committee in the closing days of May this year, did all that was possible in the circumstances to placate the Eastern leaders.

I am also satisfied that the constitutional formula under which the twelve new states, subject to boundary adjustments, will associate with one another, is a matter which will not be handed down to the people by any one, but will be

carefully considered and decided upon by a Constituent Assembly which will be get up in the proper manner as soon as circumstances permit. When the time comes, the Constituent Assembly will have to take serious account of the political events in this country before and since January 1966, and in particular of the gruesome episode which our country had witnessed since January 1966, in deciding on a constitutional structure under which the twelve states and all the nationalities in the Federation will live in freedom and happiness, as constituent autonomous units.

I hold the view, quite firmly, and I here repeat it emphatically, that in spite of what had happened in the past, are happening now, and may still happen in the future before the present military operation is brought to an end, the best interests of the Ibos, the Yorubas, the Hausas and other national groups in the country will be best served in a reconstituted and reconstructed united Nigeria. A Nigeria so reconstituted and reconstructed as to make it impossible for any ethnic group ever again to essay to lord it over any other ethnic groups, or to be in a position effectively to incite division and disaffection among the members of the other national groups. Indeed, a Nigeria so reconstituted and reconstructed as to provide indefeasible guarantee for every Nigerian citizen to live and move freely and happily in any part of the Federation, and play an equal role in the affairs of the country.

Since the recent coup in the Mid-West, a massive propaganda offensive has been mounted by Enugu, and directed against the sons and daughters of Oduduwa. We have been asked, among other things, to shake off the shackles of Hausa/Fulani oppression. Enugu and recently Benin, have promised us full military support to this end.

In the first place, I think I am voicing your deep and abiding sentiments when I say that, we the sons and daughters of Oduduwa are not under the bondage of the Hausa/Fulani or of any other group of people. That being so we have no shackles of any kind to shake off, and accordingly do not require the assistance of anyone.

In the second place, even if we were under the yoke of an oppressor, I assert without fear of contradiction that we are quite capable of fending for ourselves and preserving our autonomy and freedom as a national unit in Nigeria. We would, therefore, not need the help of an outsider.

It is not denied that, five years ago, some Yoruba leaders allowed themselves to be used as pawns on the chessboard of two crafty players, each of whom erroneously believed it was his destiny to dominate the Nigerian peoples. For the best part of these five years, Yoruba people knew neither peace nor contentment nor happiness.

Since January 1966, however, the crisis which was imposed on the Yoruba

people of Western Nigeria has spread with increasing venom, to the other parts of the Federation. What the rebels in the Eastern and Mid-Western States are now asking us to do is to allow the waves of holocaust with which the areas, temporarily under their control, are afflicted or threatened, to be reflected back to Yorubaland.

We will do nothing of the sort. On the contrary, the urgent task to which we should now bend all our physical, mental, and spiritual energies is to make it impossible for a single rebel troop to set foot on an inch of Yoruba soil. To us a rebel is a rebel, no matter his ethnic affiliation. As things are, those who are not with us be they our closest relations, must be denounced as being against us.

We hold certain cardinal objectives to be most dear and sacred: the unity of Yoruba people; the indivisible wholeness of the Western State; and the federal and equal union of all the nationalities in Nigeria. It behoves us, to take up arms now and be ever-prepared even without arms to fight, as we did in the past, for the preservation of these sacred objectives, and to cooperate fully with all loyal Nigerians to limit the present area of rebellion and conflict, beat back the imminent threats of invasion to the Western and Lagos State, and speedily bring the Eastern and Mid-Western States under the jurisdiction of the legitimate government of the Federation.

Finally, for all the reasons and consideration which I have stated in this address in addition to those contained in the statement which I issued last Saturday, August 12, I call upon all Yoruba people, wherever they may be, in and outside Nigeria, to rally to the banner of the Federal Military Government, in defence of our homeland against any assault or violation and for the victorious and speedy conclusion of the present military operation.

