

“THE UNIVERSITY OF THE VILLAGE”: THE UNIVERSITY OF NIGERIA, NSUKKA  
AND THE MAKING OF POST-INDEPENDENCE NIGERIA

By

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A DISSERTATION

Submitted to  
Michigan State University  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
for the degree of

History—Doctor of Philosophy

2020

## ABSTRACT

### “THE UNIVERSITY OF THE VILLAGE”: THE UNIVERSITY OF NIGERIA, NSUKKA AND THE MAKING OF POST-INDEPENDENCE NIGERIA

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This dissertation examines the University of Nigeria, Nsukka (UNN, the first indigenous university in Nigeria and the first land grant university in Africa. This dissertation argues that UNN represented an innovative experiment in African higher education by expanding higher education to the general populace rather than the colonially privileged elite. However, its construction drew upon patronage politics and taxation regimes that expropriated funding at the same time other regions faced education taxes. Resistance to the University’s construction reflected local sentiments of inequitable distribution of tax resources throughout Nigeria’s Eastern Region. The University also served as a mechanism in post-independence Nigerian geopolitics: as a mechanism for removing the influence of the British-established University College, Ibadan and British educational models more generally. The University of Nigeria, Nsukka would be, as Taiye Selasi and Achille Mbembe have phrased it, an “Afro-politan” institution—porous and all-encompassing of knowledge systems throughout the globe. During the Nigeria-Biafra war, UNN faced sustained wartime damage—damage from it could not easily recover. The Nigeria-Biafra war laid the groundwork for a period of sustained infrastructural decay and internal resistance, even as the Nigerian federal government enjoyed larger access to oil revenue. This dissertation examines what makes African institutions “indigenous” and how UNN represented the halting transformation from coloniality to indigeneity in the post-independence Nigerian nation-state.

*To the people of Nsukka.*  
*Ka Chukwu gozie unu. Ka Chukwu gozie ezi na ulo unu ogbu ruo mgbe ogbo. Ka unu nwe udo,*  
*akụ na ụba. Ka ozi Nsukka bigede ruo mgbe otụtụ ogbo. Ka Ozi Nsukka nye ndi uwa ihè.*

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

An Igbo saying holds, *Ejighi Igbo Agwa Onye Ocha*: You cannot explain Igbo to a white person. The saying serves as a kind of verbalized punctuation mark, a rhetorical flourish to highlight the inner life of Igbo society that needs no explanation and by implication, that *Ndi Ocha* cannot possibly explain. Or, as Jack Johnson observes in his song, “The News”: “It’s all understood.” My efforts to understand the history of the University engage this reality: that certain things must be spoken in order to be acknowledged.

This dissertation has been through a winding road: through two major diseases, ongoing financial duress, and a global pandemic that has rendered much of my archival collections inaccessible to the public. The story of the University of Nigeria, Nsukka is a story of the soaring heights of Africa’s independence age—an era when Africans could, it was hoped, live on their own terms with their own institutions, challenging the Western naysayers who looked upon African independence with a mixture of condescension and dread. For the intellectual elite, the idea of an African university administered by Africans with an African imprimatur on its degrees struck them either as an obscenity or a farce. The planners of the University of Nigeria, Nsukka challenged prevailing wisdom, making an institution that seemed to exemplify a self-governing African country committing to crafting its own future, on its own terms. It was a radical exertion of agency and control. This dissertation is a memorial to that university, in both its splendor and its duress.

Scholars often refer to their written work in paternal terms, as a child reared through nurturing and care. My scholarship deserves no such lofty distinction. It consists of a 400-page long exploration of a specific subject, the history of the University of Nigeria, Nsukka, that



might offer a little insight to the world—nothing more, nothing less. The capacity for a single human life, even those of the lowliest station, to effect good for humanity transcends any potential impact this dissertation will have on the course of human affairs. The typical shopkeeper or mechanic—the sort standing alongside the road when our vehicle blew out a tire *en route* to Enugu—enjoys a greater capacity to affect everyday lives. But we do not enjoy the capacity to dictate the fulness of the terms under which we live. We live in an ongoing dialogue with the will of the *chi*, winning some negotiations while surrendering others. The ways that we are best suited to contribute to our communities tend to be found in rather conventional methods. Grandeur may be in the offing, but I find that my best efforts at contributing come through embracing those circumstances in which we find ourselves; a life lived in the offing is a life less lived.

This dissertation, then, reflects my modest effort to challenge prevailing Western assumptions—that Nigeria is nothing more than a teeming morass of day-to-day hustlers and scammers. This dissertation seeks to highlight the fundamentally *intellectual* nature of modern Nigeria—that it is a place rooted in ideas, aspirations, and intellectual syncretism. For all the anxieties about the independence era expressed by scholars such as Chinua Achebe and John Oji, Nigeria is, as Chinua Achebe observes, a “nation favoured by Providence” well-equipped to “facilitate mankind’s advancement.”<sup>1</sup>

An army of researchers, both hired and volunteer, have supported this dissertation along the way. An Igbo proverb holds: *Ora na-azu nwa* (“Groups raise children”). I managed a team of six researchers in both the United States and Nigeria culling archives throughout the world for documentation. The research sites included: Logan, Utah; Morgantown, West Virginia; College

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<sup>1</sup> Chinua Achebe, *The Trouble with Nigeria* (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 1984), 2.

Park, Maryland; Boston, Massachusetts; East Lansing, Michigan; Chicago, Illinois; London, United Kingdom; The Hague, Netherlands; and Ibadan, Enugu, Nsukka, Calabar, and Asaba, Nigeria. While this dissertation may have a limited impact, its need for collective care has been no pressing for it. On every page, the work of invisible labor has left its stamp.

Sherilyn Fuhrman has done the work of many, culling documentation from the Utah State University Merrill-Cazier archives, transcribing long interviews, and applying her editorial eye. To say her contributions have been instrumental would be to indulge in high absurdity. She has gone above and beyond her wages—and with a generally unknown vibrancy of spirit, even after the project would have grown old and stale for observers far less committed to the idea of Nsukka than she has been. Others have helped along the way, as well. in Charlsetown, West Virginia, Kimberly Konkel collected vital records regarding Benjamin Nnamdi Azikiwe’s arrival to Storer College. At Michigan State University’s library, Kathleen Weessies worked doggedly to procure a contemporaneous map of Nigeria, going well beyond her required obligations. I thank her for her contribution to the project.

For a dissertation to pay honors to the dissertation chair is a given. But Dr. Nwando Achebe has been singular in her contributions to and support for this dissertation. In her commitment to the idea of Nsukka, she has been unwavering—an exemplar of the commitment to engaging indigenous African institutions on their own terms. Above all, I acknowledge the presence of my older brother, Stewart, who passed away as a one-day-old infant 40 years ago this month. Had he lived, he might have been my mother’s last child. I live with his presence and remember the short life he lived as the scaffolding for my own life.

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## **KEY TO ABBREVIATIONS**

UNN University of Nigeria, Nsukka

UI University of Ibadan

EFA Enugu Federal Archives

IFA Ibadan Federal Archives

NCNC National Council of Nigeria and the Cameroons

AG Action Group

NPC Northern People's Congress

MSU Michigan State University

## INTRODUCTION

In Wole Soyinka's 1965 novel, *The Interpreters*, a group of Nigerian intellectuals who have graduated from foreign universities all struggle to understand their place in independent Nigeria; they are, as one character describes themselves, a “new generation of interpreters”—considering themselves to be stewards and scholar-statesmen and women, capable of re-imagining Nigeria anew.<sup>2</sup>

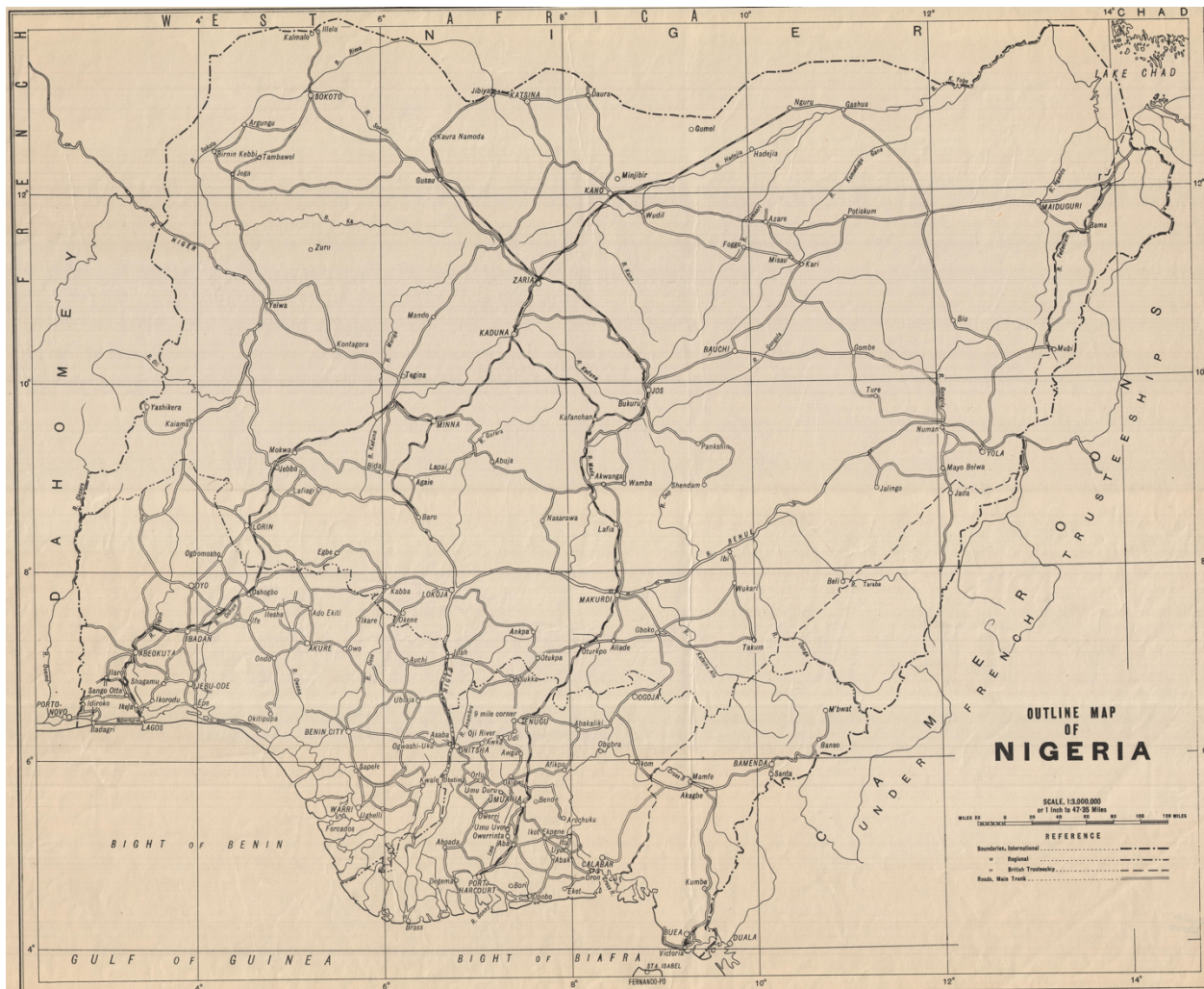


Figure 1: Map of Nigeria's Regions (Northern, Western, and Eastern), 1959  
Courtesy of University of Minnesota Library

<sup>2</sup> Wole Soyinka, *The Interpreters* (London: Deutch, 1965), 178.



An academic studying academia is the most incestuous of indulgences. Academia—including its own existence—demands such explication. Pierre Bourdieu considers scholarly analysis of academic life to be a “comic scenario, that of Don Juan deceived or the Miser robbed. . . no groups love an informer.”<sup>3</sup> Similarly, for Soyinka, the post-independence university evoked little of the grandeur of the nationalist project.<sup>4</sup> Literary critic Femi Ojo-Ade describes the university in *The Interpreters* with ferocity:

[T]he university here is a politicized, privileged institution engaged in the games of power and positions that go on daily outside its gates . . . immune from all iniquities, forever in search of sacred Truth. . . [in a] state of sanctimonious superiority, a fraud, a fake, a façade for various ills badly hidden by intellectualism.<sup>5</sup>

Soyinka’s “interpreters,” Ojo-Ade wryly observes, for all their claims to intellectual depth, turn out to be “messenger[s] of the master . . . faceless voice[s] crying in the wilderness,” or “decoder[s] of a message meaningless from the very start.”<sup>6</sup> Chinua Achebe, the world-renowned scholar of letters who served a research fellow at UNN following the Nigeria-Biafra war, also acknowledged that:

we must admit that the Nigerian university has not acquitted itself too brilliantly in cultivating national leadership. No one can point to any shining achievement in national politics which the nation can recognize as the peculiar contribution of university men and women. Rather, quite a few of them have been splashed with accusations of abuse and corruption.<sup>7</sup>

Achebe accuses Nigerian academics of “cheap[ening] themselves and erod[ing] their prestige by trotting up and down between the campus and the waiting rooms of the powerful, vying for

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<sup>3</sup> Pierre Bordieu, *Homo Academicus* (Palo Alto: Stanford University Press, 1988), 5.

<sup>4</sup> Femi Ojo-Ade, “The Interpreters, or Soyinka’s Indictment of the Ivory Tower,” *Black American Literature* Vol. 22, No. 4 (Winter 1988): 735-751.

<sup>5</sup> Femi Ojo-Ade, “The Interpreters, or Soyinka’s Indictment of the Ivory Tower,” *Black American Literature* Vol. 22, No. 4 (Winter 1988): 737.

<sup>6</sup> Femi Ojo-Ade, “The Interpreters, or Soyinka’s Indictment of the Ivory Tower,” *Black American Literature* Vol. 22, No. 4 (Winter 1988): 737

<sup>7</sup> Chinua Achebe, *The Education of the British-Educated Child* (New York: Penguin, 2009), 172.

attention and running one another down for the entertainment of the politician.”<sup>8</sup> Tragically, Achebe concludes, the “university has deservedly lost its mystique and squandered its credibility which it had in such abundance at the time of Nigeria’s independence.”<sup>9</sup> Vincent Chukwuemeka Ike’s novel, *The Naked Gods*, provides a ribald panorama of these conflicts. Depicting University of Nigeria, Nsukka (UNN) (named pseudonymously as “Songhai University”), Ike portrays a campus riven with petty posturing and high-level corruption. Ike’s “Songhai University” reveals a space in which high aspirations concerning modernity and nationhood intermingle with low stakes over esteem, semantics, and factionalism.<sup>10</sup> The Nigerian academy of Ike’s imaginary exists in a state of suspended contradiction: aspiring intellectual heights while laboring under the political strife of post-coloniality.

Soyinka’s, Achebe’s, and Ike’s dismal depictions invite critical reflection; if the very institutions tasked with social uplift and intellectual expansion are but reflective of a deep-seated colonial paradigm, then they must be questioned as to who preserves this order, and why.<sup>11</sup> If we are to take their analyses at face value, how, then, has the university as an institution stayed afloat, thriving on its own irrelevance? Universities have faced the same conflicts over resources, identity, and governance that have weighed down on Nigeria *writ large*.

This dissertation focuses on a university aspiring to challenge the trajectory of university life that Soyinka, Achebe, and Ike loathed—a generation of interpreters committed to *re-interpreting* the Nigerian landscape in the wake of independence. Histories more than a few have

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<sup>8</sup> Chinua Achebe, *The Education of the British-Educated Child* (New York: Penguin, 2009), 172.

<sup>9</sup> Chinua Achebe, *The Education of the British-Educated Child* (New York: Penguin, 2009), 172.

<sup>10</sup> Vincent Chukwuemeka Ike, *The Naked Gods* (London: Harvill, 1970), *passim*.

<sup>11</sup> Femi Ojo-Ade, “The Interpreters, or Soyinka’s Indictment of the Ivory Tower,” *Black American Literature* Vol. 22, No. 4 (Winter 1988): 744.

offered up institutional treatments of higher education in Nigeria, but they are the stories of organization charts and faculties, of Vice Chancellors and faculty development.<sup>12</sup>

The University of Nigeria, Nsukka, Attorney-General M.O. Ajegbo celebrated, is “the brightest star in our firmament.”<sup>13</sup> It will use a combination of analytical lenses to examine the rise and struggles of the University of Nigeria, Nsukka—considered at its inception to be Nigeria’s first “indigenous university”; or as one Eastern politician celebrated, a university that “started right on its own principles . . . without first of all tied to the apron strings of a parent university in Europe or America.”<sup>14</sup> Surely, Representative C.A. Abangwu from Nsukka East observed, “the future sons and daughters of this country will forever be grateful to the founder of the University of Nigeria.”<sup>15</sup> UNN aspired to be something different, to be an exemplar of Nigeria’s future as a leader on the continent. In 1964, UNN’s hopeful first valedictorian, Peter Uchebuaku Onu, proclaimed that “as bearers of the message of Nsukka,” dreaming UNN students in particular carried the responsibility to show that “the dignity of man, the African man, must be restored.”<sup>16</sup> For its founder, Nnamdi Azikiwe, UNN would mark the redemption of Africa, transforming it into a “continent of light overnight.”<sup>17</sup>

Using UNN as a case study, this dissertation will examine how UNN embodies Roland Robertson’s theorization of “glocality.”<sup>18</sup> Robertson argues that the state of glocality exists as a

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<sup>12</sup> For two examples, see A. Babs Fafunwa, *History of Education in Nigeria* (New York: Routledge, 2018); John B. Hanson, *Education, Nsukka: a study in institution building among the modern Ibo* (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1968); Michael M. Ogbeidi, “The Nsukka Project: Nnamdi Asikiwe and the Establishment of the University of Nigeria,” *Lagos Historical Review* (May 2020): 81-96; Lewis and Margaret Zerby, *If I Should Die Before I Wake: The Nsukka Dream* (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1971).

<sup>13</sup> *Eastern House of Assembly Debates*, December 8, 1961, 214.

<sup>14</sup> *Parliamentary Debates, Eastern House of Assembly*, 3rd, 4th, and 5th Sessions, December 8, 1961 (Lagos: Federal Government Printer, 1962), 214-215.

<sup>15</sup> *Eastern House of Assembly Debates*, December 8, 1961, 219.

<sup>16</sup> John Hanson, *Education Nsukka: A Study of Institution Building Among the Modern Ibo* (East Lansing: Michigan State University, 1968), 49.

<sup>17</sup> Azikiwe, *Renascent Africa*, 140.

