

RESEARCH ARTICLE

‘One-Nigeria’ Or Secession? A Conflict of Ideologies in a New Graphic Novel of the Nigeria-Biafra Struggle (1967-1970)

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Abstract

The “One Nigeria” refers to the belief and advocacy for the unity and cohesion of Nigeria as a single nation, despite its diversity in terms of ethnic, cultural, religious, and linguistic backgrounds. It emphasizes the idea that Nigerians, regardless of their differences, should work together and remain united for their collective progress, development, and stability. On the other hand, the Biafran ideology was associated with seeking the secession of the old eastern region of Nigeria, known as Biafra. The Biafran ideology emerged during the Nigerian Civil War, between 1967 and 1970 when Biafra seceded from Nigeria. This research discusses the conflicting political ideologies between Nigeria and Biafra by using Chidiebere Onwuekwe’s graphic novel entitled “Achuza: Surviving the Federal Onslaught” as a paradigm. The work is a result of PhD research in Art and Design at the University of Nigeria Nsukka. This research draws upon primary and secondary literature sources, including historical documents, and scholarly works, for review. More, the historical cum contextual analysis will be applied for discussion. This study’s findings analyse graphic literature and contribute to a deeper understanding of the complex dynamics and potential pathways towards a possible resolution in this long-standing conflict.

Keywords: Nigeria, Biafra, Ideology, Graphic Novel, Conflict, Politics, Art, Design.

1. Introduction

Every sovereign government of the world has some agreed-upon ideas guiding it. These philosophies provide a summary of their political actions. Ideologies are associated with power structures. Politicians seek power and so their ideology and the social, economic and political circumstances of the time influence what they do with that power when they have achieved it. Indeed, it is impossible to separate the two (Hanson and Boyd, 2018). It provides a framework for interpreting and approaching governance, public policy, and societal organization. Political ideologies encompass a wide range of perspectives and can vary across different cultures, countries, and historical periods. It’s important to note that political ideologies

are diverse and can exist on a spectrum, with various hybrid or nuanced positions that blend elements from different ideologies. Individuals may also hold a combination of ideological views or have beliefs that do not neatly align with any specific ideology.

There are numerous political ideologies, each with its core tenets and goals. Some prominent examples include liberalism, which emphasizes individual rights, personal freedoms, and limited government intervention in the economy. It promotes principles such as equality, the rule of law, and the protection of civil liberties. Another popular political ideology is Conservatism. It values tradition, social stability, and the preservation of established institutions. It emphasizes limited government intervention, respect for authority, and the importance of social order.

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Socialism advocates for collective ownership and control of the means of production, aiming for economic equality and social welfare. It seeks to address socioeconomic disparities and reduce the influence of private capital.

Communism envisions a classless society where all property is publicly owned, and the means of production are collectively controlled. It strives for the elimination of social hierarchies and the establishment of a stateless, egalitarian society.

Fascism is an authoritarian ideology characterized by a strong central authority, nationalism, and the suppression of dissent. It often promotes a militaristic and hierarchical society, with an emphasis on loyalty to the state, while feminism is also a socio-political ideology that advocates for gender equality, challenging traditional gender roles, and addressing issues related to women's rights and empowerment.

The idea of "One Nigeria" was coined to assert that Nigeria must remain one indivisible federal entity, irrespective of the consequences. Since then, all politicians, including those who did not care to apply it in a real sense sang the mantra. In 1967, the Biafran ideology of secession became necessary as a result of circumstances that preceded the independence: resentment against the Igbo, the coup that was coined "Igbo coup", the pogroms, the counter-coup, etc. These factors made the Igbos feel insecure and that necessitated secession. Since then, a lasting solution to the lingering crises has not been implemented. Is there a way out of this frenzy situation? Is there a way this hydra-headed monster could be nipped in the bud? Is it possible that there would be an end to renewed agitation? Is it favourable to all differing regions to stay as a country in the 21st century?

In response to these questions, his study focuses on a review of selected pages of an emerging graphic novel of the Nigeria /Biafra conflict (1967-1970) to discuss these two opposing ideas to identify lasting solutions as they linger.

2. Purpose of the Study

1. To ascertain the differences between Nigerian Federalist ideology and the then Biafran separatist nationalism, spearheaded by the Igbo of the old Eastern Nigeria
2. To Raise political discussions from an emerging Graphic Novel on Biafra, which is a part of current PhD research
3. To discuss the plot of the graphic literature entitled

"Achuzia: Surviving the Federal Onslaught".