IF WE ARE TO KEEP NIGERIA ONE

Good Evening,

The crisis which hit this country some five years ago has, since it took a dramatic turn in 1965, inflicted enormous damage on our national life. The period of twelve months, beginning from October 1965, had witnessed the exhibition of large-scale violent disturbances in different parts of the country. The calm, which followed this twelve-month period, has now proved, in retrospect, to be our worst national illusion. It is now known that in spite of Aburi, in spite of the constructive efforts of the National Conciliation Committee, and in spite of the Commander-in-Chief's conciliatory gestures and overtures in accepting and implementing, with speed and without reservation, the recommendations of the National Conciliation Committee which were wholly based on the terms dictated by Ojukwu himself, Ojukwu had spent this period of earnest and conscientious search for peace on the part of his fellow countrymen in making elaborate preparations for war designed not only to take the former Eastern Region out of the Federation of Nigeria, but also, if possible, to subjugate the other parts of the country.

After several violent border provocations at Igumale and Idah, Ojukwu finally launched unprovoked military attack on the rest of Nigeria. In the face of this rebellion, there was only one of two choices open to the Federal Military Government. Either to succumb to Ojukwu's armed rebellion and allow him to take the then Eastern Region out of Nigeria and thereby bring about the total disintegration of the entire Federation, or to put down his rebellion, with all the forces at its disposal, in order to preserve the integrity and oneness of Nigeria. The Federal Military Government chose the latter course. Hence the Police action which, in consequence of Ojukwu's aggravating conduct of his rebellious activities, was later escalated to military operations.

In the process of all these, many lives have been lost; and the number of wounded and maimed, of orphans and widows in our community, has risen sharply. In a number of places, private properties of all description have been destroyed, lost or damaged, by arson, looting and other forms of violence. A good number of bridges, roads and public buildings have

*** A public announcement by Chief Obafemi Awolowo the Vice-Chairman of the Federal Executive Council and Commissioner for Finance on October 19, 1967.**

either been destroyed, or put in a state of serious disrepair, by acts of

subversion and war. Many of our fellow citizens have been rendered homeless. A good many have fled from their places of normal residence or business.

There is nothing we can do about the dead. But there is much - very much - that we can do for the living: for the orphans, the widows, the maimed and the wounded, and for the rest of our people who have loyally and complainingly borne the inconveniences and privations which the crisis and the present military operations have imposed upon them, and who have made contributions in cash and kind for the comfort and relief of the federal troops.

Accordingly, the Federal Military Government is committed to the following courses of action:-

(i) The surviving victims of past disturbances and of the present military operations shall be cared for with the utmost compassion.

(ii) The surviving federal troops shall be amply rewarded for their gallant and devoted services to the nation.

(iii) All soldiers, no matter on which side they had fought, shall be rehabilitated and gainfully employed at the end of the military operations.

It must be noted in this connection that one of the good things about the present emergency is that it has helped to reduce unemployment throughout the country; it would be a mistaken policy of the worst kind, to allow the federal troops and the rebel soldiers to go back on the scrap heap of the country's unemployment market. It is for these reasons that the Federal Military Government is resolved to keep, and considerably, improve upon the blessings of the prevailing high level of employment.

(iv) Those whose properties have been destroyed or damaged, as a result of civil disturbances, shall be reasonably compensated.

(v) All those who had fled from their normal places of residence or business shall be resettled; and, if possible helped to make a new start.

(vi) All the roads, bridges and public buildings, which have been destroyed or damaged, shall be reconstructed with the greatest possible dispatch.

(vii) With immediate effect, a special fund into which an amount of £1m will be contributed annually; beginning with the present fiscal year, has been created for the purpose of:

(a) Stepping up the training of high-level manpower in the Nigerian Universities, at the under-graduate and post-graduate levels;

(b) raising the secondary school and trained-teacher population in the States which are lagging behind in these respects, and preventing wastes at the secondary school level in the more advanced States, as part of the reconstruction effort; and

(c) providing free primary education for the children of all members of the

Armed Forces.

In this connection, it is essential to bear three important considerations in mind.

ONE:- It is strongly believed by the Federal Military Government that a united Nigeria has all the natural resources and manpower which any people could wish nature to bestow on them. But at present, we are extremely deficient in high-level manpower. This deficiency can and must be corrected by accelerating, intensifying, and re-orientating the university education of Nigerian citizens, so that when the dynamic forces of our total manpower are brought to bear on our latent natural resources, the latter will be compelled to yield their full increase for the benefit of Nigerians. If this desirable end is to be achieved, with the minimum possible delay, many of our youths who have the innate talents, but are unable to obtain secondary as well as university education, simply because their parents are too poor to find the money, should be given the fullest possible financial assistance by the Government. This is precisely what the Federal Military Government is determined to do to give free financial assistance, not loans, to all secondary-school pupils and university students who, for good reasons certified by the Authorities concerned to the satisfaction of the Federal Government, are unable to pay their fees. This free financial assistance will be in addition to the usual scholarship awards to deserving pupils and students.