<sup>18</sup> Roland Robertson, “Glocalization: Time-Space and Homogeneity-Heterogeneity,” in Mike Featherstone, Scott Lash, and Roland Robertson, eds., *Global Modernities* (London: Sage, 1995):

state of “communicative and interactional connecting” between global and local systems; in a similar manner, UNN became enmeshed in a web of global exchange and local conflict, testing its resilience and staying power.<sup>19</sup> Reliant largely on Western patronage and Western beneficiaries, university life in Eastern Nigeria cannot be uncoupled from Western finances and at times, American politics. Additionally, the lifeblood of university life cannot be uncovered from its structures alone but must consider the intellectual ambiance of the region in which it resides. UNN was not built on a blank canvas but rather, became a new institutional actor in an area with a long history of intellectual and institutional lives. UNN was established in Nigeria against a kaleidoscope of social, political, economic, and intellectual contexts.

### *Chapter Breakdown*

This dissertation contains an introduction, a conclusion, and six chapters. Chapter 1 offers my positionality *vis-a-vis* Nsukka, university education, and the perspective gained conducting field research. Chapter 2 situates Nnamdi Azikiwe's life history as a product of Americana education—highlighting his commitment to linkages, narrative-building, and networking as the core of his professional persona. I draw on archival evidence from the Enugu Archives as well as Storer College to situate Azikiwe as a product of a complicated milieu of Aggrey-ite black self-uplift, Garveyite black liberation, and white conqueror mythos.

Chapter 3 reveals how Azikiwe shepherded UNN legislation through the House of Assembly and how it resonated in the public sphere. it functioned as part of a broader program of patronage politics in which Onitsha received greater access to funding and institutions than site such as Aba. I collected documentation concerning the wide disenchantment with Eastern Region public education, leading to militant action throughout Southern Igboland (esp. Aba and

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<sup>19</sup> Robertson, “Glocalization,” 31.

Owerri). They considered Azikiwe's education program to be one more tax-extracting institution in the tradition of British exploitation. I will illustrate how Aba had been marginalized by colonial powers in the realm of essential goods, such as water programs and road construction. While Azikiwe was billing UNN to the public—and more specifically, to Americans—as a product in multi-racial coalition building, southern politics considered the move to be one more evidence of fidelity to Nsukka. I situate the University firmly in local politics.

Chapter 4 shows the beginnings of the contest over educational sovereignty between the Americans and the British in the formative days of the University. It argues that the University of Nigeria serves as a case study in which Azikiwe utilized American influence to dismantle the British educational hegemony. British concerns about the decline of British influence in Nigerian education as well as the preservation of positive Anglo-MSU relationship prompt them to remain, but MSU's ongoing efforts to implement land grant style educational philosophy both repulse them to leave as well as prod them to stay. Azikiwe intervenes, manipulates, and directs the university in spite of ongoing Anglo-American urges of caution, leaving the two contestants for influence ultimately at Azikiwe's behest.

Chapter 5 will engage the internationalization of the MSU project; while it's typically been conceived to be an American project, it was, in fact, a site of international collaboration and contest. I will draw on literature from the wave of "Afro-politan" thinkers who challenge scholars of Africana to revise notions of static, "indigenous knowledge"--allowing us to see "indigenous" not only as a set of pristine ideas and identities but a state of being in which Nigerians (or other Africans) stand at the center of their own knowledge making process--the essence of man's dignity, which was UNN's *raison d'etre* ("to restore the dignity of man"). This situates "indigenous" not only as an identity juxtaposed against colonial erasure but also as a

fully functioning mechanism for incorporating externalities and Western thought. I also offer an extensive discussion of the influence of the Peace Corps and how Nigerians resisted and challenged Peace Corps influence.

Chapter 6 will discuss UNN against the context of the Nigeria-Biafra war. It will highlight how the university survived through the war as well as the University as a site of wartime mythos--used to highlight the depravity of Nigerian troops for destroying Biafra's holy seat of knowledge, as it were. It will also discuss the post-war recovery process through official correspondence as well as a campus satirical magazine, *The Mask*.

*Anaghi a nọ otu ebe ekiri mmanwu: One Cannot Stand in one Position to Watch of the Masquerade Dance*

The proverb, *anaghi a nọ otu ebe ekiri mmanwu* (you cannot stay in one place to watch the masquerade dance) invokes the arrival of ancestral and deified spirits to the community. It is a performance that is deserving of the attentiveness of all community residents. The proverb urges its hearers to view the dance from a variety of vantage points, an indigenous invocation to promote a variety of perspectives. Like the masquerade dance, the University embodies a host of human experiences, ranging from the soaring flights of the mind to the crass partisan bickering over funding and water rights—as is often the case, when such discourses overlap.

“The University of the Village” is equal parts biography, intellectual history, institutional history, political history, and social history. As a group biography, this dissertation draws on the approach deployed by a host of individual and group biographers, highlighting how individual quirks and proclivities inform not only an individual’s personal trajectory but whole institutions and movements.<sup>20</sup> Group biographies highlight not only individual transformation, but

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<sup>20</sup> For examples, see James Mann, *Rise of the Vulcans: The History of Bush’s War Cabinet* (New York: Penguin Books, 2004); John W. Hanson, *Education, Nsukka: A Study in Institution-building Among the Modern Ibo* (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1968); Liaquat Ahmed, *The Bankers Who Broke the World* (New York:

*synergistic* transformation—demonstrating that results come through collaborations rather than individuals.<sup>21</sup>

This dissertation will not merely be an institutional history but the history of personalities and movements, of ideas applied, debated, discarded, and deployed. In the telling, the dissertation will engage broader themes in the transition between coloniality and independence: the incorporation and synthesis of Western ethos with indigenous notions of higher education, and the influence of Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU's) on the Nigerian educational system. Although the biographical tradition has become a little *passé* in Western academe, it remains a compelling mode of analysis for Africanists. The biographical cannot be distinguished from the intellectual.

#### *UNN as Intellectual History*

As an intellectual history, this dissertation engages with not only what thoughts gained currency but *why* they did and *from whence*? Six years after overseeing a commission to examine Nigerian universities, Sir Eric Ashby, the Chairman of the Ashby Commission dedicated to localizing West African education in de-colonizing British Africa, observed: while “higher education is not new to the continent of Africa,” its “modern universities in Africa owe nothing to this ancient tradition of scholarship.”<sup>22</sup>

This dissertation challenges Ashby's views: the notion of generalized studies *does* draw on indigenous knowledge constructs in Nigeria. The standard gloss for “university” in Igbo is *mahadum*: “to know them all.” Yet, the notion that an individual may acquire knowledge

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Penguin Books, 2009); Mehrsa Baradaran, *The Color of Money: Black Banks and the Racial Wealth Gap* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2019).

<sup>21</sup> Ira B. Nadel observes: “in group biography, one becomes defined by the many” and “establishes place or milieu, the context for a movement.” In *Biography: Fact, Fiction, and Form* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 1986), 192.

<sup>22</sup> Y.G.M. Lulat, *A History of African Higher Education from Antiquity to the Present* (Westport, CT: Greenwood, 2005), 42.

regarding the totality of human truths strikes indigenous Igbo thought as an absurdity. When an individual claims an excess of expertise, a conventional Igbo response may be: “*I ma nke a; I ma nke ozo?*” (You know this; do you know that?), urging the over-confident to be cognizant of their own ignorance. *Amamihe*—a moderately correlated gloss to “wisdom” in the Igbo language—can be rendered: “to know something,” “I know something,” or, alternatively, “do I know something?” Folklorist and Anthropologist J. Akuma Kalu-Njoku renders “amamihe” as a construct constitutive of “collective memory, thought, lasting values, and character.”<sup>23</sup> In these regards, the epistemological foundations of the “university”—the notion that all truths can be acquired and accessed in a single space—is fundamentally at odds with indigenous education. In this regard, the famed proverb, *ihe kwulu, ihe ekwudebe ya* (where one thing stands, something else stands beside it) forms a core of indigenous epistemology: the notion of generalized knowledge must co-exist alongside profound intellectual humility.

Existing institutions provided education, both for banal matters and high-level thought, in all theaters of daily life. As Sabine Jell-Bahlsen observes regarding indigenous education in the ways of the Igbo water goddess, *Ogbuide*, youth acquired knowledge through a *local* system, including a sense of gradated knowledge and gradated intimacy with *Ogbuide*’s divine nature.<sup>24</sup> Among indigenous Igbo societies, Historian Nwando Achebe argues that pre-existing educational and knowledge-acquisition institutions were administered through the *ogbo* [age group], *ezi na ulo* (family compound), in which children learned about agriculture, pottery, and

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<sup>23</sup> J. Akuma Kalu-Njoku, “Establishing Igbo Community Tradition in the United States: Lessons from Folkloristics,” *The Journal of American Folklore*, Vol. 125, No. 497 (Summer 2012), pp. 327-342

<sup>24</sup> Sabine Jell-Bahlsen, *The Water Goddess in Igbo Cosmology: Ogbuide of Oguta Lake* (Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 2008),



weaving.<sup>25</sup> Elsewhere, indigenous diviners (e.g. *dibia*), inculcated the mysteries of the unknown into the apprentices.<sup>26</sup>

Centering Nsukka, the birthplace of UNN, Achebe further contends that knowledge and intellect were conveyed not only through the *ndi isi* or *ishi* (elders) but also, from parents to children, from the *umuada* (the community daughters) and the *ndi ogbo* (age grade societies), and from *attamas* (priests or priestesses of the deities), *mmuo ndichie* (ancestors) to indigenous adherents, often through the performance of the *omabe* (a male masked spirit in Nsukka) and the celebration of the deities.<sup>27</sup> *Abere*, who was *Omabe*'s spouse, was a greatly feared deity in Nsukka Division.<sup>28</sup>

In 1953, Reverend Friar A. Ojefua, a Catholic friar and news commentator in Ibadan, acknowledged the strength of religion in pre-colonial education : “everything, everybody and the whole society was controlled by religion and order,” and “the belief was that all laws were made by the gods and the departed ancestors and that any violation of these laws entailed penalty automatically.”<sup>29</sup>

The story of the University of Nigeria, Nsukka is, therefore, not only the history of ideas but of *idea-making* through a particular kind of institution. In his study of East African Christian conversion, Derek Peterson writes about an “infrastructure of cosmopolitanism” among East African Christian converts, thus cultivating a *supranatural* identity against nationalist discourses.<sup>30</sup> Engaged in the world of ideas, in identities far removed from their own, the

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<sup>25</sup> Nwando Achebe, *Farmers, Traders, Warriors, and Kings*, 122-126.

<sup>26</sup> Nwando Achebe, *Farmers, Traders, Warriors, and Kings*, 75-80.

<sup>27</sup> Nwando Achebe, *Farmers, Traders, Warriors, and Kings*, 163, 172.

<sup>28</sup> Nwando Achebe, *Farmers, Traders, Warriors, and Kings*, 163-164.

<sup>29</sup> Rev. Fr. A. Ojefua, “Education and the New Nigeria,” *Catholic Herald* [Enugu] July 3, 1953, 6.

<sup>30</sup> Derek Peterson, *Ethnic Patriotism and the East African Revival* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), chpt. 2.

Christian converts Peterson highlights live in the nexus of identity transformation and agentive identity appropriation.<sup>31</sup>

Africanists of past generations have situated “indigenous” and “traditional” identity against the era of coloniality and post-coloniality—a chronological label rather than a social label. Literary scholar Chielozona Eze values the “recourse to nativist, relativist, and autochthonous arguments” as a “means to fight erasure.”<sup>32</sup> He contends that such an approach “does not have within it the means to extend the vision of the world beyond the essentialist enclave of African pristine villages.”<sup>33</sup> The relativist model of African identity, Eze contends, has become embedded in ethnic loyalties and the ethnocentric identities that numerous Nigerian commentators have condemned since well-before independence; therefore, Africans need a new approach to embracing their indigenous identity while celebrating the process of cultural cross-pollination: what author Taiye Tuakli-Wosornu describes as “Afro-politanism.”<sup>34</sup> This dissertation, then, offers new theoretical significance for UNN as a space of “Afro-politan” cultural cross-pollination, even within the localized contact of Nsukka far-removed from Tuakli-Wosornu’s imagined “Afro-politan. . . blend of London fashion, New York jargon, [and] African ethics.”<sup>35</sup> Literary theorist Simon Gikandi describes “Afro-politanism” as a mechanism celebrating the imperative “to embrace and celebrate a state of cultural hybridity—to be of African and other worlds at the same time.”<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> Derek Peterson, *Ethnic Patriotism and the East African Revival* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), chpt. 2.

<sup>32</sup> Chielozona Eze, “Rethinking African Culture and Identity: The Afropolitan Model,” *Journal of African Cultural Studies* 26, no. 2 (2014): 236.

<sup>33</sup> Chielozona Eze, “Rethinking African Culture and Identity: The Afropolitan Model,” *Journal of African Cultural Studies* 26, no. 2 (2014): 236.

<sup>34</sup> Taiye Selasi, “Bye-Bye Babar,” <http://thelip.robertsharp.co.uk/?p=76> <accessed August 11, 2020>.

<sup>35</sup> Taiye Tuakli-Wosornu, “Bye-Bye Barbar,” <http://thelip.robertsharp.co.uk/?p=76>, accessed September 9, 2019.

<sup>36</sup> Simon Gikandi (2010). “Foreword: On Afropolitanism.” *Negotiating Afropolitanism: Essays on Borders and Spaces in Contemporary African Literature and Folklore*, eds. Jennifer Wawrzinek and J.K.S. Makokha. (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2011), 9.

While Wosornu's world was made up of London Fashion and New York jargon, this dissertation demonstrates how UNN presented its own kind of Nsukka-politanism: a space in which Dutch, English, Americans, Irish, and Indians mixed and mingled, sharing knowledge systems under the banner of Nigerian nationalism and with Nigerians at the center of their own knowledge producing institutions. UNN students saw that being Nigerian did not demand strict adherence to any one nation-state's body of knowledge. UNN was neither African nor American, nor was it an attempt to recover a pristine African past. It represented all strains of thought from both sides of the Atlantic. It was an "Afro-politan" institution *par excellence*.<sup>37</sup>

With independence would come prosperity, personal actualization, and political greatness. Postal worker Charles Agu told a visiting missionary: "Now that they have independence every one [sic] is growing financially, educationally, etc. But they believe they should grow spiritually."<sup>38</sup> He celebrated that "independence . . . will confer on all of us obligations of a new kind and proportion" with "new strains and stresses."<sup>39</sup> To borrow from political scientist and historian, James Scott, the University sought to make the post-independence nation-state "legible"—intellectually conceivable for the educated masses and, thus, legitimate and worthy of loyalty.<sup>40</sup>

Nigeria's early intelligentsia faced a challenge: convincing skeptical Westerners not only that Nigerian life enjoyed the same kind of richness and depth that Western intellectuals had long claimed but also, that they could produce an institution capable of producing knowledge

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<sup>3737</sup> Achille Mbembe observed that Afro-politanism meant "to domesticate the unfamiliar." Mbembe, "Afropolitanism," 10.

<sup>38</sup> Marvin Jones Diary, October 23, 1961, LDS Church History Archives.

<sup>39</sup> Chief Obafemi Awolowo, "Independence," in *Voice of Reason: Selected Speeches of Chief Obafemi Awolowo*, vol. 1, 3 vols. (Akure, Nigeria: Fabamigbe Publishers, 1981), 1:154.

<sup>40</sup> James Scott, *Seeing Like A State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1998).

dissemination in a manner that could serve similar ends as Western universities.<sup>41</sup> Nigerian students attending institutions such as Trinity College, Dublin, Oxford, and Cambridge received access to increased success and earning power, but the environment demanded that they suppress their sense of self in order to meet the demands of the moment. Could they produce their own versions of the university on their own terms?<sup>42</sup>

Thus, “authentic” African identity need not be bound to particular spaces. Eze, theorist Achille Mbembe, and philosopher Kwame Anthony Appiah hold that such “indigenous” identity construction is useful mythology.<sup>43</sup> These scholars hold that African-ness cannot—and should not—be defined by geospatial boundaries: as theorist Rodwell Makombe summarizes this school of thought: African identity “is mobile, transnational, and not confined to a geographical place.”<sup>44</sup> Eze writes that claiming an indigenous African identity “can no longer be explained in purist, essentialist, and oppositional terms or by reference only to Africa.”<sup>45</sup> Appiah observes: “Cultural purity is an oxymoron,” with the odds being high that literate individuals “already live a cosmopolitan life.”<sup>46</sup> Eze concurs: “The African is contaminated in the sense that she is not culturally or biologically pure.”<sup>47</sup> UNN provided an institutional space in which Azikiwe *fostered and encouraged* inter-cultural cross-pollination—a space in which Nigerian “indigenous knowledge” could be not one thing but many.

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<sup>41</sup> For a treatment of Nigerian efforts in

<sup>42</sup> Nnamdi Azikiwe complained in *Renascent Africa*: “Why should African youths depend upon Oxford, Cambridge, Harvard, Yale, the Sorbonne or Heidelberg for intellectual growth? These universities are mirrors which reflect their particular social idiosyncrasies.” Azikiwe, *Renascent Africa* (London: Frank Cass, 1968), 140.

<sup>43</sup> Kwame Anthony Appiah, *Cosmopolitanism* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2010), 113.

<sup>44</sup> Rodwell Makombe, “Literature as a Medium for Social and Political Activism: The Case of Mashingaidze Gomo's A Fine Madness,” *African Studies Review* 60, 2 (September 2017): 136.

<sup>45</sup> Eze, “African Culture and Identity: The Afropolitan Model,” 240.

<sup>46</sup> Kwame Anthony Appiah, *Cosmopolitanism* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2010), 113.

<sup>47</sup> Eze, “Rethinking African Culture and Identity: The Afropolitan Model,” *Journal of African Cultural Studies* 26 (2014): 234-247.

Through the work of comparative historian Matthias Middel, scholars have come to see “space” *per se* as an illuminating venue for research. Middel has called for increased historicization of such spaces, particularly “portals of globalization, regimes of territorialization, and critical junctures of globalization.”<sup>48</sup> In the physical space, forces intersect, and structures delineate boundaries. Space evokes not only physical structure and set-apartedness; it also provides a useful venue for understanding the making and re-making of collective memory regarding the UNN project.

UNN represented the hope that the *oyibo* [foreigner] or the *ndi ocha* [white people] appeared to offer methods of personal advancement, such as *iguakwukwo*: book learning. At mission schools and colleges throughout Nigeria’s Northern and Southern regions, colonial mission educators had challenged the educational supremacy of the *ezi na ulo* (family compound), the *dibia*, and other local participants in the education economy.<sup>49</sup>

This “*Nsukka-politanism*,” as it were, stands in contrast to advocates for commitments to rigid ideological lines, who insist that nation-based identity *must* confine itself to specific precepts and ideas. One recent contrast can be found in the 21<sup>st</sup>-century terrorist group, nicknamed *Boko Haram*, which derives its name from a disdain for such Western education: “the book is forbidden” in that space.<sup>50</sup> How can a university committed to a knowledge production infrastructure produce knowledge relevant to the whole of a Nigerian nation-state stitched together through the cartographical manipulations of a colonial imaginary? This dissertation will

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<sup>48</sup> Matthias Middel and Katja Naumann, “Global history and the spatial turn: from the impact of area studies to the study of critical junctures of globalization,” *Journal of Global History* 5, no. 1 (March 2010): 153.