4. To suggest a very strong political solution that has been brewing between the sides, even over fifty years after the conflict.

3. A Brief Insight into the Nigerian-Biafran Saga

The story of Nigerian post-independence politics was not a bed of roses, but a very turbulent path. Unfortunately, today, the turbulence has become worse. It was in October 1960 that Nigeria gained her independence officially. Then the British colonialists were relieved of control over the affairs of the nation. That gave birth to the first republic with Abubakar Tafawa-Balewa as the first prime minister and Nnamdi Azikiwe as the president. The national parties were run according to the ethnic divide. The North was the bailiwick of the Northern People's Congress (NPC) whose leader was the Saraduna of Sokoto (Forsyth, 2001 p16). The Northern Peoples' Congress pursued the interests of the Northern Bloc. Crowther (1978, p 223) as cited in Igwe (2015, p 21), submits that Dr Nnamdi Azikiwe founded the National Council of Nigeria and Cameroun, alongside Herbert Macaulay on the 26th of August, 1944. The party was adopted by a majority of Eastern and Yoruba people of the West. Chief Obafemi Awolowo and Samuel Ladoke Akintola were the arrowheads of Western policies. The fact is that politics were run along ethnic divides and sentiments which culminated in bloody violence in many parts of North and Western Nigeria. This failed nepotism and sentiments as elites favoured their relatives in terms of appointments, contract awards and employment, which made other unfavoured parties biased.

Aside from ethnic chauvinism, politicians were so corrupt that they plundered the national treasury without being questioned, thereby causing serious political disorder. Among such was using various means to manipulate election results, instigating sentiments that caused bloody riots in the West. Aneke (2007, p12) in this work entitled "The Untold Story of the Nigerian-Biafra War", submits the following on electoral violence and manipulation of results.

On October 14, 1965, many people were feared dead in the morning after a day of violence in Western Nigeria, following a regional election in which rival parties both claimed victory. Chanting crowds looted and burned houses on the streets of Lagos, the Federal Capital Territory, while the regional electoral commission declared the ruling National Democratic

Party of Chief Samuel Akintola Victorious. The opposition party, the Action Group yesterday announced the formation of a rival Government of Ibadan...

This experience and the example of others were the reasons why the populace got fed up before the bloodiest coup d'état on Nigerian soil ensued. The coup, when it came, was seemingly well-planned by a group of idealistic mainly Igbo army officers, spearheaded by Major Kaduna Nzeogwu, Major Ifeajuna, Major Ademoyega, Major Humphrey Chukwuka, Major Donatus Okafor, and others. In the North, it proved a complete success, but in Lagos, the coup was defeated. In Enugu, the plan failed, as it did in the mid-west where no soldiers were stationed (Gould, 2012 p. 26-27).

The coup, even though was a failure, ended the lives of The Prime Minister, Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa, Sardauna of Sokoto, Alhaji Ahmadu Bello, Chief S.I. Akintola and other politicians perceived to be constituting a nuisance. Thus the coup was the straw that broke Carmel's back as many believed it was an Igbo coup staged by Igbo officers in the Nigerian army to affirm Igbo domination in Nigeria. That brought about hatred for the Eastern, particularly the Igbo. Similarly, Achebe (2013, p 65) submits that the coup was led by a group of junior officers, most of them Igbo, and it would be known-widely as the Nzeogwu, the ring leader who was from the northern city of Kaduna. The night of January 10, 1966, is something Nigeria has never really recovered from.

In July 1966 a counter-coup ensued, this time it was executed by young Northern Officers. Uwechue (2004, p 31) explains what transpired in the late hour of that faithful day; "A similar situation recurred in July 1966 when the second coup took place. General Gowon, then lieutenant colonel, was General Ironsi's Chief of Staff when the rebels' kidnapped the general along with them, Colonel Adekunle Fajuyi from the latter's home." They were later killed at Lalupon, in present-day Lagelu Local Council of Oyo State. Fajuyi, 41, an indigene of the present Ekiti State, who just came back from a war front in Congo before he was announced as the first military governor of the Western Region volunteered to be killed alongside his boss (Njoku and Lawal, 2016)

3. 'One Nigeria' or Self Determination?