TWO:- It may not be generally known that, in the current year, there are only approximately 18,000 pupils in secondary grammar schools in the six Northern States, as against 170,000 in the six Southern States, and roughly 12,000 teachers in training in the Northern States, as against about 24,000 teachers in training in the Southern States. If we are to keep Nigeria one - and harmoniously so, and if all sections of the national groups in Nigeria are to have equal opportunity for contributing to our high level manpower needs, this yawning gulf must be closed without further delay. It is for this reason that the Federal Military Government has decided to stimulate, vigorously, the rapid expansion of secondary education and teacher training in the Northern States, by the award of scholarships in large numbers, and the grant of free financial - not loans, to qualified pupils in the Northern States.

THREE:- It is well known that soldiers, by the peculiar nature of their calling, have to be moved from time to time to different parts of the Federation. Such movements do often entail their being deprived of certain basic amenities which they enjoy in some parts of the Federation, but which are totally absent in other parts. It is in order to minimize this obvious disparity which inevitably arises, as a result of the movement of the members of our Armed Forces to

different parts of the Federation, that the Federal Military Government has decided to afford free primary education to the children of the members of the Armed Forces, wherever they may be in the Federation. Children of the Members of the Armed Forces and the Nigeria Police Force who lost their lives during the present military operations will also enjoy this benefit.

It will be seen, that the Federal Military Government is resolved not only to win these military operations, but also and this is by far more important - to secure the peace, which will follow, by guaranteeing political equality and social justice to all Nigerian citizens, irrespective of their State of origin, ethnic affiliation, religion, social status, or the side on which they had fought during the rebellion. It is above all resolved to lay a sound foundation for a prosperous future for our country and our people. All these things, that is the present military operations and the programmes of reconstruction as well as of development, which I have outlined, do cost money. Already, the military operations have cost the Federal Government well over £50m. The cost of general reconstruction, of re-building and, in some cases, widening damaged bridges and roads, has not yet been calculated. But it is assumed that this will run into several million pounds. The same thing will go for the cost of rehabilitation and resettlement.

In addition to all these, our economic growth rate must not only be maintained but must also be improved upon, considerably. The programme for this, together with its cost, is still to be worked out. But from the past experience, there is no doubt that such a programme, when it shall have been fully estimated, will run into hundreds of millions of pounds. The problems which confront us, therefore, may be summarised as follows:-

(i) Whatever the cost, we must finance the military operations until they are successfully concluded or until Ojukwu accepts the peace terms declared by the Federal Military Government. In this regard, it must be borne in mind that our hands are already so long and so justifiably laid on the plough, that it is too late in the day and dangerous for us to look back.

(ii) We must find all the money that is required for reconstruction, so as to bring the country speedily back to where it was, before the dogs and the horrors of war were let loose on the country by Ojukwu.

(iii) Since we cannot afford to stand still, and since indeed we must, in our own interest, make a big leap forward economically and socially, it is imperative that we must raise enough money to finance new development programmes.

At the moment, however, our financial situation is far from being a happy one. The gap between expenditure and revenue widens with each day that passes: the one increasing by leaps and bounds, whilst the other steadily falls

short of estimates. In the result, the Federal Military Government has had to have recourse to inflationary financing. There is, however, a limit beyond which this method of financing must not be allowed to go, if we are to avoid complete economic disaster.

Furthermore, our foreign exchange position shows a more or less similar trend. Payments for military equipment make an ever-rising demand on our foreign exchange reserve, whilst because of delay in the shipment of our agricultural export products, and of the temporary cessation in the exportation of petroleum products, our foreign exchange earnings are also falling short of estimates.

It is clear, from all that I have said, therefore that, as a matter of urgency, the Federal Military Government must do something about our finances. In this connection, it has adopted two lines of approach: to economize our financial resources and to raise additional revenue.