<sup>49</sup> For instance, see Achebe, *Farmers, Traders, Warriors, and Kings*, 83-97.

<sup>50</sup> Several books have been written on *Boko Haram*. An introduction to the movement must include the following texts: Helen Habila, *The Chibok Girls: The Boko Haram Kidnappings and Islamist Militancy in Nigeria* (New York: Columbia Global Reports, 2016); Alexander Thurston, *Boko Haram: The History of an Africanist Jihadist Movement* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2018); and Abdulbasit Kasim, *The Boko Haram Reader: From Nigerian Preachers to the Islamic State* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2018).

argue that such intellectual flexibility is part in parcel with indigenous Igbo intellectual constructs—the capacity to engage, appropriate, and build-up based on externalities. The assumption of an “indigenous purity” was, itself, a Western imposition; as Chinua Achebe writes, African pasts, “with all [their] imperfections—were not one long night of savagery from which the first Europeans acting on God’s behalf delivered them.”<sup>51</sup> And thus, the notion that Igbo intelligentsia would readily adapt *amamihe* against the context of *mahadum* illustrates the expansiveness and porosity of the Igbo intellectual worldview.

### *UNN as an Economic History*

UNN is bound up in the webs of late-colonial capitalism, Western state-driven developmentalism, and Azikiwe’s networks with white American philanthropic networks. As an economic history, the University of Nigeria, Nsukka offers a backdoor look into the blend of public and private finances in late colonial Nigeria. Intellectual life cannot be divorced from the life of resources and finance: palm oil, Marketing Boards, cocoa, and water supply. A popular Igbo song for children goes:

*Akwukwo na-atọ uto  
Ọ na-ara ahụ na-amụta  
Onye nwere nkasiobi?  
Ọ ga-amụta akwukwo  
Ọ bụrụ na na nne gi na nna gi nwe ego.*

[Books taste sweet  
Learning is difficult  
Who feels comfort?  
The person that will study  
If your parents have money]

The verse highlights the relationship—closer than not—between access to wealth and access to Western knowledge. When the University of Nigeria, Nsukka drew on a white-

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<sup>51</sup> Chinua Achebe, *Hopes and Impediments: Selected Essays* (New York: Anchor Books, 1990), 45.

dominant support system and donor network, Azikiwe participated in a long tradition of HBCUs—which Azikiwe considered UNN to be. (Nnamdi Azikiwe referred to UNN as a “‘Lincoln University’ or ‘Howard University’ in Nigeria.”).<sup>52</sup> A generation earlier, Booker T. Washington’s Tuskegee Institute masterfully secured large donations from white donors both wealthy and middle-class, launching publicity tours throughout New York, Massachusetts, and Pennsylvania; even after Washington’s passing in 1915, Washington’s Institute had become a fundraising machine throughout the United States.<sup>53</sup> Black American historian W.E.B. DuBois observed that such institutions developed primarily by “cop[ing] with the white world on its own ground.”<sup>54</sup>

In a similar manner, UNN’s funding drew upon profits accrued through the Eastern Region Marketing Board, the Eastern Region Development Corporation, as well as philanthropic organizations and experts throughout the United States, the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, the Federal Republic of Germany, and India, each of which had motives ranging from India’s anti-colonial fervor to America’s Cold War “developmentalism.”<sup>55</sup> UNN’s existence relied upon Western markets and Western philanthropy. UNN, for all its laudable ambitions and outcomes, functioned, as this study will demonstrate, as much as an *extractive* institution; in pulling palm oil taxes for its establishment, it appropriated funds from southern Igbo and ethnic minorities who considered themselves poorly represented in funding appropriations.

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<sup>52</sup> Nnamdi Azikiwe, *Zik: A Selection of Speeches from Nnamdi Azikiwe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1961), 5-6.

<sup>53</sup> See Eric Anderson and Alfred A. Moss, *Dangerous Donations: Northern Philanthropy and Southern Black Education, 1902-1930* (Jefferson City, MO: University of Missouri Press, 1999).

<sup>54</sup> W.E.B. DuBois, *DuBois on Education*, ed. Eugene F. Provenzo, Jr. (New York: Altamira Press, 2002), 185.

<sup>55</sup> For an overview of the “global Cold War,” see Odd Arne Westad, *The Global Cold War: Third World Interventions and the Making of Our Times* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012). See also Robert Latham, R. Kassimir, and T.M. Callaghy, “Introduction: Transboundary Formations, Intervention, Order, and Authority,” in *Intervention and Transnationalism in Africa: Global-Local Networks of Power*, ed. T. M. Callaghy, R. Kassimir, and R. Latham (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001); Bruno Latour, *Science in Action* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1987).

As the nation's leading agricultural program, UNN's agricultural economics dominated the national economy; as of 1962-1963, approximately  $\frac{1}{4}$  of all 3,761 students at Nigerian universities; the National Universities Commission found the number of students *majoring* in agriculture to be "lamentably low."<sup>56</sup> Following the Nigeria-Biafra war, oil sales from Southeastern Nigeria expanded rapidly, turning Nigeria into a single-export petro-state, particularly following the OPEC boycott in 1973; crude oil rose from 8.36/barrel in 1973 to 36.52/barrel in 1982.<sup>57</sup> Facilitated by federal efforts to expropriate the oil fields, oil sales expansion catalyzed agriculturalists to explore other avenues to engage the world market, in hopes of de-stabilizing Nigeria's oil reliance.<sup>58</sup> Oil sales had created a skewed marketplace, producing a quasi-colonial relationship between Western purchasers and the federal regime.<sup>59</sup> In this regard, UNN agricultural economics students utilized free market economic models to challenge *petro*-colonial rule by corporation; their research provided mechanisms that may have prevented the need for the World Bank-driven Structural Adjustment Programs of the 1980s that stripped African universities of funding and promoted extensive austerity measures leaving an already struggling UNN more bereft of funding.<sup>60</sup>

In these regards, UNN reveals economies ranging from high, world politics to the most local of land tenure customary laws. The fact that Azikiwe not only had access to that land but re-apportioned it for the purposes of a *university* rather than a hospital, a palm oil plant, or even a primary school evokes the complicated politics of rural Eastern Nigeria facing a three-way

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<sup>56</sup> "University Development in Nigeria: Report of the National Universities Commission," *Minerva* 3, no. 2 (Winter 1965): 220.

<sup>57</sup> Bedford A. Fubara, "The Ethics of Nigeria's Proposed Withdrawal from the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries," *Journal of Business Ethics* 5, no. 4 (August 1986): 330.

<sup>58</sup> Ayoka Mopelola Olusakin, "Peace in the Niger Delta: The Ethics of Nigeria's Proposed Withdrawal from the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries," *Journal of Business Ethics* 5, no. 4 (August 1986): 6.

<sup>59</sup> Chibuike Uche, "Oil, British Interests, and the Civil War," *The Journal of African History* 49, 1 (2008): 111-135.

<sup>60</sup> See Uka Ezenwe, "Regional Dimensions of Structural Adjustment in West Africa," *Intereconomics* 32, 3 (April 1997): 134-143.



transition: from political coloniality to sovereignty, from village republic to Western-styled municipality, and from foreign-controlled to “Nigerianized.”

### *UNN as Political History*

As a political history, UNN reflects the anxieties of transforming colonial governance institutions from colonial rule to independence. Azikiwe did not see the University-building project as a project strictly for improving the lives of Nigerians. Having “retired” from partisan politics, Azikiwe took on the position of Governor-General as well as the University’s Chancellorship. Azikiwe requested the Governor-General position as part of a deal struck with the predominant Northern party, the Northern People’s Congress; as a “father of the nation” just as UNN opened its doors.<sup>61</sup> A colonial title, “Governor-General” at once heralded Azikiwe’s contributions to Nigerian nationhood while simultaneously preserving a British institution. As a Chancellor, Azikiwe assumed a decidedly British title.

Yet, UNN’s very name reflected a measure to co-opt Nigerian nationalism under Azikiwe’s control—and, arguably, for his profit, quite like he had done through his extensive network of Nigerian newspapers. Nationalism was profitable business for the firebrand journalist. By 1950, Azikiwe had established a network of newspapers, and along with Zik’s Press, disseminated a vision for a “New Africa” and a “New Nigeria”—one shorn of the bonds of colonial rule. His newspaper, *West African Pilot*, succeeded with marked success; drawing on the American tradition of sensational reporting, the *West African Pilot* circulated widely and, according to historian Lai Oso, “pioneered the commercialization drive in the press.”<sup>62</sup> His oft-political adversary, Obafemi Awolowo observed with some rue: “Whatever any one may say

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<sup>61</sup> For an overview of each major party’s activities in the years leading to October 1960, see Richard Sklar, *Nigerian Political Parties: Power in an Emergent Nation* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1963).

<sup>62</sup> Lai Oso, “The Commercialization of the Nigerian Press: Development and Implications,” *Africa Media Review* 5, no. 3 (1991): 50.

about Dr. Azikiwe, it will be readily conceded to him that he was the first consummate propagandist that Nigeria produced.”<sup>61</sup> Indeed, Azikiwe deployed his branding skills when he named “the University of Nigeria”—a university that was a *regional* university at its inception. Azikiwe sought to place both the burden—and the grandeur—of Nigerian nationalism under the stewardship of his regional network throughout northern Igboland. A 1955 Eastern Regional law had appropriated millions of pounds for the establishment of an Eastern Regional University; this law anticipated a replication of University College, Ibadan in a larger city, such as Enugu or, perhaps Calabar.<sup>63</sup>

UNN also represented the complicated nature of colonial transference into the independence era. Americans would later describe it as the “University Doctrine”—the “faith that education can and should make a difference in the society it serves and in the character of the men and women it educates.”<sup>64</sup> Azikiwe, too, embraced this doctrine, arguing that his “most consistent theme” was the need to put “an end to colonial bureaucracy.”<sup>65</sup>

But how could a University facilitate it? Azikiwe saw the University itself as a mechanism for expanding the socioeconomic strength of the Eastern Region’s drive for supremacy over the Western and Northern Regional economies, for transforming frustrated young men and women lacking opportunity to laborers who would invest in the Nigerian nation-state as much as they had in *okpara Chineke* (the son of God). Indeed, as Azikiwe would later note, he himself might be compared to the Messiah.<sup>66</sup> Thus, the notion of “University

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<sup>63</sup> Nsukka County Council Minutes, August 26, 1954, NSUDIT 12/1/148, Enugu Federal Archives, Nigeria.

<sup>64</sup> N.A., *The University of Nigeria is Born* (Enugu: Nigeria Printing Corporation, 1960), 1.

<sup>65</sup> Nnamdi Azikiwe, *Zik: A Selection from the Speeches of Nnamdi Azikiwe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1961), viii.

<sup>66</sup> Patrick J. Furlong, “Azikiwe and the National Church of Nigeria and the Cameroons: A Case Study of the Political Use of Religion in African Nationalism,” *African Affairs*, Vol. 91, No. 364 (Jul., 1992): 447.

doctrine was apropos, given Azikiwe's vision of himself and his centrality to Nigeria's destiny.<sup>67</sup> Azikiwe promised grand things for the University: "History," he told the students, "has charged us with the task of building a new nation out of a hoary past."<sup>68</sup> He imagined Nsukka as a kind of Hegelian World Historical Institution, capable of dismantling an empire and ushering in a new epoch for a people whose future had been neglected.<sup>44</sup>

But while Azikiwe rejected the colonial bureaucracy, he did not reject *bureaucracy*, as such. Azikiwe had no interest in reverting Nigeria to what Nwando Achebe describes as *tupu oge ndi ocha bia* (pre-colonial times "before the white people came") or *oge otikpo* ("the time of the destroyer").<sup>69</sup> His critique had always been British claims to superior administration of the colonial apparatus, not the apparatus itself; for instance, in 1929, Azikiwe advocated for proper representation in Parliamentary bodies rather than a return to pre-colonial systems of governance.<sup>70</sup>

Thus, UNN functioned as a part of a broader effort to expand and uphold Eastern regional autonomy through foreign patronage and public education initiatives. Modeled after the American "land grant system," UNN was "not [to] be an imitation" of Western Universities, "but rather a full adaptation to the needs of the indigenous culture."<sup>71</sup> Against these contexts, "indigenusness" served an important purpose in enabling Azikiwe to bill his university to the public. At every turn, literati attempted to evoke the ritual mythos of Nsukka *omenala* ("culture," or "law" to be exact: "that which the earth goddess ani decrees to be right or wrong"): with one

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<sup>67</sup> See Patrick J. Furlong, "Azikiwe and the National Church of Nigeria and the Cameroons: A Case Study of the Political Use of Religion in African Nationalism," *African Affairs* 91, no. 364 (July 1992): 433-452.

<sup>68</sup> Hanson, *Education, Nsukka*, 110.

<sup>69</sup> Nwando Achebe, *Female King of Colonial Nigeria* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2005), 233.

<sup>70</sup> Ben N. Azikiwe, "Nigerian Political Institutions," *The Journal of Negro History* 14, no. 3 (July 1929): 340.

<sup>71</sup> "Report to the Government of the Eastern Region of Nigeria," UNN Project Papers, Michigan State University Archive. For instance, the UNN library has a run of 1970s-era magazines entitled *The Mask* at the Nnamdi Azikiwe library.

journal called, for instance, *Omabe* and another, *The Mask (mmanwu)*.<sup>72</sup> Poorly-funded, haphazardly planned, and provincially-bounded, on its best of days, the beginnings of the University functioned more as a *symbol* of regional success rather than success in actuality—evidence that Nigerians *could* educate themselves and that Africans *could* collaborate productively with Western institutions, without ceding their autonomy.

An Igbo proverb observes: *onye ahugho nwu onye ahugho eli ya* (when a cunning man dies, a cunning man buries him). While presented as a collaborative University-building project, UNN reflected an aspect of Azikiwe’s localized political strategy: the perpetuation of regionalist politics under the banner of anti-coloniality, the use of foreign actors seeking to buttress their anti-colonial aims. Subsequent chapters demonstrate that at every stage of the University-building process. As depicted in Chapter 4, Azikiwe held both Michigan State University and British interlocutors at bay—Michigan in its effort to promote an image as a facilitator of nationalism and the British, who sought to preserve their educational heritage. In spite of both MSU and British efforts to commandeer the University, Azikiwe shaped events far more than the foreigners did.

The building of UNN reveals the scope of internal patronage politics. As documented in chapter 3, Azikiwe favored Nsukka for the university site. Nsukka had enjoyed access to colonial resources through Azikiwe’s home province of Onitsha—and Azikiwe continued the line of patronage. The Eastern dominant political party, the National Council for Nigeria and the Cameroons promise of “free” school fees was abandoned in part to support the Nsukka university, a decision that led to violent uprisings in the streets of Owerri, Brass, and Aba.<sup>73</sup>

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<sup>73</sup> For instance, see Letter to Administrative Officer, February 18, 1958, WDIT, 2/1/123; “Announcement,” February 19, 1958, OWDIT, 2/1/123; Affidavit, Louis Nwosu, February 18, 1958, OWDIT, 2/1/123; Affidavit, Louis Nwosu, February 18, 1958, OWDIT, 2/1/123; A. Urquhart, Letter to Senior Supt. Of Police at Owerri,

Further, in Nsukka, *okwa nchu aja* (priests) mounted protests against the University's water usage.<sup>74</sup> And local politicians—such as the Aba Urban District Council member such as Ekota Ekong and Owerri's noted politician and educator, Alvan Ikoku—used support for N.C.N.C. as leverage to push that the University be located in their city.<sup>75</sup> Azikiwe ignored their requests. His university project brought much-coveted water systems and building projects to northern sites within Igboland such as Enugu and Nsukka while other Igbo regions were left bereft.

#### *UNN and American Foreign Policy*

The University represented the dynamics of international collaboration and “developmentalism” in the United States. The University of Nigeria, Nsukka served as a “tipping point” in MSU's transition from nation-consulting to nation-building. MSU had transformed itself into, as Azikiwe would later describe it, a “midwife to independence.”<sup>76</sup> The Eisenhower, Kennedy, Johnson, and to a lesser extent, Nixon and Ford administrations considered Nigeria to be a foundation for “modernization” in Africa and the centerpiece of American foreign policy in West Africa, specifically—including various university-building and state-driven industry projects.<sup>77</sup> University administrators had become viziers to a sprawling global university network—one that, at times, deployed imperial means to keep that network afloat, including close alliance with the United States military, government, and intelligence agencies.<sup>78</sup> The Eisenhower, Kennedy, Johnson, and to a lesser extent, Nixon and Ford administrations considered Nigeria to be a foundation for “modernization” in Africa and the centerpiece of

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February 18, 1958, OWDIT, 2/1/123; C.A. Ekeanywu, Letter to Chief Administrative Officer [Urquhart], February 16, 1958, OWDIT, 2/1/123, all in Enugu Federal Archives.

<sup>74</sup> “Report on the General Progress of Development and Welfare Schemes—Nsukka Division, 1940/1947” ONDIST 12/1/1824, Enugu Federal Archives.

<sup>75</sup> “Aba Not Favoured Like Onitsha, says UDC Chairman,” *Eastern States Express*, April 4, 1957,

<sup>76</sup> Nnamdi Azikiwe, Letter to President Hannah, April 15, 1959, Box 49, Folder 15, MSU.

<sup>78</sup> For a discussion of MSU's liaison with government agencies in the context of South Vietnam, see Warren Hinckle, “The University on the Make,” *Ramparts* (April 1966): 13-22.

American foreign policy in West Africa, specifically—including various university-building and state-driven industry projects.<sup>79</sup>

For the British, their educational legacy in Nigeria was how late-colonial administrators envisioned their *raison d'être* in the Niger context. Proper education demanded restrictiveness, a sense that higher education is not for everybody—and devised to prepare bright and particularly capable students to become thinkers of Great Thoughts and administrators of Great Institutions. T. H. Huxley in 1894 observed that the University should be “putting within the reach of such persons as are naturally fitted to take part in that great work” of “pure knowledge.”<sup>80</sup> The British claimed what may be considered “educational sovereignty” over its post-empire. Whatever an observer wanted to say of the British Empire, they must, proponents observed, acknowledge it.