The amalgamation of the Northern and Southern protectorates of Nigeria in 1914 gave rise to "One Nigeria". Although the nomenclature never existed

until after the military interventions of 1966. Abdul (2013) buttresses that British colonialism of Nigeria began apparently in 1861 when Lagos was ceded to Britain. This occurrence is officially described as the annexation of Lagos. With this annexation of Lagos, British colonialists began spreading their dominance, and finally, in 1914, Lord Lugard became Nigeria's first British Governor-General and thereupon, he joined Southern Nigeria with Northern Nigeria.

Nigeria is known for its diversity, comprising over 250 ethnic groups, each with its languages, customs, and traditions. The three largest ethnic groups are the Hausa-Fulani in the north, the Yoruba in the southwest, and the Igbo in the southeast. Alongside these groups, numerous other ethnic communities contribute to the rich cultural tapestry of Nigeria. However, Nigeria faces various challenges in maintaining stability and effective governance. Issues such as corruption, inadequate infrastructure, economic inequality, and security concerns, particularly in the northeastern region affected by the Boko Haram insurgency, have posed significant obstacles to the country's development.

The need to protect these diversities gave birth to the "One Nigeria" mantra. The concept of "One Nigeria" reflects the belief that despite the country's diversity, the Nigerian people are bound together by a common history, values, and aspirations. It advocates for equal rights, justice, and opportunities for all citizens, regardless of their ethnic, religious, or regional backgrounds. Today's politicians usually voice that "the unity of Nigeria is non-negotiable. However, the question is whether the "One Nigeria" has moved Nigeria forward since the post-war era. Duru (2021) is of a different opinion on One Nigeria when he argues that events around Nigeria today, substantiate the constant truth that the claim of One Nigeria has been a long-lasting lie. He goes further to give his reasons why he believes that "one Nigeria" is a farse;

This is the fact, let's face it: the idea of a united Nigeria is simply a myth and it has been so all along; Nigeria's claim of being a 'federation' is a farce, and it has been so at least since 1967; the mantra of One-Nigeria is a fraudulent claim because Nigeria was not formed originally to operate in the mode that the faulty idea of 'One-Nigeria' imposed on it, especially since after the civil war. In other words, 'One-Nigeria' as it came to be understood and applied even to this day, is a 'corruption' of the original concept of Nigeria as a 'federation' and a 'republic', a 'union' of self-governing regions. 'One-Nigeria' has rather been a

tool of political deception used against the various peoples of Nigeria by those who have been profiting from such a sickly nation.

He further argues that the Federation was bastardised not by ordinary Nigerians who have been deceived over the years, but by the gullible politicians and the Military junta who enriched their pockets and those of their clansmen, under the guise of keeping Nigeria as one. He further buttresses his point by giving an example of how politicians ruined the "One Nigeria" in its right sense:

The sole culprits and indeed real enemies of a united Nigeria are Nigeria's political and elite class, who for 60 years have manipulated both the resources and the peoples of Nigeria to serve their whims and interests. One of them is President Muhammadu Buhari who behaves as though Nigeria belongs to his tribesmen, the Fulani and by extension to his Northern Muslim kinsmen. Tendencies and conducts, such as the mindless nepotism seen in the appointments and projects of the Buhari administration, are the reasons for the failure of unity in Nigeria.

Unfortunately, these trends repeated themselves in administration upon administration. and got worse under Buhari as the Grand Commander of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. As a multiethnic and multicultural nation, Nigeria has faced challenges related to ethnic tensions, distrust, regional disparities, and identity politics throughout its history. Such gave rise to Eastern Nigeria's secession and carving of Biafra in May 1967.

On the other hand, Biafran ideology refers to the political, social, and cultural ideas associated with the movement for an independent state of Biafra in old eastern Nigeria. The Biafran ideology emerged during the Nigerian Civil War (1967-1970) when the region of Biafra, predominantly inhabited by the Igbo ethnic group, sought secession from Nigeria. Nwaubani (2020) gives a summary of the events that led to the War;

For most Nigerians, the war over the breakaway state of Biafra is generally regarded as an unfortunate episode best forgotten, but for the Igbo people who fought for secession, it remains a life-defining event. In 1967, following two coups and turmoil which led to about a million Igbos returning to the east of Nigeria, the Republic of Biafra seceded with 33-year-old military officer Emeka Odumegwu Ojukwu at the helm. The Nigerian government declared war and after 30 months of fighting, Biafra surrendered. On 15 January 1970, the conflict officially ended.