With regard to the first line of approach, it will interest you to know that, ever since the launching of the military operations, the Federal Military Government has embarked on strict austerity measures, some of which are meant only for the interim period, whilst others are intended to remain as a permanent feature of our public life. I will briefly enumerate some of these measures.

(i) - Every Ministry, other than the Ministries of Defence and Internal Affairs, is enjoined to make 1 % savings in its approved estimates of expenditure. But from the next financial year, even stricter economy will be enjoined on all Ministries and extra-Ministerial departments.

(ii) The Federal Executive Council has set up a Committee to examine the structure of Government-sponsored Corporations and Companies in the light of the reports and recommendations of the Tribunals set up to enquire into the affairs of some of them. This is done with a view to putting these Corporations and Companies, properly and viably, on their feet. At the moment, most of them are ailing and sick; and the Federal Military Government is determined, not only to cure them, but to prevent a future relapse of their ailments, so that they may be self-sufficient and profitable, and hence cease to constitute an incessant drain on the finances of the Federal Government.

(iii) Capital projects in respect of which the Federal Military Government has not irrevocably committed itself are postponed for the time being.

(iv) All Federal Commissioners have agreed to observe a stringent Code of Conduct which precludes them from enjoying any benefit, and receiving any allowance, other than their salaries.

(v) A Committee has been set up to consider the advisability of reducing

the number of our Foreign Missions. These Missions cost us a fortune in foreign exchange, and there is no doubt that some of them are maintained for prestige purposes only.

(vi) Steps are being actively taken to recover arrears of income tax and duties. Arrears of income tax amount to well over £.5m.

(vii) Pending the setting up, at an early date, of a Tribunal of Inquiry for the purpose of recovering ill-gotten gains made by some public officers and their self-employed collaborators, the Inland Revenue has already assessed to tax the amounts of money which some of the persons, who gave evidence before the Tribunals which inquired into certain Corporations, had admitted as having been legitimately made by them as incomes, but which they had not in the past been declared as such to the Inland Revenue. As a result of investigation made up to the end of September, a total assessment of about £2m has been made. Much more than double this amount is expected when the investigation is completed. I would like to say in passing that the taxes collected from these assessments will be offset against the total amount of any individual confiscation.

(viii) A much tighter control than ever before is now being exercised in the use of our foreign exchange reserve, care being taken, at the same time, to ensure that our foreign trade is in no way hindered. But when all these have been done, there is still a considerable gap to be filled if we are to fulfill the social objectives to which I have previously referred, and to which the Federal Military Government has committed itself. It is in order to fill this gap that the Federal Military Government has decided to raise additional revenue from sources which I will now outline to you.

But before I do so, I would like to state the principles by which we have been guided. They are:

- (i) to save our foreign exchange reserve from being run down to a dangerous level;
- (ii) to preserve the strength of the Nigerian £;
- (iii) to have enough financial resources for the purposes which I have previously mentioned, namely: rehabilitation, resettlement, reconstruction, and new development;
- (iv) to encourage local industries, and thereby save foreign exchange, and progressively achieve self-sufficiency in, at least, non-durable consumer goods; and
- (v) to obviate the danger of a runaway or uncontrollable inflation.

The measures which the Federal Military Government had decided to introduce for the purpose of raising additional revenue, and conserving our foreign exchange come under five heads.

1. IMPORT AND EXCISE DUTIES:

A number of carefully selected items of goods will, henceforth, attract various rates of duty. These measures are designed to raise additional revenue as well as conserve our foreign exchange. The details of the items of goods involved, and the actual rates of duty imposed upon them will be published later tonight. In a full year a total revenue of about £7m is expected from these sources.

2. NATIONAL RECONSTRUCTION SURCHARGE

For the duration of this emergency and for the whole period of reconstruction, there will be a 5% surcharge on duties payable on all items of imports and excisable goods, with the exception of the following:-

- (i) Stockfish
- (ii) Milk
- (iii) Salt
- (iv) Sugar
- (v) Raw materials imported at concessionary rates of duty by approved manufacturers under the Approved User Scheme.
- (vi) Bread
- (vii) Flour
- (viii) Soap,

In this connection, it is pertinent to bring to the remembrance of older Nigerians, and to the notice of younger ones, that during the Second World War, a surcharge of 25% on specific import duties, was imposed. The surcharge remained in operation for more than eight years late 1939 to March 5, 1948.