For Azikiwe, America was the mythos worthy of Nigeria's future, a narrative capable of reaching into the corridor of the British Empire's Death Star.<sup>81</sup> Large portions of both his treatise, *Renascent Africa* and his memoir, *My Odyssey* were devoted to Americana veneration. When, in 1956, Azikiwe sought funding for his University project, he approached the Ford Foundation for funding.<sup>82</sup> Considering Azikiwe's project to be a personal passion of rural interest, the Foundation referred him to Michigan State University, whom Ford Foundation hands considered more capable of establishing institutions, as it had done in the rice paddies of South Vietnam and post-World War II Japan.<sup>83</sup> MSU assumed control over the project, with

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<sup>79</sup> Larry Grubs, *Secular Missionaries: Americans and African Development in the 1960s* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2010).

<sup>80</sup> *Parliamentary Papers*, October 27, 1892, 553.

<sup>81</sup> Gene Ulansky, “Nnamdi Azikiwe and the Myth of America,” Ph.D. Dissertation, University of California-Berkeley, 1980.

<sup>82</sup> David Wiley, correspondence with author, David Wiley, for oral interviews give job title, Email Correspondence with author, September 25, 2017.

<sup>83</sup> For a survey of MSU's involvement in South Vietnam and Japan, see James M. Carter, *Inventing Vietnam: The United States and State-Building, 1954-1968* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), chpt. 3; Mire Koikari, “‘The World is Our Campus’: Michigan State University and Cold-War Home Economics in US-occupied Okinawa, 1945–1972,” *Gender and History* 24, no. 1 (April 2012): 74-92.

UNN's first two vice-chancellors being either chosen by the MSU-governed University Provisional Council or MSU itself: Howard University Law Dean Law Dean George M. Johnson and MSU International Deans, Glen Taggart. MSU officials and Azikiwe recruited scholars from Fourah Bay College, the Netherlands, India, and even the German Democratic Republic to staff the University.

### *UNN and the Nigeria-Biafra War*

At the outset of the Nigeria-Biafra war, In January 1966, a predominantly-Igbo officers coup, followed by a July 1966 counter-coup; in the wake of the coup, a wave of violence spread against the country's Igbo population from Lagos and Ibadan to Jos and Kaduna, UNN became an intellectual hub for refugee Igbo scholars expelled from throughout the North and West, mathematicians such as Chike Obi and scientists such as Eni Njoku, as well as literati such as Christopher Okigbo.<sup>84</sup>

UNN functioned as the incubator for Biafran identity and the post-war production of what survivors of the Chinese Cultural Revolution call “scar literature”—both in poetry and in prose.<sup>85</sup> While “scar literature” authors cast the resolution to their trauma through the lens of love and affection, UNN poets’ “scar literature” emphasized the scars and wounds of war and the loss of idealism following it. Following the Nigeria-Biafra war, in January 1970, and disaffiliated with MSU.<sup>86</sup> Following, Dr. Hubert Kodilinye, an Igbo ophthalmologist with deep ties to the United Kingdom (including a white British wife), assumed the Vice-Chancellorship and, with

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<sup>84</sup> For examples of Biafra intellectual life, see Wendy Griswold, *Bearing Witness: Readers, Writers, and the Novel in Nigeria* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000); chpt. 3; Obi Nwakanma, *Christopher Okigbo, 1930-1967: Thirsting for Sunlight* (London: James Currey, 2010), chpt. 8; Peter Thomas, “Life after the Fall: Poetry from Nsukka Since the Biafran War,” *World Literature Today* 55, no. 1 (1981): 40-42.

<sup>85</sup> “Scar literature” or 伤痕文学 (shānghén wénxué) refers to literature produced by intelligentsia in an effort to (Kang-i Sun Chang and Stephen Owen, *The Cambridge History of Chinese Literature: From 1375* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 651-654.

<sup>86</sup> Former African Studies Center Director, David Wiley, Email Correspondence with author, September 25, 2017.

MSU absent, attempted to transform UNN into a British-style collegiate system. In 1976, Kodilinye failed and resigned the Vice-Chancellorship; the struggling University was absorbed by the federal regime and, by the end of the decade, had become embroiled in corruption scandals and administrative war.<sup>87</sup> The Nsukka dream bore few marks of its 60s-era aspirations.

### *UNN as Social History*

As a social history, UNN reveals the tensions in the Regional Government's state-planned projects for attempting to control the agricultural market. Although UNN relied heavily upon agricultural exports for its sustenance, trends toward urbanization had been well-underway since the expansion of Lagos in the early twentieth century. As an Aba news report offers a recounting of an interview with a sex worker at an Aba hotel, the reporter asked why she preferred to do sex work over agricultural labor on her land, she rejoined with a question: "Are you a farmer?"<sup>88</sup> The Aba sex worker's disdain for farm work and her identification of the reporter's hypocrisy highlights the professional trends of the contemporary East, with a push for white collar jobs while leaving behind the agricultural sector. In May 1943, University of Liverpool administrator H. J. Channon had seen a new kind of future for the colonial government: "provid[ing] adequate opportunities for the higher education of the few who are capable of becoming the pioneers in the evolution of their own people."<sup>89</sup> University College, Ibadan had served this function, but it left the majority of laborers ill-equipped for integration into the national economy; its primary *raison d'être* was the training of white collar elites. Azikiwe warned of this "white collar drift":

We can no longer afford to flood only the white collar jobs at the expense of the basic occupations and productive vocations, which can be so intelligently directly to create wealth, health, and happiness among the greatest number of people" in fields such as

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<sup>87</sup> See Frank M. Ndili, Interview with author, December 21-22, 2018, Frank Ndili Home, Asaba, Nigeria.

<sup>88</sup> "Women Scramble for Rooms in Aba hotels," *Eastern Nigeria Sentinel*, March 30, 1957, 1.

<sup>89</sup> Livsey, *Nigeria's University Age*, Kindle Location 997.



agriculture, business, and engineering.<sup>90</sup>

Although UNN was intended to produce a class of agricultural maestros who could return to—and increase the productivity of—their farmland, UNN seemed to be a vehicle to national bureaucracy, not unlike the aspirations of previous generations. UNN fed into the perpetuation of colonial trajectories of labor displacement, reproducing classes of aspiring white-collar workers rather than agricultural professionals trained to work in UNN agriculture. Azikiwe told UNN administrators of when he visited the University College, Ibadan’s botany program and saw that the students were training to become specialists in British plants—all while ignoring the palm trees surrounding them.<sup>91</sup> By 1962, MSU administrator George Axinn complained to Glen L. Taggart that Agriculture, along with Education and Engineering, had “grown out of proportion to the other units of the faculties which now include them.”<sup>92</sup>

Azikiwe told UNN administrators of when he visited the University College, Ibadan’s botany program and saw that the students were training to become specialists in *British* plants—all while ignoring the palm trees surrounding them.<sup>93</sup> This dissertation discusses how the University became a new social space, siphoned away laborers from Eastern Nigerian agriculture, in spite of its stated efforts to *reinforce* Nigerian agricultural sectors.

As other countries in the so-called “developing world,” the Nigerian Eastern Region was attaching university education to their development.<sup>94</sup> Universities functioned as a mechanism

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<sup>90</sup> Joseph R. L. Sterne, “Nsukka Work Aided by U.S.” *The Sun* [Baltimore], February 14, 1962, 4.

<sup>91</sup> George Axinn, Interview with David Wiley, 2003 (accessed May 10, 2020), <https://archive.lib.msu.edu/VVL/dbnumbers/DB14583.mp3>.

<sup>92</sup> George Axinn, Letter to Glen L. Taggart, October 30, 1962, UNN Project Papers, Box 177A, Folder 42, MSU Archives.

<sup>93</sup> George Axinn, interview with David Wiley, November 20, 2012, <https://fedcom4a.lib.msu.edu/vvl/3445> <accessed August 18, 2020>.

<sup>94</sup> For examples, see Timothy Livsey, *Nigeria’s University Age: Reframing Decolonisation and Development* (Cambridge: Palgrave, 2017) and Richard C. Levin, “Top of the Class: The Rise of Asia’s Universities,” *Foreign Affairs* 89, no. 3 (May/June 2010): 63-75.

for social control of otherwise unwieldy youth populations, and as will be seen twice in 1960s Nigeria, not always with success.<sup>95</sup> Herein lies the irony of the UNN project: in achieving its goals of anti-colonial education, it utilized the same machinery of coloniality. Rather than place more resources in the countryside, it ended up transforming former farm hands into white collar hopefuls.<sup>96</sup> Even in seeking to establish a distinctively *Nigerian* education, it made no efforts to serve as a *national* University. In spite of the best efforts, as Walter Markov, who taught history at UNN saw, it became a decidedly Igbo University.<sup>97</sup> As both a regional university and a sprawling “miniature United Nations,” as Chukwuemeka Ike suggests, UNN represented both the local milieu and a global nexus.<sup>98</sup>

### *The University of Many Stories*

“The University of the Village,” then, is not one history but many: a history of intellectual change amidst political transformation, and a history of the prospects—and costs—of international “development” efforts. UNN is both a visionary experiment and a bureaucracy teeming with all the burdens of its colonial roots. Thus, as this dissertation will seek to illustrate, the line separating coloniality and sovereignty is blurry—and the transition between them reflective of greater continuity than change.

To lay the scaffolding for this dissertation, I will present below a brief historical overview of higher education in communities in West Africa more broadly, highlighting how UNN resonates against a broader intellectual and institutional context of indigenous education. I will examine the origins of higher education in Nigeria juxtaposed against Western models of

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<sup>95</sup> Jeremi Suri, *Power and Protest: Global Revolution and the Rise of Détente* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2009), chpt. 3.

<sup>96</sup> Ralph Smuckler, Letter to Glen L. Taggart, March 19, 1963, MSU Archives, notes that UNN’s Farmer Advisory Service and the College of Agriculture tried to “reach rural people, influence their actions through education, and in turn learn of their problems.”

<sup>97</sup> Walter Markov, “La Naissance de L’Université Africaine: Le Succès Difficile,” *Afrique*, January 1, 1979, 59-64.

<sup>98</sup> Ike, *The Naked Gods*, 255.

higher education, starting with pre-colonial forms of indigenous education and tracing this history through UNN's foundation and beyond, including the University in the Nigeria-Biafra war as well as the post-war reconstructions. This study will come with the University's struggles to recoup from the post-war milieu in the late 20<sup>th</sup>-century.

### *Indigenous Higher Education in West Africa*

The notion of “higher education” is not a Western innovation. For the purposes of this dissertation, “higher education” is considered to be a system of education that conveys knowledge or precepts with a self-aware attempt to increase gradation and/or rigor over time. Much of indigenous higher education consisted of initiation into Sabine Jell-Bahlsen describes local *ogbuide* worship near Oguta lake as a “university of the village,” with young boys initiated into increasing levels of *gnosis* through local institutions of learning about the *ogbuide* water goddess.<sup>99</sup> This dissertation draws its title from her work.<sup>100</sup> Oguta residents *Agugu* festival which celebrates natural forces and the cosmic presence of the goddess *ogubide*. During the festival, young men and women engage in graded lessons about water levels, crop rotation, and practical economic skills; more importantly, as Jell-Bahlsen documents, *ogbuide* worship holds different levels of meaning and education for her followers. The core ritual, *Nchu-chu*, in which the two most senior women have reached the highest levels of *ogbuide*'s system of knowledge (called *Owu*), walk around the town at night nude and greet local shrines.<sup>101</sup> Writing about the Islamic education in the Senegambia, historian Rudolph Ware highlights that Wolof speakers may describe a fully-educated Islamic scholar as an *Al-Xuraan Buy Dokh*: a “walking Quran.”<sup>102</sup>

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<sup>99</sup> Sabine Jell-Bahlsen, *The Water Goddess in Igbo Cosmology*, 328 for a prayer to Ogbuide.

<sup>100</sup> Jell-Bahlsen, *The Water Goddess in Igbo Cosmology: Ogbuide of Oguta Lake* (Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 2008), 8.

<sup>101</sup> Jell-Bahlsen, *Being and Becoming: Gender, Culture, and Shifting Identity in Sub-Saharan Africa* (Oxford: Spears Media Press, 2016), 38.

<sup>102</sup> Rudolph Ware, *The Walking Qur'an: Islamic Education, Embodied Knowledge, and History in West Africa* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2014).

At Sankoré, Mali, Muslim scholars engaged in a wide array of subjects, ranging from algebra to Greek philosophy to astronomy.<sup>103</sup>

Ibadan and Nsukka, too, had institutions of varying levels of education long predating the rise of Anglo-American educational experiments there. More, external polities exerted influence on these institutions, in various capacities, making Michigan State University one in a long line of institutional powers shaping events. Nwando Achebe, the most prominent scholar of Nsukka Division's indigenous life, has shown a vibrant, rich community with a host of knowledge systems and intellectual institutions shaping daily life. As Achebe demonstrates, sites throughout Igboland and Igalaland, such as Nri, Igala, Nike, and Aro, all exerted commercial, political, intellectual, and military influence on the daily life of Nsukka's inhabitants; Igala agents called Attamas seized Nsukka shrines and claimed a singular control over access to Nsukka deities—establishing a separate political entity apart from the *ndi ishi* (the age-defined ruling elders of the community).<sup>104</sup> In Nsukka, children grew up to be spinners and potters, while being raised to accept female goddesses such as *efuru*. Education involved the process of learning the nature of the *ebee gburugburu* (the surrounding environment, both physical and spiritual). Mothers taught children how to plant cassava and yams and retrieve water for deities, such as the goddess Adoro.<sup>105</sup>

Thus, the process of education came not only through the manual processes of tradecraft—farming and weaving—but also competence in engaging external actors. Trade networks extended from the forests near the Niger Delta up northbound through the savannah of Hausaland through the kola nut trade. Nsukka people had grown accustomed to acquiring ground

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<sup>103</sup> Ousmane Oumar Kane, *Beyond Timbuktu: An Intellectual History of Muslim West Africa* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2016), 27.

<sup>104</sup> Nwando Achebe, *Farmers, Traders, Warriors, and Kings*, 29-32.

<sup>105</sup> Achebe, *Farmers, Traders, Warriors, and Kings*, 55-62.

knowledge to navigate and negotiate with external actors. As children became increasingly familiar with pottery, nut farming, and clothing design, they grew from learning to how to pick and sew to learning how to barter and trade in the market. Similarly, adherents to gods and goddesses such as *umuada nimu*, the helpers of the Nimu Kwome.<sup>106</sup> They gained graduated levels of knowledge, starting with learning the goddess' name as a child; someday, they could ascend to higher levels of authority and power such as those women initiated into *Owu* at Oguta Lake who carry out the *Nchu-chu* ritual.<sup>107</sup>

Nsukka's higher education models stands in conversation on equal terms with other institutions of higher education throughout the Western world. A useful contrast may be seen, for instance, in the Grecian *Mouseion* in Alexandria—the temple/university wherein “liberal knowledge” intended to represent avenues to a multiplicity of human knowledges, the university of the Muses.<sup>108</sup> After failing in 4<sup>th</sup>-century C.E., the *Mouseion* represented distinct institutions throughout the Western intellectual tradition. Its most famous manifestation, the *Mouseion* of Alexandria, burned to the ground in 48 B.C.E.<sup>109</sup> Styled as a sacred space for orienting oneself against the geometrics of the heavens and earth, the *Mouseion* functioned as much as space for acquiring *knowledge system*. The *Mouseion* functioned as a mechanism for gleaning knowledge from various disciplines, senses, and physical skills. The *Museion*, 18<sup>th</sup>-century French philosopher Louis de Jaucourt observed, could be identified as “all places where one applies oneself to the cultivation of the Sciences & Beaux-Arts.”<sup>110</sup> Historian Paula Young Lee has

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<sup>106</sup> Achebe, *Farmers, Traders, Warriors, and Kings*, 164-166.

<sup>107</sup> Jell-Bahlsen, *Being and Becoming: Gender, Culture, and Shifting Identity in Sub-Saharan Africa* (Oxford: Spears Media Press, 2016), 38.

<sup>108</sup> Ernst Robert Curtius, *European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983), chpt. 13.

<sup>109</sup> For an overview of Alexandria, see Malka K. Simkovich, *Discovering Second Temple Literature: The Scriptures and Stories that Shaped Early Judaism* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2018), chpt. 5.

<sup>110</sup> Paula Young Lee, “The Musaeum of Alexandria and the Formation of the Muséum in Eighteenth-century France,” *The Art Bulletin* 79, no. 3 (Sept. 1997): 386, 389.

observed, indeed, that the *Mouseion* was less a “place for showing” and more a “means of knowing.”<sup>111</sup> Among French *philosophes*, the *Mouseion* of Alexandria seemed to resemble, simultaneously, ‘perfect’ antiquity and ‘progressive’ modernity.”<sup>112</sup> Notions of sacred higher learning can also be traced to Old and New Kingdom Egyptian repositories that served not only as archives but also, as sites for the dissemination of knowledge about the universe; temples and archives were often the same institution.<sup>113</sup> In the Egyptian *House of Life* archive, the title, a “Master of the secrets of the house” administered access to its records and provided interpretation for supplicants.<sup>114</sup> One observer spoke of the repositories’ reputation abroad: “the renown of this wisdom crossed the sea,” and that *House* scribes were said to “heal the sick, kn[o]w the medicinal plants, geography, the signs of sacred animals, [and] the history of ancient kings.”<sup>115</sup> Similarly, at the University in Sankoré (Timbuktu), according to historian YGM Lulat, students not only engaged in Quranic education but also, “astronomy, history, medicine, and mathematics.”<sup>116</sup> UNN represented no significant intellectual departure in African life. Communities throughout the Niger area had constructed their own version of “higher education”: contact zones in which gradated knowledges, languages, and assumptions engaged in conversation with each other. Historian Grant Lilford has observed, with perhaps an excess of

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<sup>111</sup> Paula Young Lee, “The Musaeum of Alexandria and the Formation of the Muséum in Eighteenth-century France,” *The Art Bulletin* 79, no. 3 (Sept. 1997): 386, 389.

<sup>112</sup> Paula Young Lee, “The Musaeum of Alexandria and the Formation of the Muséum in Eighteenth-century France,” *The Art Bulletin* 79, no. 3 (Sept. 1997): 386, 389.

<sup>113</sup> Thomas Hendrickson, “The Invention of the Greek Library,” *Transactions of the American Philological Association* (1974-2014) 144, No. 2 (2014): 390.

<sup>114</sup> Fayza M. Haikal, “Private Collections and Temple Libraries in Ancient Egypt,” in *What Happened to the Ancient Library of Alexandria?* Eds. Mostafa El-Abbadi, Omnia Fathallah, Ismail Serageldin (Leiden: Brill, 2008), 42.