That was just a summary of the war as there were events in the mid-1960s; economic and political instability and ethnic friction characterized Nigerian public life. In the mostly Hausa north, resentment against the more prosperous, educated Igbo minority erupted into violence. In September 1966, some 10,000 to 30,000 Igbo people were massacred in the Northern Region, and perhaps 1,000,000 fled as refugees to the Igbo-dominated East. Non-Igbos were then expelled from the Eastern Region (Falola, 2019). With this, the Eastern government led by Colonel Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu felt that the security of the lives of Easterners could no longer be guaranteed in Nigeria and that they were no longer needed in Nigeria as it were. The key tenets of Biafran ideology include Self-determination. The Biafran ideology emphasizes the right of the Igbo people and other ethnic groups in the region to determine their political status and pursue self-governance. It asserts that Biafra should be an independent state separate from Nigeria. It highlights the significance of Igbo ethnic identity and promotes the preservation and empowerment of Igbo culture, language, and traditions. It emphasizes the historical and cultural distinctiveness of the Igbo people. It also emphasizes the need for economic self-sufficiency and development in the region. Supporters argue that an independent Biafra would have greater control over its resources, leading to improved economic opportunities and development.

The Biafran ideology often references historical grievances, particularly the perceived marginalization and discrimination faced by the Igbo people within Nigeria. Supporters argue that secession would address these grievances and provide a more equitable and inclusive political environment.

More, Biafran ideology advocates for a system of governance that reflects the aspirations and needs of the Biafran people. Supporters argue for the establishment of democratic institutions, the rule of law, and respect for human rights within an independent Biafra.

Biafra never existed through times of peace for one to ascertain the application of these principles, but whenever agitation arises, there are high hopes, anticipation and optimism. Fifty years after the Biafran conflict, Nigeria is still battling to maintain its unity, with various groups, not just the Igbo, calling for the restructuring of Africa's most populous state.

4. Theoretical Studies

This study adopts comparative politics as a theory of the study. Comparative politics is an aspect of political

science epitomised by the use of comparative or other empirical methods, to inquire into the politics of one country or different countries. Again, this can imply questions on political institutions, political behaviour, ideology, conflict, and the causes and consequences of the economic development of some countries.

One influential scholar often credited with laying the foundation of comparative politics is Aristotle, an ancient Greek philosopher. In his work "Politics," Aristotle extensively compared different political systems and analyzed their strengths and weaknesses. In more modern times, scholars such as Alexis de Tocqueville, Max Weber, and E.E. Schattschneider made notable contributions to comparative politics. Following Aristotle, several political thinkers began using the comparative method for analysing and presenting their views and conclusions about politics. Thus, it can be legitimately observed that comparative politics had its origin in Aristotle (Priya, 2017)

Alexis de Tocqueville (b. 1805–d. 1859) was a French politician and writer, considered variously as a historian, sociologist, and political theorist. His two most well-known works are *Democracy in America* (2 vols., 1835–1840), and *The Old Regime and the Revolution* (1856). In the latter, along with the less well-known but equally useful and vibrant memoir *Recollections: The French Revolution of 1848* (1893), he analyzed the causes of the French Revolution and reflected on the relationship between equality and freedom. In all these texts, vis à vis his painstakingly observant approach, he examined how the broad social structures of a society affect the daily lives of individuals, and their relationships both to politics and economics (Boros, 2018). Three approaches can be employed in comparative politics. They are the rational approach, cultural approach and structural approach. The theory was used to compare federalism and the right of self-determination.

It is important to note that comparative politics is a collective and ongoing endeavour involving contributions from scholars across generations and diverse perspectives. The field continues to evolve as new scholars and researchers contribute to the understanding of political systems, processes, and dynamics through comparative analysis

5. Introducing the Body of the Graphic Novel

The project is a graphic novel, and it typically looks like a comic book, but it is longer and more substantial work, with a more intricate and involving storyline. The work is titled "Achuzia: Surviving Federal

Onslaught". The Front Matter has a cover page, copyright, foreword and table of contents, the body matter contains 9 chapters. The end matter is just a leaf with an epilogue. Every chapter has a sub-heading and a picture that follows it. The novel combines elements of traditional literature with sequential art, using images and text, including figures of sound, to tell the story. The format of a graphic novel can vary, but this work includes multiple panels on each page, with a minimum of two, and one panel on rare occasions. with text and dialogue incorporated into the panels themselves or in captions below them. The artworks have been rendered to have sharp tonal contrasts between the mid-tone and shades.