A yearly revenue of about £9m is expected from this source.

3. DIRECT TAX:

As a result of the creation of the Lagos state, the only sphere of direct tax in which the Federal Government can now operate with complete freedom is that of Company tax. Even here, a good deal of circumspection is called for. An increase in the present rate of company tax might have the effect of driving out of existence those companies which only manage to keep their heads above water. Whatever we do, we must not kill any of the geese that lay the golden eggs, however poor their laying may be. But just as there are poor struggling companies which make meagre profits, so there are rich and prosperous ones whose profits are comparatively large. The Federal Government has, therefore, decided to impose a super-tax of 2/- in the pound, on companies whose taxable profits exceed whichever is the greater of-

- (i) £5,000 for a year of assessment, or
- (ii) 15% of the company's issued and paid-up share capital.

It is expected that this imposition will yield an additional revenue of £2.9m

for the rest of the present financial year.

4. ONE NIGERIA BONDS:

The spontaneity and generosity, with which you have all donated to Troops' Comfort and Relief Funds, are a practical demonstration of your loyalty to the noble cause to which the Federal Military Government has dedicated itself. There are those of you who have donated once-for-all substantial sums to these funds. There are others who pay their own donations instalmentally, and who, to this end, have given irrevocable standing instructions for 5% of their salaries to be deducted every month for 3 months consecutively. The Federal Military Government is exceedingly grateful to you all for your financial sacrifices. But it will like you to do more accordingly, it has decided to launch on 1st December 1967, a compulsory Savings Scheme. The Savings Scheme would take the form of mandatory deduction of 5% from your salaries and wages for investment in bonds to be known as the "ONE NIGERIA BONDS". This Scheme will also apply to all self-employed persons who pay tax. Professionals, traders, businessmen, farmers, and all, will be included. In their cases, the deduction of 5% will be made from their taxable incomes. With regard to flat-rate taxpayers, however, only a flat rate of 10/- will be required from each of them. In every case, the amount of savings collectible will be added to the 1968 tax assessment and, after collection will be invested in the bonds in the name of the payer.

The funds invested, under this Scheme will be redeemable after ten years, with interest. Compulsory subscription to the bond will last for only twelve months. Thereafter, the Government will examine the possibility of making it voluntary.

This Scheme will be limited to Nigerian citizens only in both the public and private sectors; but institutional investor and expatriates who wish to show their appreciation for Government efforts in keeping Nigeria one may buy the bonds on a voluntary basis.

5. CONSERVATION OF FOREIGN EXCHANGE

In order to conserve our foreign exchange, and to assist the growth of indigenous industries, the importation of a number of commodities will, henceforth, be either subject to quota or completely banned. By these measures it is expected that, in a full year, savings in foreign exchange to the tune of more than £6 million will be effected. The details of commodities involved in this exercise and the manner of their treatment, will also be published later tonight.

In this connection, I would like to warn that the list of commodities liable to this kind of treatment is by no means closed. At the moment the Board of

Customs and Excise is making an elaborate tariff classification of all imports, in order to enable the Federal Military Government to determine which of them are necessary and essential in the national interest. In future, all unessential items of imports will either be subject to quota or totally banned.

It should be clear from all that I have said that in the midst of the present strife which has been forced upon it, the Federal Military Government looks firmly and confidently into a glorious future. A future in which all the national units in Nigeria will live in harmony and unity with one another; a future in which political equality and social justice will be guaranteed to all. These being the declared and ultimate objectives of the Federal Military Government, the present military operations must be consistently regarded and supported for what they truly are. They have been designed, not for the gratification of hatred for any group of Nigerians: nor for the extermination of the Ibos, as has been wickedly suggested in some malevolent quarters; indeed, they have been launched for noble and imperishable ends, namely: the federal unity of Nigeria, and the happiness and prosperity of its people.

It follows, therefore, that those who support the Federal Military Government in all its endeavours, including its current search for additional revenue, do the manifest will of God. For, God is the God of unity and progress, not of division and stagnation.

I thank you very much for listening.

Goodnight.

11.