<sup>115</sup> Fayza M. Haikal, “Private Collections and Temple Libraries in Ancient Egypt,” in *What Happened to the Ancient Library of Alexandria?* Eds. Mostafa El-Abbadi, Omnia Fathallah, Ismail Serageldin (Leiden: Brill, 2008), 48.

generality, that “African traditional knowledge systems blur the disciplinary boundaries” typically associated with Euro-centered educational programs.<sup>117</sup>

### *Colonial Higher Education in Africa*

The significance of the UNN project cannot be understood outside the context of the British mission and colonial enterprise to re-shape local knowledge systems through religious schools and government-administered educational programs. As early as the 18<sup>th</sup>-century, educational reformers were imagining educational initiatives throughout West Africa and the African diaspora: Thomas Buxton, a British abolitionist and reformer, proposed plans for technical and agricultural communal educational enclaves in Asanteland and in the Niger Delta; Bishop George Berkeley’s hope to establish a university in Bermuda.<sup>118</sup> In 1826, the “University College” in London received its charter: that of “affording to young men” throughout England “adequate opportunities for obtaining literary and scientific education at moderate expense.”<sup>119</sup> Decidedly and avowedly inferior to a proper “university,” the “university college” system was devised for lesser minds looking for opportunities to those of a lower standing to access higher education; for instance, when the Irvine Committee recommended a University, they directed that a university college be founded first “in order to establish its academic standards and win public confidence and esteem” through “external degrees of a University of repute.”<sup>120</sup>

Scholars have conventionally considered institutions of higher education as incubators for the production of an indigenous elite capable of upholding the Empire. Cardinal John Henry

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<sup>117</sup> Grant Lilford, “The African Liberal Arts: Heritage, Challenges, and Prospects,” in Peter Marber and Daniel Araya, eds., *The Evolution of Liberal Arts in the Global Age* (New York: Taylor and Francis, 2017), 150.

<sup>118</sup> Edwin S. Gaustad, “George Berkeley and the New World Community,” *Church History* 48, no. 1 (March 1979): 11.

<sup>119</sup> Henry Benjamin Wheatley and Peter Cunningham, *London Past and Present: Its History, Associations, and Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 42.

<sup>120</sup> Richard D’Aeth, “The Growth of the University College of the West Indies,” *British Journal of Educational Studies* 9, no. 2 (May 1961): 101.

Newman in his renowned *The Idea of the University* argued that universities were devised to cultivate “the culture of the intellect,” to produce the “education which is necessary for the man of the world, the statesman, the landholder, or the opulent gentleman.”<sup>121</sup> As historian Timothy Livsey has observed, “as a force for political, economic, and social progress that would prepare colonies for eventual self-government.”<sup>122</sup> The university would serve as a primary vehicle for the latest version of the civilizing mission; Livsey observes that the late-colonial universities “belonged to a distinctive post-war phase of British colonialism . . . in which the empire was reframed as a force for political, economic, and social progress.”<sup>123</sup> Emancipated Africans from Brazil and Sierra Leone, competent in multiple languages and familiar with new potential markets, became civil and commercial participants among West African elites.<sup>124</sup> In Liberia, African American settlers imposed a variety of mechanisms for confirming their status as superior people; indeed, University of Liberia, established in 1863, required that English serve as the official language of instruction.<sup>125</sup> Only a handful of colonial possessions claimed British higher educational institutions (e.g. Malta, Jerusalem, Ceylon, and Hong Kong), and as of 1939, colonial hands such as Lord Hailey, a longtime member of the Indian Civil Service, were asking “what [Britain] was going to do with the educated product.”<sup>126</sup> Harold Nicholson, with no small sense of the racist macabre, recounted his conversation in Entebbe, Uganda: “Kauntze (director of medical services) said that it had been proven. . . that the cells of the African brain were

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<sup>121</sup> John Henry Newman, *The Idea of the University*

<sup>122</sup> Timothy Livsey, *Nigeria's University Age: Reframing Decolonisation and Development* (New York: Routledge, 2016), Kindle Location 244

<sup>123</sup> Livsey, *Nigeria's University Age*, Kindle Location 236.

<sup>124</sup> See Lisa Earl Castillo, “Mapping the nineteenth-century Brazilian returnee movement: Demographics, life stories and the question of slavery,” *Atlantic Studies* 13, no. 1 (2016): 25-52.

<sup>125</sup> Henryatta L. Ballah, “Liberia: A Colonized Nation and the Role of English in that Process,” *Journal of West African History* 5, no. 1 (Spring 2019): 29-52.

<sup>126</sup> A.J. Stockwell, “The Crucible of the Malayan Nation’: the University and the Making of New Malaya, 1938-1962,” *Modern Asian Studies* 43, 5 (2009): 1151-1152



underdeveloped.” In order to determine whether education ameliorated this deficit, Nicholson and Kauntze determined that “we must cut up a Makerere [college] student and see.”<sup>127</sup>

American and British voices alike looked upon African students with skepticism—not with hope.

*The University College System in the Empire and Nigeria*

Colonial higher education, like myriad other institutions, was the product of a flurry of commissions at Downing Street. In 1937, the De La Warr Commission, staffed by colonial officer Earl De La Warr, advocated for higher training in British East Africa; however, De La Warr, too, warned that the British should not be overly aspirational.<sup>128</sup> In 1950, he chastised some British for leading Africans “up the garden path and let[ting] [them] think [they] can skip whole stages of both personal and racial experience that no other people have yet succeeded in skipping.”<sup>129</sup> De La Warr condemned the British for hoping to disengage Africa outright; they had been complicit, after all, in “having broken up the tribal life and beliefs of her people” and “having taught them western discontent and having embarked on social and material developments.” “We have no right, I say,” he wrote, “just to walk out.”<sup>130</sup>

R. E. J. Hussey, a scrappy athletic colonial hand foundational in establishing institutions ranging from Makerere College, also started as a colonial project, in colonial Uganda to the establishment of primary and secondary education in Nigeria (e.g. the founding of King’s College, Lagos), had imagined higher education as a vocational endeavor first and foremost—with some hopes, perhaps, of advancement in the undetermined future, assumed to be “remote.”<sup>131</sup> Yaba Higher College, established in 1927 at Hussey’s behest, required competence

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<sup>127</sup> A.J. Stockwell, “The Crucible of the Malayan Nation’: the University and the Making of New Malaya, 1938-1962,” *Modern Asian Studies* 43, 5 (2009): 1151-1152.

<sup>128</sup> Earl De La Warr, *African Affairs* 49, no. 196 (July 1950): 251.

<sup>129</sup> Earl De La Warr, *African Affairs* 49, no. 196 (July 1950): 251.

<sup>130</sup> Earl De La Warr, *African Affairs* 49, no. 196 (July 1950): 251.

<sup>131</sup> Ade Fajana, “Colonial Control and Education: The Development of Higher Education in Nigeria, 1900-1950,” *Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria* 6, no. 3 (December 1972): 331.

in English, Mathematics, Physics, History, and other subjects; however, its degree had no currency anywhere in the empire. Hussey's vision of Yaba Higher College focused on training government and business assistants, not independent scholars and administrators of government. Although Hussey allowed the possibility of Yaba Higher College becoming a university at a later date, the Nigerians would have to demonstrate their capacity for academic performance first.<sup>132</sup> Historian and anthropologist J. D. Y. Peel observes: "Few issues united educated Nigerians of all shades . . . as much as opposition to the proposal that Yaba Higher College in Lagos should be "practical," rather than academic, in the orientation of its courses."<sup>133</sup> Established in a temporary hut, with limited funding, at the dawn of the Great Depression, the College had little chance of receiving financial and political backing.<sup>134</sup>

The failure of Yaba Higher College prompted the 1943 Channon Commission, chaired by Lord Channon, to advise colonial officials to construct proper research facilities and replace London certification with local degrees.<sup>135</sup> Two years later, in 1945, a Commission of Higher Education, chaired by Sir Cyril Asquith, argued for the expansion of higher educational institutions in colonies throughout the empire.<sup>136</sup> Simultaneously, the Elliott Commission, chaired by Colonel Walter Elliott, a Scottish parliamentarian and former Cabinet Minister of Agriculture, issued a report holding that Anglophone West Africa needed one university, to be located at Ibadan.<sup>137</sup> In colonies from Malaya to Kenya to Pakistan, members of the British

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<sup>132</sup> Fajana, "Colonial Control and Education: The Development of Higher Education in Nigeria, 1900-1950," 329.

<sup>133</sup> For a discussion of the Nigerian response to Yaba Higher College, see Timothy Livsey, "'Suitable lodgings for students,'" *Urban History* 41, no. 4 (2014): 651-652.

<sup>134</sup> Ade Fajana, "Colonial Control and Education: The Development of Higher Education in Nigeria, 1900-1950," 329.

<sup>135</sup> Apollos Nwauwa, *Imperialism, Academe and Nationalism: Britain and University Education for Africans, 1860-1960* (New York: Taylor and Francis, 2013): 117-125.

<sup>136</sup> Apollos Nwauwa, *Imperialism, Academe and Nationalism: Britain and University Education for Africans, 1860-1960* (New York: Taylor and Francis, 2013): 117-125.

<sup>137</sup> Livsey, *Nigeria's University Age*, Kindle Location 1031.

Council traversed, propping up “University Colleges” in each location.<sup>138</sup> The expansion of British higher educational systems into Nigeria did not represent an interest in *Nigerian* higher education but rather, a fear of British education’s demise. The sheer volume of higher educational commissions and the rate of university college construction throughout the empire revealed the degree to which the British felt they needed to *control* decolonization more than *promote* it.

Eventually, in 1948, British educators officially established the University College, Ibadan. Situated on a hill overlooking the whole of Oyo, University College, Ibadan was not properly a *Nigerian* university but a British one—granting not Nigerian but British degrees, authorized by the University of London.<sup>139</sup> For the next decade, politicians from the Eastern Regions such as the Eastern Premier Nnamdi Azikiwe railed against University College, Ibadan (U. C. I.) for its exquisite price-tag and its foreign influence. Azikiwe, called it a “million-dollar baby” for its exquisite price-tag.<sup>140</sup> When Azikiwe would not visit Ibadan as President, University College Ibadan Vice Chancellor, Kenneth Dike, rolled his eyes: Azikiwe “had a funny attitude toward Ibadan.”<sup>141</sup>

### *The Azikiwe Challenge to Nigerian Higher Education*

While Western premier Obafemi Awolowo and to a lesser extent, the Sardauna of Sokoto, Ahmadu Bello, had attended universities in Europe, Azikiwe’s education came through black colleges and universities in America such as Storer, Lincoln, Howard University as well as

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<sup>138</sup> See Ratemo Waya Michieka, *Trails in Academic and Administrative Leadership in Kenya* (Dakar: Codesria, 2016): 145-160; A.J. Stockwell, “The Crucible of the Malayan Nation”: the University and the Making of New Malaya, 1938-1962,” *Modern Asian Studies* 43, 5 (2009): 1151-1152.

<sup>139</sup> For a full account of the University College, Ibadan, see Kenneth Mellanby’s memoir, *The Birth of Nigeria’s University* (London: Methuen and Company, 1958).

<sup>140</sup> Nnamdi Azikiwe, *Zik: A Selection from the Speeches of Nnamdi Azikiwe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1961), 33.

<sup>141</sup> Elbert G. Mathews, Memo of Conversation with Kenneth Dike, November 18, 1964, USAID Mission to Nigeria, Container 1, P 823, FY 65.

at the University of Pennsylvania.<sup>142</sup> Once the federation of Nigeria had been granted increased regional autonomy under the 1953 Constitution, regions entered into competitions for “development,” each one lobbying for the construction of educational, industrial, and other Western-oriented institutions to assist them in integration into the global marketplace.<sup>143</sup> His efforts ranged from palm oil investment, to a misbegotten banking endeavor, to the establishment of a regional university, a university at Nsukka—named “University of Nigeria” to give it additional panache; he hoped to “puncture the myth of the proverbial lack of initiative and drive on the part of the Nigerian worker.”<sup>144</sup> When Azikiwe’s university formally opened in 1960, it did so with the support of influential Western patrons and a host of voluntary associations enamored with the fervor of indigenous self-determination.<sup>145</sup> However, as this dissertation will show, the Nsukka project reflected an *extension* of past colonial institutions rather than a stark departure from them. Celebratory of largely Western-based epistemologies, methodological approaches, and bureaucracies, it, too, functioned to control Eastern Region youth increasingly allured to city positions, leaving the countryside bereft of labor; concerned over Nigeria’s latent and “frustrated” labor force, Azikiwe imagined the University as a mechanism for turning manual laborers into laborer-nationalists committed to the Nigerian mission rather than their own immediate interests.<sup>146</sup> The University of Nigeria, Nsukka aspired to be an institution of demographic control as much as a mechanism for social uplift; sensing Nigeria’s profound

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<sup>142</sup> Nnamdi Azikiwe, *My Odyssey*, chpts. 6-7.

<sup>143</sup> Sklar, *Nigerian Political Parties*, 133.

<sup>144</sup> Nnamdi Azikiwe, *Zik: A Collection of Speeches of Nnamdi Azikiwe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1961), 285.

<sup>145</sup> See, for instance, Andrew Walls, Interview with author, May 24, 2017.

<sup>146</sup> Nnamdi Azikiwe, *Zik: A Collection of Speeches of Nnamdi Azikiwe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1961), 300.

potential for labor productivity *as well as* its potential for unrest, UNN could harness youthful power into profitable enterprise.<sup>147</sup>

This background establishes the thematic scaffolding against which UNN developed: fundamentally akin to prior university-building efforts, UNN reflected no meaningful departure from the past two generations of colonial higher education in Nigeria, whether University College, Ibadan or Yaba Higher College. While imagined, billed, and conceptualized as an “indigenous university,” it drew on complicated, international and domestic influences, most of which including Nigerian actors themselves—held little commitment to removing Western knowledge from Nigeria but instead, re-shaping and reforming them.<sup>148</sup> Nnamdi Azikiwe’s injunction that the University “restore the dignity of man”—dignity stripped away by coloniality—considered foreign influence to be an essential component in Nigeria’s development.<sup>149</sup> Western, and particularly American, knowledge was not only *good*; it, as Azikiwe consistently argued in his memoir and speeches, it could play an important role in emancipating the African mind.<sup>150</sup>

### *Interpreting the Interpreters—Literature Review*

As a nation-state, Nigeria was stitched together through a convergence of local and colonial interests. Each region of Nigeria claimed a distinctive ethnolinguistic demographic. A conservative estimate holds that Nigeria has over 150-400 distinct languages.<sup>151</sup> The

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<sup>147</sup> Nnamdi Azikiwe, *Zik: A Collection of Speeches of Nnamdi Azikiwe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1961), 300.

<sup>148</sup> For instance, see for instance, *Parliamentary Debates, Eastern House of Assembly, 3rd, 4th, and 5th Sessions, December 8, 1961, 214-215.*

<sup>149</sup> See Gene Ulansky, “Nnamdi Azikiwe and the Myth of America,” Ph.D. dissertation, University of California, Berkeley, 1980; see also Michael C. Echeruo, “Nnamdi Azikiwe and Nineteenth-century Nigerian Thought,” *Journal of Modern African Studies* 12, no. 2 (June 1974): 251-252.

<sup>150</sup> For Nnamdi Azikiwe’s positive views of American figures, such as Henry Ford and James E. Garfield, see *Renascent Africa* (London: Frank Cass, 1937), 134-141.

<sup>151</sup> Mark O. Attah, “The National Language Problem in Nigeria,” *Canadian Journal of African Studies* 21, no. 3 (1987): 393.

predominant ethnolinguistic groups are Hausa-Fulani groups in the Northern region, Igbo, Ibibio, and Efik in the Eastern and Southeastern regions, and Yoruba in the Western Region.<sup>152</sup> These settings formed the predominant backdrops against which UNN was forged, and thus, these communities serve as the primary theaters of action for this dissertation.

Academics are enamored with their own stories. Is another book on Nigerian higher education merited, a reasonably conversant student might ask? At first—and superficial—glance, it would appear that a host of books hold more than sufficient to command the attention for scholars seeking to understand the intellectual transformation from colony to nationalism.<sup>153</sup> Historian J. F. Ade Ajayi has observed that, in examining the influence of British imperial policies on colonial higher education, “there is very little [an] author can add” to existing works.<sup>154</sup>

A fascinating scholarly milieu on indigenous higher education *tupu ndi ocha bia* [before white people came] has illuminated how engrained the notion of advanced education is within indigenous societies throughout the eastern Nigeria and Africa, more broadly. Much colonial-era and even recent scholarship places a high premium a narrative of “pristine-ness,” alienated from the expansion of externalities; highlighting pristine-ness presents an important ideological narrative in challenging colonial rule. Jean Paul Sartre seethed in his preface to theorist and post-colonial activist Frantz Fanon’s *The Wretched of the Earth*: the European *élite*. . .picked out promising adolescents” and “branded them, as with a red-hot iron, with the principles of western

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<sup>152</sup> Attah, “The National Language Problem in Nigeria,” 394. .

<sup>153</sup> Good treatments, both as surveys and as specialized studies, include James S. Coleman, *Nigeria: Background to Independence* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1958); Saheed Aderinto, *When Sex Threatened the State: Illicit Sexuality, Nationalism, and Politics in Colonial Nigeria, 1900-1958* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2016).

<sup>154</sup> J.F. Ade Ajayi, Review of Apollos Nwauwa, *Imperialism, Academe and Nationalism: Britain and University Education for Africans, 1860-1960* in *Journal of African History* 39, no. 3 (Sept. 1998): 514.

culture.”<sup>155</sup> At European universities, “they stuffed their mouths full with high-sounding phrases, grand glutinous words that stuck to the teeth,” preparing them to return to the colony, “white-washed.”<sup>156</sup> Even with nationalist resistance, independence era leaders ranging from Fanon to Achebe looked upon the state of the new nation-state with some skepticism. Achebe observed that “the old white master was still in power.” Europeans had connived “a bunch of black stooges to do his dirty work for a commission. As long as they did what was expected of them they would be praised for their sagacity and their country for its stability.”<sup>157</sup> Postcolonial theorist Homi Bhabha chides postcolonial scholars for supposing that

the project of our liberationist aesthetics” must be “forever part of a totalizing Utopian vision of Being and History that seeks to transcend the contradictions and ambivalences that constitute the very structure of human subjectivity and its systems of cultural representations.”<sup>158</sup>

By the early 19<sup>th</sup>-century, A. E. Afigbo argues, Nsukka enjoyed networks of free trade spanning throughout the Southeast Nigeria, with goods such as livestock, textiles, and metal.<sup>159</sup> The spread of goods facilitates the spread of ideas. Historian Nwando Achebe has argued that Nsukka’s northern neighbor, Igalaland served as the cultural center—and imperial core—of Northern Igboland. Nsukka people borrowed from the Igala and the Aro on their southern side; trade migration exchanged Nsukka with Igala dialects.<sup>160</sup> Similarly, historian Stephen Schwartz has argued, lived experiences for Spanish travelers to North Africa produced a sense of “universality” in religious toleration, highlighting “the permeability of cultural frontiers” in the

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<sup>155</sup> Jean-Paul Sartre, Preface for Franz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth* (New York: Penguin, 1980), 7.