The sound effects were made such that they reflect the indigenous tones of the Igbo. A good example is "Gbimmm" for explosions, and 'tuwai' 'kposa', for the sound of gunfire. It is interesting to note that the artists steered away from the conventional sound effects such as 'bang', 'blam', 'ka-boom', 'splosh', or 'bratatat'. Similarly, Obasi, (2019) speaking of how some Biafran soldiers hear the sound of gunfire and explosions, avers that "Biafra knew the sound of Nigerian gunfire. The 'rat-tat-tat' became 'kwarapu, kwarapu,' which meant park and go. It signalled that federal soldiers were coming in full force. If the sound 'unu dum (all of you) followed it meant that an enemy bomber was operating from the air, killing civilians in hundreds". Overall, this work is made to appear unique, exciting, and visually appealing form of storytelling.

The book is a war-themed graphic novel and explores many of the same themes as war comics, but it has more intricate storylines and character development. It focused on the following subject matter: historical events, personal experiences, politics and ideology, and war's impact on society.

6. Presentation and Discussions

9 out of 150 samples of the finished pages are presented hereunder. The variables are presented as 3,8, 9, 12, 23, 41, 69, and 105. The artists followed this procedure to achieve the result: field trip, literature review, structured oral interview, and studio procedure of scripts, ideation, concepts, inking, colour, sound effects scripts and layout. These data were analysed using the contextual method of data analysis, which implies that the historical, social, and cultural implications of the Nigerian/Biafran conflict can provide valuable insights. The use of the vocabulary of design, including line, form, colour, and texture, is also considered a factor of discourse of the presented JPEG images



Plate 1. Page 3, *Digital Art*, 2023. © Chidiebere Onwuekwe, 2022
 On panel A, the British Union Jack is loosened from the pole. According to Smith (2022), the Union flag was called a jack only when it was flown at the bowsprit of British naval vessels, but it was commonly called the Union Jack by the late 17th century; now, either name is acceptable. The flag is flown on land for government and military purposes, and at sea it serves as a flag for the Royal Navy. The general public uses it unofficially as a civil flag. Its width-to-length ratio is 1 to 2. Union Jack was the symbol of British imperialism which they hoisted on conquered lands and administrative places. Panel B shows the Nigerian flag being hoisted on the same pole in the national square in Obalonde Lagos. The two panels symbolize

the handover of power. Panel C depicts conflicts in the National Assembly. The red in the background suggests violence and also the red chamber. The last panel shows various weapons brandished in the air, with some having stains of blood. The Flag of the Action Group is also seen flying in the air. They started a reprisal as a result of rigging against their candidate Obafemi Awolowo.