A DUTY TO AFRICA

In the name of Nigeria's Head of state and Government, Major-General Yakubu Gowon, and of the people of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, and on behalf of myself and my colleagues on the Nigerian delegation, I extend my very hearty and warm thanks to His Excellency the president of the Revolutionary Council and the head of the Democratic and popular Republic of Algeria, Col. Houari Boumedienne, for the profuse kindness and lavish hospitality which I and my colleagues have enjoyed, since the Ministerial Council of the OAU commenced its meeting here on the fourth of this month.

I also want to seize this opportunity to reiterate Nigeria's great admiration for the gallant and indomitable people of Algeria, for the bravery and selflessness which they demonstrated, throughout the period of their long and historic fight for freedom. The inspiration which their struggles gave to other countries in Africa will never die or abate: Indeed, their epic struggles will forever constitute an imperishable episode in the annals of man's long and arduous march to liberty.

The impressive attendance, especially of the Heads of State and Governments, at this OAU Summit is a glowing tribute to the great Nigerian people, and a measure of the affection which all countries of Africa have for them and their leaders.

I also very warmly congratulate President Boumedienne for the supreme success of the Algiers summit of the Organization of African Unity.

Algiers Summit is unique in more ways than one. At this Summit, the OAU has handled a number of delicate issues with unsurpassed maturity, constancy, consistency, and complete freedom from pressures foreign to Africa. Between the Kinshasa and Algiers Summits our Organization was visibly threatened by the MONSTER OF DIVISION. A monster whose father and mother are, respectively, ENVY, AND SUBSERVIENCE TO FOREIGN INFLUENCE, INIMICAL TO AFRICAN INTERESTS.

At this Summit, this monster has been very seriously scorched but it will be naive to suggest that it has been destroyed. Between now and the next Summit, it will be paramount duty of every Member-State to do all in its power to lay the ghost of this monster, once and for all in the life of our great Continent.

I say this because, wherever you turn, the urgent and imperative need for African unity and solidarity not only stares you in the face, but also cries very loud for the most devoted attention.

Educationally, economically, and technologically, our Continent remains one of the most backward areas of the world.

*** Address delivered on Monday 16th September, 1965 by Chief Obafemi Awolowo, Vice-Chairman of the Federal Executive Council at the closing ceremony of the 5th Session of the Organisation of African Unity held in Algiers from 13th-16th September, 1968.**

As hitherto, Africans or peoples of African descent continue to be the butt of all manner of inhuman treatment and degradation. To the whites in South Africa and Rhodesia, Africans are nothing but anthropoid apes, as Hitler once contemptuously termed them. The white settlers in South Africa and Rhodesia have forcibly expropriated our peoples of all the larger and richer portions of the lands, and relegated them to the status of permanent subordination and unmitigated drudgery in the political and economic affairs of their own motherlands.

In the U.S.A., the Negro Americans suffer grave social disabilities, so much so that there are now clear signs that the recent violent riotings by the Negroes may degenerate into civil war between white and black Americans. The latent colour prejudice which has always existed in Britain, but which has hitherto been cleverly suppressed, is now bubbling to the surface; and there is a real danger of racial violence directed against dark-skinned peoples domiciled in Britain.

In the pursuit of their naked self-interests, the developed countries of the world continue to exploit and cheat Africa as well as other underdeveloped countries by means of every contrivance and artifice which man's ingenuity can invent. With the result that the gap between us and them widens with the years: they are getting rapidly richer, and we are getting steadily and relatively poorer.

To cap it all, the great powers of the world have grouped themselves into two mutually antagonistic ideological camps, and seek feverishly and frantically to entice African States into their respective spheres of influence. To this end, aids are proffered to us in kind and cash. But on prospective donors always make sure that each aid or loan carries with it a host of humiliating strings and conditions which tend materially to help them more than us, and to undermine our strength and vitality for united and concerted action, by ensuring our permanent economic dependence on them.

In the face of all these disabilities, which are by no means inherent in us or incurable, we need, among other things, the impregnable armour of single-minded unity, solidarity, and fraternity among our different countries.

But instead of directing our energies towards this end, what do we find? Whilst many of us are truly dedicated and inflexible in our resolution to terminate apartheid, Ian-Smithism, and Salazarism in Africa, some of us have embraced Vorsterism without reservation, and are even encouraging the

disruption and disintegration of member-states, in flagrant violation of some of the provisions of Articles 11 & 111 of the O.A.U. Charter, and in deliberate disregard of some of the resolutions passed by the O.A.U. in pursuance of these provisions.