<sup>156</sup> Jean-Paul Sartre, Preface for Franz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth* (New York: Penguin, 1980), 7.

<sup>157</sup> Ezenwa-Ohaeto, *Chinua Achebe: A Biography* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1997), 137.

<sup>158</sup> Homi Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (London: Routledge, 1994), 19.

<sup>159</sup> A. E. Afigbo, “The Nsukka Communities From Earliest Times to 1951: An Introductory Survey,” in *The Nsukka Environment*, ed., G. E. K. Ofom ata (Enugu: Fourth Dimension Publishers, 1978).

<sup>160</sup> Nwando Achebe, *Farmers, Traders, Warriors, and Kings*, 29-33.

Western Mediterranean as a context in which such toleration could be cultivated.<sup>161</sup> Historian Toby Green highlights how the Western Sahel reflected a “complex mosaic of influences” between the Mandinka state expansion and the growth of Islam, forging a zone of mutual accommodation that facilitated society-building among disparate groups.<sup>162</sup> While the Mandinka had assumed new territories, they, too, had adopted local *mentalités*.<sup>163</sup> Regarding a setting closer to that of this dissertation, historian G. Ugo Nwokeji has argued that the incorporation of Nri-Awka Igbo into Arochukwu society, even when enslaved, produced an environment of cultural co-existence between Nri-Awka and Arochukwu societies.<sup>164</sup> In each instance, African institutions have been shaped by external actors, providing new ideas, new politics, and adaptations. Education in Africa, as with other institutions, is not reliant on a pristine, uncontaminated sense of the past; it demands what Eze considers to be intellectual “contamination.”<sup>165</sup> Historian Rudolph Ware highlights the process of intensified Islamic education in the Senegambia. While many external observers dismiss Quranic education as rote and rigid, the aspiration to total mastery over Quranic texts demands personal commitment, physical stamina, and mental focus.<sup>166</sup> Quranic schools among Hausa-Fulani communities proliferated both before and during colonialism. Historian J. N. Paden concludes that by 1964, there were at least 12,000 *malam* (Quranic teachers) in Kano alone.<sup>167</sup> With schools focused

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<sup>161</sup> Stephen Schwartz, *All Can Be Saved: Religious Tolerance and Salvation in the Iberian Atlantic World* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008), 73.

<sup>162</sup> Toby Green, *The Rise of the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade in Western Africa, 1300-1589* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 45.

<sup>163</sup> Toby Green, *The Rise of the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade in Western Africa, 1300-1589* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 45.

<sup>164</sup> G. Ugo Nwokeji, *The Slave Trade and Culture in the Bight of Biafra* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), chpts. 1-2.

<sup>165</sup> Chielozone Eze, “Rethinking African Culture and Identity: The Afropolitan Model,” *Journal of African Cultural Studies* 26, no. 2 (2014): 236.

<sup>166</sup> Rudolph Ware, *The Walking Qur'an: Islamic Education, Embodied Knowledge, and History in West Africa* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2014), chpt. 1.

<sup>167</sup> J.N. Paden, *Religion and Political Culture in Kano* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973), 58.



predominantly of education for its own sake—after all, most Hausa boys followed the profession of their fathers—Quranic education took on a purist sensibility absent in either the vocational schools or even University College, Ibadan (which still sought to cultivate colonial administrators). Once students completed their study of the Quran, which involved rigorous several hour sessions daily, the teacher performs a *sadaka*, where an animal is killed and gifts are given to the malam. The ritual celebrates the student’s success and establishes them as capable either of memorizing the Quran or attending a *makarantar ilmi*, an Ilm school that studies the body of commentaries, both legal and theological, on the Quran.<sup>168</sup> Historians J. Lorand Matory, Stefania Capone, and Paul Johnson, in addition to the host of past anthropologists (e.g. Ruth Landes and Roger Bastide) all highlight that Brazilian Candomblé requires lifelong commitment as well as a diversity of knowledge bases in order to comprehend the mysteries of the *orixa*.<sup>169</sup>

This dissertation also finds inspiration from scholars who use space, city, and roads to illustrate change over time in the spirit of maximum utilization of sources: the telling of many stories through a handful of locations. Historian Kristin Mann’s “city biography” account of Lagos, Nigeria, highlights how Lagos’ history demonstrates population change, intellectual shifts, and political transformation, ranging from the transformation in *oba* or king supremacy to the introduction of “legitimate” trading markets and the increasing economic power of non-royal palm oil producers.<sup>170</sup> Similarly, historian Mariana Candido’s history of Benguela in present-day Angola, too, highlights a specific political locale’s transformation through external actors; both

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<sup>168</sup> Joe A. McIntyre, “An Overview of Education in Northern Nigeria: Attempted from the Perspective of Qur’anic Education,” *Africa Spectrum* 17, no. 1 (1982): 21-31.

<sup>169</sup> James Lorand Matory, *Black Atlantic Religion: Tradition, Transnationalism, and Matriarchy in the Afro-Brazilian Candomblé* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005); Stefania Capone, *Searching for Africa in Brazil: Power and Tradition in Candomblé* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2010); Paul Johnson, *Secrets, Gossip, and Gods: The Transformation of Brazilian Candomblé* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002). Page numbers

<sup>170</sup> Kristin Mann, *Slavery and the Birth of an African City: Lagos, 1760-1900* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2007).

Lagos and Benguela are port cities, and thus, likely to be international spaces.<sup>171</sup> Mann and Candido ably highlight each city's ethnic diversity and, I argue, the production of "glocality."

Non-Africanist scholars have used "the map" effectively to convey piercing analyses of power, patronage, and conflict. Historian Robert Caro's biography of famed New York City construction bureaucrat, Robert Moses, uses infrastructure—roads, parks, and beaches—as narrative devices for understanding whether Moses compelled New York City into modernity or brought ruin to a half-million tenants by evicting them from their homes.<sup>172</sup> Vietnam scholar John Prados uses the Ho Chi Minh trail to highlight the transnationality and instability of the Northern/Southern Vietnamese/Laotian boundaries.<sup>173</sup> This dissertation will adapt a similar framing device, using Nsukka's spatiality—its roads and buildings—as a narrative device for introducing lines of inquiry to the ready.

Previous discussions of Nigerian higher education have suffered—at times, severely—from the strangling death-grip of analyses driven by the pantheon of foreign Commissions, Committees, and Tribunals or by the polemics of anti-coloniality. MSU administrator's John Hanson's study presents UNN as an exemplary case study in how Western chroniclers depicted UNN as "institution-building" and a representation of the embrace of Western intellectual liberalism in Nsukka Division.<sup>174</sup> Other studies by historians Nduka Okafor and Babatunde Fafunwa situate UNN as one more stage in the expansion of Nigerian higher education. Their work takes little interest in the intellectual ramifications and life histories undergirding

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<sup>171</sup> Mariana Candido, *An African Slaving Port and the Atlantic World: Benguela and Its Hinterland* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013).

<sup>172</sup> Robert Caro, *The Power Broker: Robert Moses and the Fall of New York* (New York: Knopf, 1974).

<sup>173</sup> John Prados, *The Blood Road: The Ho Chi Minh Trail and the Vietnam War* (New York: Wiley, 1999).

<sup>174</sup> John W. Hanson, *Education, Nsukka: Institution Building Among the Modern Ibo* (East Lansing, MI: Michigan State University Press, 1968).

University education and more, on the institutional character.<sup>175</sup> More recent scholarship has revised these assumptions. In his book, historian Apollos Nwauwa has highlighted early 19<sup>th</sup>-century Nigerian efforts to lobby higher educational institutions to be established in Nigeria; missionary teachings offered indigenous peoples access to alternative knowledge systems, prompting them to seek out access to increased education.<sup>176</sup> These scholars, however, have either overlooked the significance of UNN altogether or cast it a low-level experiment born of post-independence dabbling.<sup>177</sup> These studies do not situate UNN against the context of indigenous knowledge development, against the development of local party politics, or as an agent for social change in Igboland. My study is poised to do so.

Several scholars have approached UNN through the lens of standard institutional history, rather than intellectual or biographical history: as a rather banal process of establishing councils, institutes, and laws while courting funding and faculty.<sup>178</sup> In 1960, Ashby chaired a committee for the examination of higher educational expansion throughout the soon-to-be independent Nigeria, arguing for increased localization, agricultural education, and cross-regional integration.<sup>179</sup> Unlike previous commissions, such as the Elliott Commission (1944) or the Asquith Commission (1945), Ashby held that the prevailing “University College” system could no longer service imperial or post-imperial holdings.<sup>180</sup>

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<sup>175</sup> Nduka Okafor, *The Development of Universities in Nigeria* (New York: Humanities Press, 1971); A.B. Fafunwa, *A History of Nigerian Higher Education* (New York: Macmillan, 1971).

<sup>176</sup> Apollos Nwauwa, *Imperialism, Academe and Nationalism: Britain and University Education for Africans, 1860-1960* (New York: Taylor and Francis, 2013).

<sup>177</sup> Livsey, *Nigeria's University Age*, chpt. 6.

<sup>178</sup> For instance, see John W. Hanson, *Education, Nsukka: A Study in Institution-building Among the Modern Ibo* (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1968); see also, Livsey, *Nigeria's University Age*, chpt. 6.

<sup>179</sup> Eric Ashby, et al., *The Ashby Commission* Ibadan Federal Archives, Nigeria, *passim*; see also Barbara Anthony Rhodes, “The genesis of the 1959 Ashby commission report on education in Nigeria,” Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Southern California, 1973, 42.

<sup>180</sup> A. I. Asiwaju, “Ashby Revisited: A Review of Nigeria's Educational Growth, 1961-1971,” *African Studies Review* 15, No. 1 (April 1972), 1-16.

This work does not seek to situate the establishment of UNN against indigenous modalities of knowledge *tupu ndi ocha bia*. University of Nigeria, Nsukka, for whatever resonance it may have with pre-colonial institutions marked something different, something new for the University of Nigeria and its foreign partners. It is my contention that UNN highlights the results of collaboration between colonial, post-colonial, and external actors in knowledge production. Whereas U. C. I. attempted to import British education wholesale into Nigeria, UNN promoted cultural cross-pollination by design, incorporating knowledge systems from throughout the West as well as Africa.

The University's setting, Nsukka Division, has a storied history as a subject of anthropological and historical analysis. Educational pedagogy scholar Lawrence Offie Ocho has rendered Nsukka to be a "meeting point of four civilizations."<sup>181</sup> Anthropologist C. K. Meek collected data from Nsukka Division in order to assist Her Majesty's Government in properly arranging governance to prevent further outbreaks like the *ogu umuwanyi* (the Igbo women's war).<sup>182</sup> Additionally, renowned historian A. E. Afigbo has produced an extensive corpus on Nsukka as a trade nexus and space for inter-ethnic contact prior to colonization.<sup>183</sup> In 1978, G. E. K. Ofomata's edited volume, *The Nsukka Environment* offered a whirlwind tour of all aspects of Nsukka life, ranging from its topography and climate to the establishment of the University.<sup>184</sup> Historian Nwando Achebe's extensive study of Nsukka Division highlights how children learned to weave, to grow cotton, and to adhere to the masked spirits, such as *Abere* or *Oboloko Nimu* (the wife of the *Attama*, one of a limited number who could enter the shrine of the warrior

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<sup>181</sup> Lawrence Offie Ocho, "Nsukka: The Meeting Point of Four Civilizations," *Okikpe* 3, no. 1 (1997): 48-78.

<sup>182</sup> C.K. Meek, *An Ethnographical Report on the Peoples of the Nsukka Division* (Enugu: Government Printer, 1930).

<sup>183</sup> A. E. Afigbo, "The Nsukka Communities From Earliest Times to 1951: An Introductory Survey," in *The Nsukka Environment*, ed., G. E. K. Ofomata (Enugu: Fourth Dimension Publishers, 1978)

<sup>184</sup> G. E. K. Ofomata, ed., *The Nsukka Environment* (Enugu, Nigeria: Fourth Dimension Publishers, 1978).

goddess, *Kwome Nimu*).<sup>185</sup> Art historian Herbert M. Cole situates the Mbari Art Houses of Owerri as institutions of learning, including increased spiritual capacity to invoke the powers of *Ala*. The local *okwa nchu aja* [priest] received directions from *Ala* to move from house to house choosing individuals to assist in the construction of a house of art in devotion to *Ala*.<sup>186</sup> The Mbari Art House, Chinua Achebe observes, serves as a “profound affirmation of the people’s belief in the indivisibility of art and society.”<sup>187</sup> Achebe concludes: “There is no rigid barrier between makers of culture and its consumers. Art belongs to all and is a ‘function’ of society.”<sup>188</sup> Knowledge production not only enjoys a robust history in sub-Saharan Africa; Achebe articulates a vision of egalitarian education that inhabits the Igbo tradition.

This dissertation, however, is as much about social processes, economies, ideas, and politics as it is about Nsukka proper. While sociologist James S. Coleman highlights a Nigerian nationalism functionally similar to that of European nationalisms—the product of a literate elite connected through print culture and mission churches—political scientist Richard Sklar highlights the profound fractiousness in the years leading to Nigerian independence.<sup>189</sup> Access to Western education, however, served as the most powerful binding agent for all Nigerian elite and provided important scaffolding for the establishment of universities, UNN included. Western Region Premier Obafemi Awolowo, Northern Region Premier Ahmadu Bello, and Eastern Premier Nnamdi Azikiwe all received education in British schools, to varying degrees, whether as children or adults: Awolowo at Kings College, Ahmadu Bello at Katsina Training College,

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<sup>185</sup> Nwando Achebe, *Farmers, Traders, Warriors, and Kings*, 164.

<sup>186</sup> Herbert M. Cole, “Mbari is Life,” *African Arts* 2, no. 3 (Spring 1969): 8.

<sup>187</sup> Chinua Achebe, “Africa and Her Writers,” *The Massachusetts Review* 14, no. 3 (Summer 1973): 620.

<sup>188</sup> Chinua Achebe, “Africa and Her Writers,” *The Massachusetts Review* 14, no. 3 (Summer 1973): 620.

<sup>189</sup> James S. Coleman, *Nigeria: Background to Nationalism* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1958); Richard Sklar, *Nigerian Political Parties* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1963).

and Nnamdi Azikiwe at the C. M. S. and Wesleyan Schools.<sup>190</sup> The work of Coleman and Sklar, however, made little effort to engage the transition from colony to nation-state through popular ideas, social histories, or even indigenous language sources.

Moreover, local politics have not been emphasized sufficiently. J. F. Ade Ajayi situates university development against the milieu of regional competition, maintaining that “nationalism and regional competition. . . sometimes contradicted each other to the point of self-destruction.”<sup>191</sup> While acknowledging the influence of external actors, this dissertation will situate it firmly among the politics of Nigerian political forces, whether wielded by Parliamentarians or by the collective violence of Aba women protesting school fees. University spaces are often ideal for exploring this kind of cultural cross-pollination process, both at the place of high politics and in popular culture. Historian David Mills has situated Makerere University, Uganda as an “intellectual and political trading zone” and as an embryo for producing the student as a “social actor” in making post-colonial Uganda; Makerere was not a mere extension of colonial interests, Mills holds, but rather, a cosmopolitan matrix that traded on its relative autonomy to promote the building of Ugandan nationalism.<sup>192</sup> Jeremy Suri has shown how student protests prompted both Soviet and American authorities to forge stronger domestic security apparatuses. Suri observes that Soviet-American détente had social roots; similarly, UNN produced the intellectual environment that would foster Biafra separatism.<sup>193</sup> Timothy Livsey has situated the University College, Ibadan as a site for students’ Nigerian identity formation, with UNN functioning not as a sign of increased indigenization but rather, an

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<sup>190</sup> For autobiographies of each, see Obafemi Awolowo, *Awo* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1960); Nnamdi Azikiwe, *My Odyssey* (New York: Praeger, 1970); Ahmadu Bello, *My Life: The Autobiography of Alhaji Sir Ahmadu Bello* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1960).

<sup>191</sup> J. F. Ade Ajayi, “Higher Education in Nigeria,” *African Affairs* 74, no. 297 (October 1975): 421.

<sup>192</sup> David Mills, “Life on the Hill: Students and the Social History of Makerere,” *Africa* 76, no. 2 (2006): 247-266

<sup>193</sup> Jeremy Suri, *Power and Protest: Global Revolution and the Rise of Détente* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2003).

expansion of Cold War interests.<sup>194</sup> This dissertation expands and re-appropriates the work of such scholars, highlighting how UNN students functioned as agentive actors, both thanks to, and in spite of, Azikiwe's university-building scheme. This dissertation, while not wholly rejecting Cold War elements of UNN's development, argues that UNN reflected local and regional factors as much—and generally more than—the high politics of U.S.-Nigerian relations.

UNN must be understood against the broader trend of university-building throughout the globe. That the West, and particularly, the United States, has been seeking to export such models in the latter half of the twentieth-century is clear; education scholars Warren and Alice Ilchman highlight the expansion of “global South” universities over the course of the 20<sup>th</sup>-century: from 81 at the century's dawn (11 of which were Spanish institutions for civil servants) to 1500 by 1985, 600 of which were founded between 1961 and 1975. From data collected in 1984, just over 62 (30 percent) of higher education institutions had been established throughout the African continent from pre-1900 to 1961; between 1961 and 1975 alone, newly sovereign African nation-states established 154 (50 percent). Within Nigeria, nearly a dozen were functioning by 1975.<sup>195</sup> The Ilchmans' highlight the international trend for universities to serve as the site for cultivating the nation-state's next elite, and just as importantly, as mechanisms for political control of volatile age-groups.<sup>180</sup>

UNN adopted the design of emerging universities throughout Africa, Latin America, and Asia during this time period; the Ilchmans' argument provides important context to check enthusiastic Africanists' impulse to place an excess of emphasis on “indigeneity” when

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<sup>194</sup>; Timothy Livsey, *Nigeria's University Age: Reframing Decolonisation and Development* (New York: Palgrave, 2017).

<sup>195</sup> Warren and Alice Ilchman, “Academic Exchange and the Founding of New Universities,” *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, Vol. 491, The Fulbright Experience and Academic Exchanges (May, 1987) 51.

“uniformity” became more characteristic of the university-building trend.<sup>196</sup> Similarly, Phillip G. Altbach has offered an analysis of how higher educational institutions in newly-independent African countries become targets for politicization and outright repression. Altbach writes that they are “generally highly politicised institutions” because of their “close ties to the government because of patterns of funding and governance.” When these governing regimes are “lacking legitimacy,” Altbach concludes, they are “quick to repress oppositional activism or occasionally limit expression.”<sup>197</sup>

Dana G. Holland considers this history of higher education to be “one of the richest areas” for research highlighting the contours and trajectory of globalization and especially, the “degree of worldwide convergence in educational institutions”—noting the unpredictable variability among planned universities throughout the global South. Holland highlights that qualitative research on American higher education’s export trends—of which UNN is an example—reveals “variability” even as institutionally-minded administrators tend to view them as “coherent, rationalized, and containing universalistic ideas of modernity.”<sup>198</sup> Although UNN was designed to be a university distinctive to the needs of the Nigerian nation-state, a product of “variability,” it also fit within broader trends of Western university exportation—glocality *par excellence*.