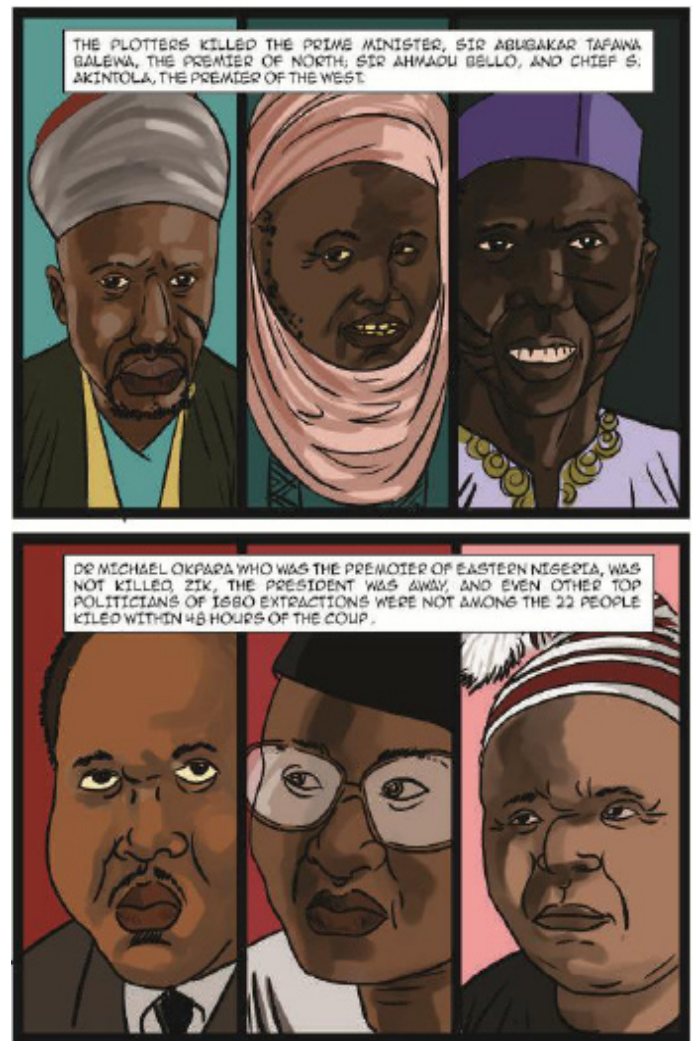


Plate 2. Page 8, *Digital Art*, 2023. © Chidiebere Onwuekwe, 2022

This plate has six portraiture panels with six prominent faces of Nigerian independence. The top row; On the left is Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa, followed is Sir Ahmadu Bello, and the last with Yoruba tribal marks is Chief Akintola. They were all killed in the first coup in Nigerian history. The second row is Dr Michael Okpara, a one-time Premier of Eastern Region, the next is Dr Nnamdi Azikiwe, the father of Nigerian Independence and Akanu Ibiam (29 November 1906 - 1 July 1995), who was a distinguished medical missionary who was appointed Governor of Eastern Region, Nigeria from December 1960 until January 1966 during the Nigerian First Republic (World Statesmen, 2010)

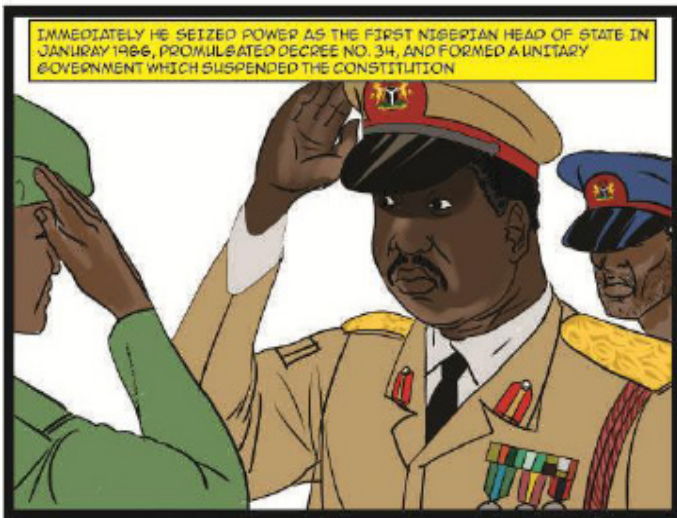


Plate 3. Page 9, Digital Art, 2023. © Chidiebere Onwuekwe, 2022

Plate 3 is the 9th page with three panels. Page one is the face of the general who foiled the first coup d'Etat in Nigeria; Major General Johnson Thomas Umunnakwe Aguiyi-Ironsi GCFR MVO MBE (3 March 1924 – 29 July 1966). He was the face of Nigerian Unity as he promulgated the Federal constitution by way of "Decree No 34", and a subsequent Unitary System of Government. Panel B shows the imprisonment of some of the first coup plotters. Panel C pictures him donned in official Military regalia with decorations. Then he is sworn in as the new head of state.