It would appear that the zeal and vision, which animated the founders of the O.A.U. and dominated their hearts, are beginning to depart from some of us. This is a most dangerous and contagious trend. And we owe it as a duty to Africa and our respective countries to arrest this deterioration and decay before they spread too far to be contained.

In this connection, I would like to express the warm appreciation and profound gratitude of the Government and people of Nigeria to those thirty-three member-states who voted yesterday for the resolution on Nigeria. By this action, they have shown their unflinching commitment to the principles of national unity and territorial integrity, without which Africa just cannot survive as a viable political and economic entity.

These thirty-three states have also shown deep understanding of the imperialist intrigues at work against Nigeria, as part of the imperialist over-all strategy of continuing the political domination and economic exploitation of Africa. It is clear to these states that the imperialists and neo-colonialists, with their abominable techniques of divide and rule, are striving hard to use the Nigerian crisis as a means of driving a wedge among the Member-States of Our Organization. The serious consequences of this dangerous trend for the future of this organization should be a matter for serious reflection, and constant vigilance by Member States.

There is, therefore, a pressing need for us, from now on, to renew our pledge to observe the provisions of our Charter to the letter, and with absolute fidelity. To this end, we must, at all times, condemn, both in word and action, every form of political, economic, and social oppression and discrimination against Africans or peoples of African descent, both in Africa and in any other part of the world. We must regard every African State as an indivisible organism of entity. We must all regard every resolution of the O.A.U. as absolutely binding. We must respect and observe it at all times, and we must do everything in our power to give effect to it. We must make it our cardinal policy to support every African government of the day, whatever the ideological or other character of such a government. In other words, the legitimacy or ideological acceptability of every government for the time being, as well as the integrity of its existing territory, must be assumed and upheld by all of us, without any quibbling whatsoever. We must denounce Unilateral Declaration of Independence, otherwise known as U.D.I., with unequivocal vehemence; and must seek to crush such a political monstrosity by force of arms, if necessary

both in Rhodesia and in any other part of Africa.

We must do more: we must cherish the principle of non-interference as a sacred article of faith. In this connection, I would like to emphasize that peace in any society will be impossible to maintain, if every family regards it as its business to interfere in the domestic affairs of another family.

It is not disputed that, in the name of mutual friendship, one family may give admonition to another family. But, as all of us here will testify from personal experience, even this task is never undertaken without express or clearly implied invitation; and, in any case, it is always approached with extreme caution and circumspection, and with the sole object of promoting and preserving the corporate existence of the other family. Otherwise, the bond of friendship, which subsisted between the two families, would be broken beyond repairs, and bitter hostility would take the place of amity.

It follows from all these remarks that the O.A.U. must continue, as it has done in the past, to denounce secession or rebellion of whatever kind and guise; it must continue to work assiduously for the termination of all forms of oppression, discrimination, and colonialism in any part of Africa; it must continue, without relenting, to foster the unity of every African country, realising that the unity of the whole of Africa is inextricably intertwined with the unassailable unity of each of its constituent States; and it must resolutely resist, and strongly discourage its members from succumbing to the temptation to interfere in the internal affairs of another African State.

These then, in concrete terms, are the irrevocable objectives of the O.A.U. And it must be borne in mind that any departure from any of these noble objectives would be bound to lead to strife, acrimony, and irreconcilable cleavage among member-states; and hence to the total ineffectiveness, if not the complete death of the O.A.U. itself.

It is easy to recognize the advantages of unity, and to discern the dangers of division in the African context. If we are united, we shall succeed collectively, and severally. If we are divided, we shall, for a certainty, perish individually, in the hands either of our former colonial masters, or of the new imperialists who are now making a desperate search for African spheres of influence.

In unity, we lose nothing but our economic chains: indeed, in unity we gain many things, including economic independence, and the welfare of our entire peoples. But, in division, we would lose many things, and gain nothing but neo-colonialism, permanent economic bondage and mutually destructive hostilities among ourselves. Let us, therefore, remain united, and let us do so resolutely, faithfully, and unflinchingly.

Mr. President, I thank you for the opportunity given me to address this august assembly.