UNN was built at the dawn of the global “university age,” as university-towns proliferated throughout the West. In architectural theorist Francesco Zuddas’ “The Idea of the Università,” he highlights how the 1960s marked the expansion of university-building

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<sup>196</sup> Warren and Alice Ilchman, “Academic Exchange and the Founding of New Universities,” *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, Vol. 491, The Fulbright Experience and Academic Exchanges (May 1987): 51.

<sup>197</sup> Phillip G. Altbach, “Academic Freedom: International Challenges and African Realities,” *Journal of Higher Education in Africa* 3, no. 2 (2005): 19.

<sup>198</sup> Dana G. Holland, “Waves of Educational Model Production: The Case of Higher Education Institutionalization in Malawi, 1964–2004,” *Comparative Education Review* 54, No. 2 (May 2010): 199.



throughout the United Kingdom with “plateglass” universities, established in ruralities and connected to urban settings, such as Essex, York, and Kent.<sup>199</sup> “It did not seem incongruous,” Historian Peter Scott observed in his reflection on the Robbins Report on Higher Education in the United Kingdom, “to seek to expand private freedom by expanding public power.”<sup>200</sup>

Scholars of American foreign policy have highlighted the prominent role that American educational, military, and intelligence apparatuses have played in shaping African nation-states transition to independence. Elizabeth Borgwardt has argued that human rights doctrine defined American institution-building abroad American expansion post-World War II.<sup>201</sup> Borgwardt roots American institutional expansion in a Rooseveltian commitment to strengthened institutions, well-oiled bureaucracy, and proper access to education that could foster a “human rights” ethos wherever it developed.<sup>202</sup> Historian Robert Rakove has detailed how both the Kennedy and Johnson administration found the American network of alliances throughout the non-aligned world to be tenuous, at best; by the end of the decade, even friendly nations were utilizing American relationships in order to fund authoritarian regimes—warning that American failures would lead to Communist destabilization and ultimately, coups and perhaps civil war.<sup>203</sup> Vietnam scholars too, situate the Vietnam conflict in “Great Society” ethos of state-sponsored technology and innovation.<sup>204</sup> Historian Carol Anderson’s *Eyes Off the Prize* similarly engages how African American intelligentsia engaged international institutions to promote a human rights regime that extended beyond repealing segregation, inclusive of educational and

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<sup>199</sup> Francesco Zuddas, “The Idea of the Università,” *AA Files* 75 (2017): 119-131.

<sup>200</sup> Peter Scott, “Blueprint or Blue Remembered Hills? The Relevance of the Robbins Report to the Present Reforms of Higher Education,” *Oxford Review of Education* 14, no. 1 (1988): 34.

<sup>201</sup> Elizabeth Borgwardt, *A New Deal for the World* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2005); Lloyd P. Gardner, *Pay Any Price: Lyndon Johnson and the Wars for Vietnam* (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 1997).

<sup>202</sup> Elizabeth Borgwardt, *A New Deal for the World* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2005).

<sup>203</sup> Robert Rakove, *Kennedy, Johnson, and the Non-Aligned World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015).

<sup>204</sup> Lloyd P. Gardner, *Pay Any Price: Lyndon Johnson and the Wars for Vietnam* (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 1997).

employment access for African Americans.<sup>205</sup> This dissertation situates UNN at the center of a kind of Anglo-American “cold war” over educational sovereignty, revealing that even firm alliances clash—albeit it in university classrooms rather than on battlefields.

This dissertation’s engagement with high politics between the United States and Nigeria draws from historian Tony Smith’s article, “New Wine for New Bottles: A Pericentric Framework for the Study of the Cold War.”<sup>206</sup> Smith argues that scholars must place minor nation-states at the center of the Cold War conflict; not only did these minor entities attempt to “*block, moderate, and end* the epic contest,” Smith writes, “they also took actions that played a key role in *expanding, intensifying, and prolonging* the struggle between East and West” (Smith’s emphasis). In the southern Igbo city of Aba, Representative O.C. Ememe, mounted a challenge to the University project, using the cause of Nigerian nationalism to challenge American dominance in the region and solicit Soviet support.<sup>207</sup> And as the keystone of American foreign policy in the African continent, particularly in upholding the Moïse Tshombe regime in the Congo, Nigeria wielded meaningful influence in manipulating American efforts not only in Nigeria but in Africa *writ large*.<sup>208</sup> Ironically, however, as this study will show, the UNN project exacerbated conflict between the United States and its firm ally, the United Kingdom. American initiatives such as the Peace Corps, an early participant in UNN operations, and USAID functioned as a part of this broader strategy.

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<sup>205</sup> Carol Anderson, *Eyes Off the Prize: The United Nations and the African American Struggle for Human Rights* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2003).

<sup>206</sup> Tony Smith, “New Bottles for New Wine: A Pericentric Framework for the Study of the Cold War,” *Diplomatic History* 24, No. 4 (2000): 567-591.

<sup>207</sup> “MP SOS Zik over problem students” *Eastern Nigeria Guardian*, November 9, 1962, 1

<sup>208</sup> Emmanuel Gerard and Bruce Kuklick, *Death in the Congo* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2015), 123; Telegram from the Department of State to the Embassy in Nigeria, June 19, 1964, 7:58 P.M., *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1964-1968* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 2014), 255; Telegram From the Embassy in France to the Department of State, April 2, 1964, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1964-1968* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 2014), 232. For Nigeria’s centrality, see Rakove, 139.

Yet, another body of literature highlights how American foreign policy institutions not only sought to contain Soviet Communism but also, contain *nationalism* and at times, the *population*. Demographic historians such as Nick Cullather and Matthew Connelly have illustrated how the looming concerns for a large portion of the “developing world” appeared to be as environmental as political. With teeming masses of “black Africans,” American foreign policymakers feared that African decolonization could turn to unfettered violence and “tribal wars.”<sup>209</sup> Thus, UNN did not only serve an *intellectual* purpose for American foreign policymakers (including MSU administrators, who had functionally assumed the role of a para-state entity). As the first university to bear the name of “Nigeria,” UNN aspired to bring together those of ethnic and religious differences under the same university walls. According to early University College leaders such as A. W. Pickard-Cambridge, Ibadan Religious Studies faculty, ecumenicism would be the only way Ibadan could prevent a fate like the religious violence that swept through the Asian subcontinent during the Partition of India; of the faculty, Pickard-Cambridge observed: “It would be our hope that in a University such as we visualize, Mahomedans and Christians would learn religious toleration. We have failed to teach Indians this with fatal consequences.”<sup>210</sup>

This dissertation borrows from the theorization of religious studies scholars such as Lamin Sanneh and Andrew Walls in arguing for the need of “institutional translatability”—the notion that institutions and religious models are able to traverse social, cultural, and national

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<sup>209</sup> Nick Cullather, *The Hungry World: America’s Cold War Battle Against Poverty in Asia* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2010); Matthew Connelly, *Fatal Misconception: The Struggle to Control World Population* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2010).

<sup>210</sup> Notes by Dr. A.W.Pickard-Cambridge on memo by Bishop Horstead, Nov. 7, 1945, Church Missionary Society Archive AF 35/49 AFW E3 1930-1945.

lines.<sup>211</sup> Historian Dana Holland holds that a University's capacity to match global models depends upon the extent to which the University has established "linkage to global and regional models."<sup>212</sup> Theorists Robert Latham et al. considers most "development" efforts to be "order-making projects": imposing predictability, bureaucracy, and regulation on what the "developers" consider to be an "untamed" milieu. Both Latham and Bruno Latour hold that the growth of institutions, including universities, depend on coalition building: extracting resources from Western entities who share an interest in common with the institution under question.<sup>213</sup> Education scholar Dana Holland concludes that "institutional models transfer across national boundaries not because they are legitimate or high status per se but because a network of allies has been successfully enlisted through *translation strategies* that align the goals of disparate allies " contrived primarily through tailoring the institutional ends to nation-state in which the university exists (emphasis mine).<sup>214</sup> This dissertation considers how and why such strategies were implemented: what compromises needed to be made, what adaptations the local environment demanded, and whose influence needed to be honored. This dissertation, then, will consider the expansion of UNN not only as an indigenous university but also, as a *translated* university—borrowed from externalities and re-produced against an indigenous milieu.

This dissertation takes a keen interest in highlighting the role of para-state actors in "transitioning" colonies to independence. In this regard, Michigan State University has played a

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<sup>211</sup> Andrew Walls, "The Translation Principle in Christian History," in *Bible Translation and the Spread of the Church*, ed. Phillip C. Stine (Leiden: Brill, 1990); Lamin Sanneh, *Translating the Message: The Missionary Impact on Culture* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2009).

<sup>212</sup> Dana G. Holland, "Waves of Educational Model Production: The Case of Higher Education Institutionalization in Malawi, 1964–2004," *Comparative Education Review* 54, no. 2 (2010): 201.

<sup>213</sup> Robert Latham, R. Kassimir, and T.M. Callaghy, "Introduction: Transboundary Formations, Intervention, Order, and Authority," in *Intervention and Transnationalism in Africa: Global-Local Networks of Power*, ed. T. M. Callaghy, R. Kassimir, and R. Latham (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001); Bruno Latour, *Science in Action* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1987).

<sup>214</sup> Dana G. Holland, "Waves of Educational Model Production: The Case of Higher Education Institutionalization in Malawi, 1964–2004," *Comparative Education Review* 54, no. 2 (2010): 201.

disproportionate role in facilitating these interactions, a reality scholars have increasingly recognized over the last decade. Historian Douglas A. Noverr offers a sound general history of MSU's transformation from agricultural college to a Research I institution—a rise only made possible through President John W. Hannah's willingness to ally MSU's research arms with United States Government initiatives (ranging from USAID to Peace Corps to, at times, the Central Intelligence Agency).<sup>215</sup> Historian James M. Carter highlighted Michigan State University's disproportionate role in shaping infrastructure and governance in South(ern) Vietnam.<sup>216</sup> Historian Mire Koikari has detailed how MSU home economics instructors provided “domestic science” workshops to women in post-World War II Okinawa, the University of the Ryūkyūs Project. MSU's involvement in providing personnel in transitioning a colony to independence fit well with their established record throughout the “developing world.” Koikari casts MSU as a kind of “university-empire,” enjoying full access to governmental entities—including means of coercion to enforce their will.<sup>217</sup> The full scope of MSU's influence abroad has yet to be realized in the scholarly literature. Yet, this dissertation will depart from Koikari's and Carter's analyses in an important regard: it will not emphasize the UNN classroom, even at the hands of MSU administrators, as a site for Cold War conflict; other, more relevant factors shaped the thinking of both student and administrator alike.

A sizable body of literature on the literati of the Nigeria-Biafra war has highlighted UNN as a haven for Igbo intellectuals; literary scholar Obi Nwakanma's biography of Christopher Okigbo situates Nsukka as an incubator for eastern militance and separatism, a frontier zone in

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<sup>215</sup> Douglass A. Noverr, *Michigan State University: The Rise of a Research University and the New Millennium, 1970-2005* (East Lansing, MI: Michigan State University, 2015), chpt. 1.

<sup>216</sup> James M. Carter, *Inventing Vietnam* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008).

<sup>217</sup> Mire Koikari, ““The World is Our Campus”: Michigan State University and Cold-War Home Economics in US-occupied Okinawa, 1945–1972,” *Gender and History* 24, 1 (March 2012): 74-92.

which students made themselves anew.<sup>218</sup> Historian Afam Ebeogu places Nsukka at the center of Biafran intellectual radicalism, “endow[ing] it with a depth of philosophy and a diplomatic flamboyance.”<sup>219</sup> Literary theorist Maik Nwosu’s work has situated UNN as an incubator for much of late 20<sup>th</sup>-century Nigerian poetry and dramatic arts.<sup>220</sup> Wendy Griswold, in her writing on the novel in Nigeria, has observed that for many Biafrans, the war was (wrongly) conceived to be “an intellectual’s war.”<sup>221</sup> Ironically, UNN’s *raison d’etre* was to challenge the kind of educational system that had produced such an elitist *intelligentsia*.

Additionally, this dissertation will bring the lives of UNN figures, heretofore overlooked to the fore. Vice Chancellors Eni Njoku (botanist) and Hubert Kodilinye (ophthalmologist), who assumed the position before and following the Nigeria-Biafra war, respectively, have received little scholarly attention. UNN’s leading academics have oft-been overlooked: renowned author Chinua Achebe; education scholar, Professor Christie C. Achebe, anthropologist Professor Felicia Ekejiuba, German scholar, Professor Edith Ihekweazu, mathematician Professor Chike Obi, the former University College, U. C. I. mathematician and leader of the Dynamic Party, an opposition party to the Action Group; Manjuari Sircar, the noted Indian dancer, Dr. Paul Akubue, the founder of the pharmacology faculty; as well as legal scholar, Professor Edwin I. Nwogugu and theater scholar, Professor Emeka Nwabueze. Each of these scholars were in the foundational generation of UNN’s faculty; each provide singular insight into UNN’s founding generation.

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<sup>218</sup> Obi Nwakanma, *Christopher Okigbo, Thirsting for Sunlight: 1930-1967* (Rochester, NY: Boydell and Brewster, 2010), chpt. 6,

<sup>219</sup> Afam Ebeogu, “The Spirit of Agony: War Poetry from Biafra,” *Research in African Literatures* 23, no. 4 (Winter 1992): 39. That quote could not have come from all these pages

<sup>220</sup> Maik Nwosu, “Children of the Anthill: Nsukka and the Shaping of Nigeria’s 1960s Literary Generation,” *English in Africa* 32, no. 1 (May 2005): 37-50. What exact pages

<sup>221</sup> Wendy Griswold, *Bearing Witness: Readers, Writers, and the Novel in Nigeria* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), 235.

Collectively, these—and many other life stories—reveal the dynamic presence of indigenous intelligentsia in post-independence Nigeria. Analysis of the American and European actors, too, will reveal the complicated international space that shaped Nsukka higher education. Dr. George Marion Johnson, the Howard University law dean who served as the University's first Vice-Chancellor, the noted Indian dancer, Manjuari Sircar, Marguerite Cartwright, the widely read black sociologist/columnist, and Dr. Walter Markov, the Stalinist historian of the German Democratic Republic. Glen Taggart launched MSU's International Programs office and served as UNN's second vice chancellor. The Netherlands University Foundation for International Cooperation played a substantial role in establishing UNN's Engineering Department, and Indian mathematician, and a dance instructor staffed UNN's mathematics division in an effort to extend solidarity to court Nigeria to be a non-aligned state actor in the global Cold War conflict. This dissertation will re-situate UNN as being as much an “international” space as an “indigenous” space.”

A small, but notable, body of literature highlighted below indicates the influence of American educational models on higher education throughout Africa. Jason C. Parker has offered a survey of how HBCUs have shaped African independence movements, arguing that American black universities became “intellectual hothouse[s] and safe house[s]” for the fostering of Afro-centered identities and independence movements on both sides of the Atlantic.<sup>222</sup> Thomas Howard's article on Ghanaian James E. K. Aggrey's involvement with Booker T. Washington's Tuskegee Institution—and his efforts to export this model to Achimota College,<sup>223</sup> Gold Coast in the 1920s—reveals a case study in how Tuskegee Institution's technical education

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<sup>222</sup> Jason C. Parker, ““Made in America Revolutions’?: the American Role in the Decolonization of the Black Atlantic,” *Journal of American History* 96, no. 3 (Dec. 2009): 729.

<sup>223</sup> Thomas C. Howard, “West Africa and the American South: Notes on James E.K. Aggrey and the Idea of a University in West Africa,” *Journal of African Studies* (Winter 1975): 445-465.

shaped notions of “negro education” throughout the African diaspora. Kevin Gaines and Michael Hanchard place HBCUs at the center of the cultivation of “Afro-modernity,” in which peoples of African descent such as George Padmore and Kwame Nkrumah find *liberation* as well as *integration* through exposure to Western institutions.<sup>224</sup> Hanchard speaks of a “relatively autonomous modernity” founded upon a “selective incorporation of technologies, discourse, and institutions of the modern West within the cultural and political practices of African-derived peoples.”<sup>225</sup> Historians Edward H. Berman and Donald Johnson have illustrated how the Phelps-Stokes Fund and Thomas Jesse Jones, the Welch educator (and ideological adversary of black educators such as W. E. B. DuBois and Carter G. Woodson) engaged Africana education as functionally the same as “negro education” in the United States.<sup>226</sup> In these regards, UNN marked a *departure* from tradition: holding that black people in Nigeria should be educated *distinctly* from black people in Birmingham.<sup>227</sup>

This dissertation will draw on biographical method, submitting that the life story is the lifeblood of the institution, that the background of decision-makers set the scaffolding for their paradigm for university governance. Several biographies inform my approach. Nwando Achebe’s book, *Farmers, Traders, Warriors, and Kings* and *The Female King of Colonial Nigeria* uncovers how women’s life stories illustrate the lived experience of Nsukka division women, both elite and lay, in ways that colonial documents cannot.<sup>228</sup> In her work, women

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<sup>224</sup> Kevin Gaines, *American Africans in Ghana: Black Expatriates and the Civil Rights and the Civil Rights Era* (Durham: University of North Carolina Press, 2008).

<sup>225</sup> Michael Hanchard, “Afro-Modernity: Temporality, Politics, and the African Diaspora,” *Public Culture* 11, no. 1 (1999): 245-268.;

<sup>226</sup> Edward H. Berman, “American Influence on African Education: The Role of the Phelps-Stoke Fund’s Education Commissions,” *Comparative Education Review* 15, no. 2 (June 1971): 132-145; Donald Johnson, “W.E.B. DuBois, Thomas Jesse Jones and the Struggle for Social Education, 1900-1930,” *Journal of Negro History* 85, no. 3 (Summer 2000): 71-95.

<sup>227</sup> Jason C. Parker, ““Made in America Revolutions’?:”727-750.;;

<sup>228</sup> Nwando Achebe, *Farmers, Traders, Warriors, and Kings* (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 2005); and *The Female King of Colonial Nigeria* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2011).



assume the center of their own lives, upholding collaborating with, resisting against, and succumbing to the spiritual and political systems surrounding them.