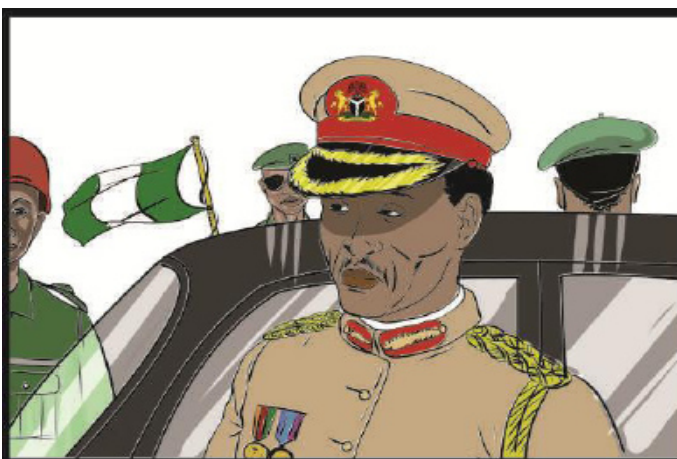


Plate 4. Page 12, Digital Art, 2023. © Chidiebere Onwuekwe, 2022

Plate 4 pictures Yakubu Gowon when he assumed power after the Northern Military mutineers killed General Johnson Ironsi and Colonel Ade Fajuyi. In January 1966, he became Nigeria's youngest military chief of staff at the age of 31, because a military coup d'état by a group of junior officers under Major Chukwuma Kaduna Nzeogwu led to the overthrow of Nigeria's civilian government. (US Library of Congress, 2002). Gowon assumed office as the head of state during the conflict and beyond. He was the icon of Nigeria's continued unity and existence as he declared once that "Nigeria's Unity cannot be negotiated". Panel B shows a crowd of northerners head-hunting the Easterners. The man at the forefront is wielding a bloodied knife, showing that he had already killed before now.





Plate 5. Page 23, Digital Art, 2023. © Chidiebere Onwuekwe, 2019

This page pictures the Biafran side waiting for the Federal Army in the trenches along Onitsha Beaches. The rising sun patch was the insignia of 'awakening' in those years. The rising sun had been used by the Australian Army, and Japanese Army during the Second World War. The patch is a symbol of resistance as every Militia and regular soldier proudly wears it on their upper arms. It helped to differentiate friends from foes too.



Plate 6. Page 41, Digital Art, 2023. © Chidiebere Onwuekwe, 2020

Night after the invasion of Onitsha, the head of state is in a telephone conversation with Achuzia in Onitsha, who is a militia major. Ojukwu was the figurehead of the Biafra War. In May 1967, Ojukwu declared the independence of the Eastern Region as the Republic of Biafra, following the massacre of thousands of Igbo people in the northern part of Nigeria. This declaration marked the beginning of the Nigerian Civil War, with Nigeria's federal government led by General Yakubu Gowon opposing Biafra's secession. As the head of the breakaway state, Ojukwu served as the commander-in-chief of the Biafran Armed Forces. The war was marked by significant humanitarian crises, including widespread famine and suffering. After nearly three years of conflict, Biafra surrendered to Nigeria in January 1970, and the Republic of Biafra ceased to exist.





Plate 7. Page 69, Digital Art, 2023. © Chidiebere Onwuekwe, 2020

Panel A pictures a Biafran high command. The Biafran symbol of sovereignty is hung behind. The Biafran flag represents the aspiration for an independent state of Biafra in southeastern Nigeria. The flag was used during the Nigerian Civil War, also known as the Biafran War, which lasted from 1967 to 1970. The flag features three horizontal stripes of different colours. The top stripe is green, symbolizing the lush vegetation and natural resources of the region. The middle stripe is black, representing the people of Biafra and their collective identity. The bottom stripe is red, symbolizing the bloodshed and sacrifices made during the struggle for independence. The flag was the official emblem of the Republic of Biafra, a secessionist state declared by the Igbo-dominated Eastern Region of Nigeria in 1967. The Biafran side sought independence, citing concerns of marginalization and political oppression, leading to a devastating three-year-long war.



Plate 8. Page 89, Digital Art, 2023. © Chidiebere Onwuekwe, 2020

On page 89 panel A, a high-ranking officer barks orders for his men to retreat amid the bombardment of their positions. The eagle and star on his shoulder suggest that he is a lieutenant colonel. The camouflage patterns of the two sides are different. The Biafran Coat of Arms featured several elements; eagles, a rising sun, a shield, and a motto. The eagle is a common symbol of strength, freedom, and independence in many cultures and is often used to represent a sovereign nation. The rising sun symbolizes hope, new beginnings, and a bright future. It may have been chosen to reflect the hope of the Biafran people for a better future through independence. The shield is a symbol of protection and defence, representing the readiness of the Biafran people to protect their sovereignty and resist external forces. The coat of arms may have included a motto or slogan representing the values or ideals of the Biafran state. However, I don't have specific information about the motto used in the Biafran Coat of Arms.





Plate 9. Page 105, Digital Art, 2023. © Chidiebere Onwuekwe, 2020

Page 105 pictures the Port Harcourt Airport which was a very important asset to both Nigeria and Biafra then. In the Battle of Port Harcourt, the airport changed hands severally before the federal forces recaptured it finally. In panel b, having captured the airport again, they set the Biafran flag on fire and fixed the Nigerian flag instead. That symbolizes the recapture of Port Harcourt for the last time, thus affirming the unity of Nigeria.

7. Discussion: A Lasting Solution to the Lingering Problem

Nigeria-Biafra is a complex and sensitive issue with deep-rooted historical, political, and socio-economic factors. Achieving a lasting solution would require careful consideration, dialogue, and a commitment to addressing the underlying grievances and challenges. Here are some key steps that could contribute to finding a lasting solution

Meaningful and inclusive dialogue between the Nigerian government and representatives of the various regions, including the Igbo people, is crucial at this point. This dialogue should address the historical grievances, political representation, and socioeconomic disparities that have fueled tensions in the past.

Devolution of Power is a very necessary action for the Nigerian nation. Devolution is about the transfer of power by a central government to local or regional Administrations (Department for Works and Pensions,

2010) Nigeria is a diverse country with various ethnic, cultural, and religious groups. The openness of devolution of power may make it attractive at a time when the role of the state is being transformed and power is moving upwards to European and global levels, downwards to regions and localities, and outwards to the market and civil society (Keating, 2009). A fair and equitable system of power-sharing and devolution of powers to the different regions could help reduce the sense of marginalization and promote a more inclusive and representative government. Recall that at independence in 1960, the three existing regions agreed to form a 'federal' or rather 'federalist' government in which the regions would be autonomous federating units. These regions did not give up their autonomy and control over their resources to the 'central' government at the point of independence. Thus, they were not financially dependent on the federal government, rather the federal government was dependent on them. They gave 'monthly allocations' called taxes to the federal government and not vice versa, as the case is today (Duru, 2021). Going back to the Independence constitution should devolve power among the current six geo-political zones of Nigeria, and make room for competition among regions.

Corruption and poor governance have been long-standing issues in Nigeria, contributing to inequality and public discontent. Implementing effective anti-corruption measures and promoting good governance practices are essential for building trust and ensuring that public resources benefit all citizens.

Social and Economic inequalities between different regions of Nigeria have contributed to grievances and tensions. In Nigeria, the scale of economic inequality has reached extreme levels, and it finds expression in the daily struggles of the majority of the population in the face of the accumulation of obscene amounts of wealth by a small number of individuals. While more than 112 million people were living in poverty in 2010, The richest Nigerian man will take 42 years to spend all of his wealth at 1 million per day (Oxfarm, 2017). Sincere focusing on equitable economic development, infrastructure, and job creation across the country could help alleviate these disparities.

More, upholding human rights, including the right to peaceful protest and freedom of expression, is essential in fostering a democratic and inclusive society.

Also, promoting cultural understanding and integration among the diverse ethnic groups in Nigeria can help

build a sense of national identity while respecting individual cultural heritages. Educational initiatives that promote national unity, diversity, and tolerance can play a crucial role in this process.

Finally, establishing a Truth and Reconciliation Commission, similar to what other countries have done after periods of conflict, could provide a platform for victims and affected communities to tell their stories, seek redress, and foster reconciliation.

8. Conclusion

It is well observed that selected pages of the artist's graphic novel entitled "Achuzia: Surviving the Federal Onslaught", presented the icons, signs indices, and imageries that reflect, or represent the two opposing ideologies of 'One Nigeria' and self-determination. Out of 150 pages, 9 pages were picked and used. It is observed that the Nigerian side fought vehemently to bring the East back to the fold, and the Old Eastern region fought back violently to defend their new sovereign state. From the research, it is essential to recognize that finding a lasting solution to the Nigeria-Biafra situation is a complex task that requires the willingness of all parties to engage in constructive dialogue, compromise, and a genuine commitment to addressing the underlying issues. It may take time, patience, and perseverance, but with dedication and the involvement of all stakeholders, a path toward lasting peace and stability can be forged.

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