Methodologically, the precedents for engaging such biographical subjects are rich. For instance, James Miller, in his biography of Michel Foucault, adopts this symbiosis between the experience of the lived and the intellectual abstractions of the mind; this methodology speaks well to the intersection of how human passions and drives shape theoretical and intellectual formulations.<sup>229</sup> Jeremy Popkin's group biography of historians similarly highlights how social background, institutional access, and political milieus rendered intellectual pursuits realizable, commenting particularly on the irony of academe's propensity to omit particularly components of their individual history<sup>230</sup>—a tendency not absent in Azikiwe's promotion of himself along with his University. Louis Menand's group biography, *The Metaphysical Club*, of post-Civil War intellectuals uses a discussion group for revealing the tensions—and, indeed, existential anxieties—that hung over post-Civil War America; his work demonstrates how a group of intellectuals reflect massive society-wide changes and how wartime trauma shape intellectual trends.<sup>231</sup> Each of these approaches to biography intersect with the key players in this dissertation: as intellectuals, as visionaries, and as traumatized war victims.

Analyses of Azikiwe's life story proliferate. K. A. B. Jones-Quartey's early biography is easily categorized as a political hagiography, in which Jones-Quartey uncritically accepts the triumphant narratives of Azikiwe's early life, sojourn, and aspirations to Nigerian independence—while tacitly rejecting Azikiwe's complicity in N.C.N.C. party crises as well as

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<sup>229</sup> James Miller, *The Passion of Michel Foucault* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993).

<sup>230</sup> Jeremy D. Popkin, *History, Historians, and Autobiography* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005).

<sup>231</sup> Louis Menand, *The Metaphysical Club* (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 2001).

claims of deception and graft in his administration of the African Continental Bank.<sup>232</sup> Michael Echeruo has situated Azikiwe against the trajectory of nineteenth-century comparative black thought, highlighting how Azikiwe gave birth to the notion of a distinctively *Nigerian* identity.<sup>233</sup> Michael S. O. Olisa and Odinchezo M. Ikejani-Clark produced an edited volume on Azikiwe's contributions to African revolutionary thought.<sup>234</sup> Polycarp Ikuenobe has highlighted how “mental emancipation” demanded a rejection of Western educational influence from African life; however, in doing so, Azikiwe *does not* reject Western educational models *per se* but Westerners administration of them in Africa—an important point for understanding the development of UNN.<sup>235</sup> While Azikiwe criticizes European constructions of Africa, Ikuenobe holds that Azikiwe saw certain indigenous beliefs as “superstitious elements that “may have led Europeans to believe Africans have inferior intellects.”<sup>236</sup> Ikuenobe, however, critiques Azikiwe on this point for “comparing African superstitious beliefs. . . with modern Western science,” thus skewing the comparison and rendering his critique illegitimate.<sup>237</sup>

All of these scholars demonstrate the power of biography to reveal the personal underlaying political and educational movements and institutions. Africans are often seen as social and political participants—less commonly are they understood as theorizers and academics. Gloria Chuku's edited volume, *The Igbo Intellectual Tradition*, offers a host of

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<sup>232</sup> K.A.B. Jones-Quartey, “The Moulding of Azikiwe,” *Transition* 15 (1964): 50-53; and *A Life of Azikiwe* (New York: Penguin, 1965);

<sup>233</sup> Michael S. Echeruo, “Nnamdi Azikiwe and Nineteenth-century Nigerian Thought,” *Journal of Modern African Studies* 12, no. 2 (June 1974): 245-263.

<sup>234</sup> Michael S.O. Olisa and Odinchezo M. Ikejani-Clark, ed., *Azikiwe and the African Revolution* (Onitsha: Africana-FEP Publishers, 1989).

<sup>235</sup> Polycarp Ikuenobe, “Mental Emancipation in Nnamdi Azikiwe's Political Philosophy and the Decolonisation of African Knowledge,” *Theoria* 65 (June 2018): 50-71.

<sup>236</sup> Polycarp Ikuenobe, “Mental Emancipation in Nnamdi Azikiwe's Political Philosophy and the Decolonisation of African Knowledge,” *Theoria* 65, no. 2 (June 2018): 57.

<sup>237</sup> Polycarp Ikuenobe, “Mental Emancipation in Nnamdi Azikiwe's Political Philosophy and the Decolonisation of African Knowledge,” *Theoria* 65, no. 2 (June 2018): 64.

histories of Igbo thinkers from the era of the slave trade to contemporary life. Chuku uses Igbo intelligentsia to hold that Africa, indeed, “has contributed enormous intellectual products to the collective output of humankind.”<sup>238</sup>

### *Conclusion*

In this introduction, I have engaged how the literature has highlighted colonial education, while virtually neglecting UNN as an extension of that narrative. Moreover, I reflect on how my identity as an outsider—a foreigner with functional, but not astounding, Igbo language skills—enabled me to forge relationships with research collaborators while, at the same time, highlighting my essential foreign-ness through mispronunciation and poor sentence construction. The fact that my use of Igbo proverbs brought on roars of laughter highlights outsider-ness more than integration.

In the next chapter, my personal narrative and positionality chapter, I reflect on my at-times tumultuous experiences during my visits to Nigeria. These experiences informed the feeling of precariousness that often looms over daily life in Nigeria, the possibility that an unexpected event could assault you unawares at any given moment. As the Igbo saying observes: *echi di ime*. Tomorrow is pregnant.

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<sup>238</sup> Gloria Chuku, *The Igbo Intellectual Tradition: Creative Conflict in African and African Diasporic Thought* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), 3.

## CHAPTER 1

“I can’t see. I can’t...” I mumbled, collapsing on the floor of the Nsukka medical clinic. All turned black, prompting a cadre of clinic workers to surround me. The nurse had been taking my blood pressure; minutes later, I awoke; a gaggle of Nigerian healthcare workers were hoisting me onto a makeshift gurney. The van bounced me from their clinic along the Naija roads—*njagala njagala*, the roads seemed to say as we rode along.

The Nsukka medical clinic struggled with half-functioning and half-equipped facilities, ranging from a flushable using a bucket of water to a blanket shortage. The attending doctor, an American-trained physician, visited me now and then. The nurses were less frequent, still; they took my vitals once every seven hours or so. One nurse badgered me about eating food—even though no food was available on-site. Strapped up to an IV, I was in no position to venture down the way to Chiti’s, the local dive. The doctors joked that my accommodations, the Continuing Education Center, served as a “mosquito haven.” Lying on my hospital bed, my mind wandered to the words of the internationally-renowned Nigerian novelist, Chinua Achebe, who panned that “only a masochist with an exuberant taste for self-violence will pick Nigeria for a holiday.”<sup>239</sup> My brush with death in Nsukka reflects on the broader situation against which university education navigates: a struggle for existence and a struggle for the cultivation of beauty and the promotion of indigenous institutions against fraught political relationships and conflicts over resources. Meanwhile, some 300,000 Nigerians die yearly of malaria; in 2017, Nigeria accounted for 25% of the malaria cases worldwide and 19% of malaria deaths.<sup>240</sup>

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<sup>239</sup> Chinua Achebe, *The Trouble with Nigeria* (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 1984), 10.

<sup>240</sup> “This year’s World malaria report at a glance,” <https://www.who.int/malaria/media/world-malaria-report-2018/en/> <accessed August 12, 2020> and Nigeria WHO malaria profile, [https://www.who.int/malaria/publications/country-profiles/profile\\_nga\\_en.pdf?ua=1](https://www.who.int/malaria/publications/country-profiles/profile_nga_en.pdf?ua=1).

On a more recent visit, I was chatting with a woman at a social gathering in Lagos. An employee at a prestigious hospital, she had aspirations: she wanted to be a fashion designer and was planning her next big hustle. She had mastered that rhetorical art form that many Nigerians have mastered: ranting about Nigeria. The rant has a cadence, often starting with something banal: the roads, the traffic, the universities, or dating. Achebe notes that such rants about the “trouble with Nigeria” has a routineness to it: “sooner or later,” Nigerians’ conversations will “slide into a litany of our national deficiencies.”<sup>241</sup>

The woman (whom we’ll call Chioma) had been riffing on the problem of men and courtship, angry that they all want it all, that they’re just in it for themselves. Falz’s song, “Hypocrite,” played in the background. Chioma made a break in her comment stream, paused for half a second, and sang along with the music: “Everbody’s a mother f---ing hypocrite ooo,” as though she had made a special request of the venue to play that song at the exact moment of her vent session. She supported Trump and hated what Nigerians abroad were doing to ruin her prospects of escape. The rhetoric was most unfortunate: as Achebe observes, Nigeria could lay claims to greatness: “favoured by Providence” who had been “commandeered by history to facilitate mankind’s advancement.

The Igbo word for human is *mmadu*, which is a derivation of the words: *mmou di ndu* (the spirit is alive) or *mma ndu*, “good life.” Much of history might be understood as the struggle of humanity to grapple with the meaning of death; what import, after all, is a dissertation in the face of the Great Unknown? Humans live from “loss to loss, until nothing remains in [us] and [our] entire bod[ies] [fall] beyond the limit—cadere, cadaver.” Johann Goethe felt at ease with death: “the thought of death leaves me in perfect peace,” as his spirit “works on from eternity to

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<sup>241</sup> Achebe, *The Trouble with Nigeria* (London: Heinemann, 1984), 2.

eternity” and like the sun, never truly sets but “shines on perpetually.”<sup>242</sup> Foucault holds that the quest for power defines human relationships. Yet, power, Foucault held, abides in a paradox; the ultimate manifestation of one’s will to power is also one’s will to death and demise. The paramount drive to control one’s existence came through the drive to end it. Death amounted to power. Gilles Deleuze, Foucault’s intellectual mentor, craved the authenticity found in the mystical center of power: a “pure becoming without measure,” which Foucault considered to be a “monstrous and lawless becoming.” Humans must embrace and ultimately, drive through this “will to nothingness.”<sup>243</sup>

Focusing in on Igbo existentiality—that is, the state of living under a condition of constant self-interrogation about the purpose and nature of one’s existence—death hangs over *mmadu* as a *mmuo*. Chinua Achebe notes that for Igbo thinkers, we must draw on “the metaphor of myth and poetry.” Achebe asks: “is it not well known that a man may worship Ogwugwu to perfection and yet be killed by Udo?”<sup>244</sup> Thus is the meaning of the Igbo pantheon: a host of forces are working for us and against us at any given time—and our capacity to control and manipulate them is limited. Indeed, as one Igbo proverb holds: *Ihe kwulu ihe ekwudebe ya* (where one thing stands, another stands beside it).

The Igbo musician Celestine Ukwu sang: “*Onwu ama[ghi] eze. . . o gburu onye ukwu, o gburu onye nta. . . onwu ama[ghi] onye ukwu, onye ama[ghi] ogbenye*” [death knows no king. . . it kills the prominent, it kills the lowly. . . death knows neither the powerful nor the poor.” Igbo thought positions man at the behest of his individualized spirit-deity, his *chi*: *chi onye adighi n’izu, ma onwu egbuna ya* (if a person’s *chi* has not conspired against him/her, then death will

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<sup>242</sup> Calvin Thomas, *Goethe* (New York: Henry Holt, 1917), 234.

<sup>243</sup> James Miller, *The Passion of Michel Foucault* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2000), 197-198.

<sup>244</sup> Chinua Achebe, “The Chi in Igbo Cosmology,” in *Morning Yet on Creation Day: Essays* (New York: Anchor Press/Doubleday, 1975), 161.

bypass him/her). *Chukwu*, the supreme *Chi*, dictates the terms of life and death: *Oge abuo ka Chukwu na-akpo mmadu; o kpo ya na ndu o kpo ya n'onwu* [Chukwu calls humans on two occasions; he calls him/her in life, he calls him/her in death].

In one folk story, *mmadu* sent a dog to Chukwu with the message that *mmadu* preferred life over death. As the noted Irish poet, Seamus Heaney—who served as a poetry instructor at the University of Nigeria, Nsukka—wrote, humans wanted to be “let back into the house of life.”<sup>245</sup> Being overly confident that he could reach *Chukwu* in good time, the dog dilly-dallied along the way while an ill-intended frog outpaced him. In one version of the tale, the frog positioned his relatives along the path to ensure that no matter how slow the frog was, a frog would always be further along the path. A darkly humorous version of the death origin tale: Chukwu sent a dog to humanity to inform them that their deceased would rise anew if they buried them and placed ashes on their corpses. When the dog fatigues of the journey, *Chukwu* sends a sheep to convey the message; the sheep only tells *mmadu* to bury them, forgetting to mention the instructions to cover them with ash. When the dog finally arrives, *mmadu* rejected his message. In the former tale, death outpaces and outmaneuvers humanity, making triumph impossible. In the latter, humanity’s unwillingness to accept the messenger of *Chukwu* ensures death’s fixture.<sup>246</sup>

The sense of death’s fickleness rests over Igbo expressions for good night: *ka chi foo* followed by *ka o buo* [may the light break/may it so be]—an expression of hope that the hearer stays alive until the following morning. Carrying out my research demanded that I approach the possibility of death; had medications not been available, had medical staff been less prepared

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<sup>245</sup> Kieran Quinlan, *Seamus Heaney and the Death of Catholic Ireland* (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2020), 204.

<sup>246</sup> Obiakoizu Iloanusi, *Myths of the Creation of Man and the Origin of Death in Africa A Study in Igbo Traditional Culture and Other African Cultures* (New York: Peter Lang, 1984), 162.

than they were, my research in Nsukka might have cost my life. It is impossible to understand me or my relationship to this subject without understanding the likelihood of my own demise. My childhood vulnerability prompted and defined my career trajectory as a historian. Whether in Star Valley or in Nsukka, the limitations of mortality have been in the air—to be forgotten at my peril.

Born with bronchiopulmonary dysplasia and the resulting ventilator-induced scarring, sudden demise seemed possible—and at times, probable. Allergies accentuated my respiratory troubles: paint fumes, freshly cut grass, fingernail polish, floor detergent, most exercise, and all animals ran the risk of triggering an attack. The seasonal flu posed an annual threat, too. A child such as me was ill-suited for the kinds of professions common to a rural mining state. In the schools, teachers kept an eye over their shoulder to ensure that I kept breathing. For good-hearted instructors and anxious administrators, I was a ticking time bomb, ready to explode into a medical and legal nightmare.

The seasonal flu brought me to my knees in 1990. I contracted a strain of the flu called HPIV-3. HPIV-3 produces the same kinds of results that COVID-19 does: the release of cytokine material into the lungs. Within 24-48 hours, I had escalated from occasional coughing spells to a total bronchial shutdown. The HPIV-3 struck at the height of influenza season near the end of February. My hometown lacked proper medical facilities, so my parents drove me—as they so often did—down that old, familiar road through Teton Canyon to St. John’s Medical Center. My mother administered mist nebulizer treatments every hour, far above the standard recommended frequency. St. John’s was nothing to write home about, but we thought it would do.

Western Wyoming winters enjoy a reputation for resembling Christmas snow globe even when it is not Christmas. Ice paved over the roads for the stretch of road connecting Afton and



Jackson Hole. About five miles outside of town, my father, in a rush to get out of the valley, struck a patch of ice; the car spun out and became lodged into a snowbank while my breathing capacity continued to deteriorate. My father's frantic attempts to dig the car out of the snow failed. He waved down the next snowplow driver to come from the canyon; against city code, the plough pulled us from the snowbank. We continued on our way.

I have few memories of this stretch of the journey. My reconstruction of events relies entirely upon the memories of my parents, both under duress at the time. Dr. James Russell Little (we took great joy in our common names) was on call; Doc Little had been there at my birth—having seen me from what was a likely an infant mortality statistic to thriving human.

For the next day, Doc Little monitored the deterioration of my lungs. They lacked the proper equipment to treat me in such a small-town hospital. The LifeFlight chopper was out-of-service; a rescue operation would require the more-difficult-to-maneuver jet from Salt Lake City. Every 20 minutes, he took a new X-ray. Every 20 minutes, more fluid gathered around the lungs.

Jackson Hole has a sordid history of difficult plane landings. Six years later, President Bill Clinton would lose nine of his entourage when they botched a take-off from the Jackson Hole airport. Where it rests in the cradle of the Tetons, arrivals and departures cannot be executed using a straight take-off but rather, through a corkscrew motion. The LifeFlight jet circled around the hospital landing site—and circled around again. The cloud cover was too thick, and the landing, too complicated. They radioed the hospital; landing would not be possible that night, and the jet would need to turn back. It appeared that I, and my water-balloon lungs, would need to fare on our own.

“We have an opening.” The LifeFlight pilot radioed in to St. John's, informing them that they could execute a landing through a small hole they found *en route* back to Salt Lake City.

My mother boarded the jet with me, while my father started the drive to Salt Lake City. My mother sat in the corner of the service room of the jet on an “itty bitty chair over by the window,” waiting while the medical staff shouted orders and jammed IVs everywhere in my body they would go.<sup>247</sup> The fluid compressed my lungs, and as I boarded, my lungs collapsed. When they flipped the switch to turn on the ventilator, they saw the electrical system had faltered. A nurse inserted a black bag into my mouth to force my lungs to stay inflated for the duration of the 45-minute flight to Primary Children’s Medical Center in Salt Lake City, Utah.

The next month at Primary Children’s Medical Center was a condescension into the greatest depths of my frailty as a human. They had inserted chest tubes on-arrival to keep my lungs inflated in spite of the ongoing release of fluids. The chest tubes and my five IVs were not exactly the kind of thing one would feel comfortable lounging around in, so they provided me a high dose of Fentanyl to reduce the pain. Fentanyl, an opiate, tends to be the high of choice for high-end doctors. Fentanyl produced at least one of the desired effects: I experienced no pain. It also catapulted me into a dark wonderland of Fantasia-like tweaking. I saw dogs roaming into and out of the room, and I saw televisions on when they were off. One night, I woke up to see rats crawling on my chest; fortunately, the nurse stood at post ready to stabilize me with some valium.

Day after day, gaggles of doctors and nurses attended to me. Dr. Mison, the nutritionist, helped me to eat again. Jackie, the nurse, played video games with me. Sonia, the physical therapist, taught me to walk again. Dr. Dale Chapman, and Dr. Madolin Witte—both pediatric pulmonologists—helped me to breathe again. Past teachers visited me unrequested; on one occasion, my father made a grand show of it: “There’s someone here to see you,” standing in

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<sup>247</sup> Conversation with Nancy Stevenson, April 28, 2020.

front of him. When he stepped aside, a favorite elementary teacher was standing there greeting me.

Day after day, I lost more weight. I rattled the nurses when I observed that I felt like “an old man in a young boy’s body,” which prompted a flurry of commentary on my profundity. When I wandered by the children’s playroom, I averted my eyes; a child was being treated for the aftereffects of gunpowder explosion. Her bluish skin with dark marks scared me. By my sister’s birthday on March 26, I was released from the hospital. My parents were privileged to have access to high quality insurance that required no out-of-pocket costs. The next year, Primary Children’s Medical Center trotted me around on their regional telethon as a “miracle child” story to help in raising funds. My diseased childhood wired me for the life of the academy; forced to stay inside during recess—the mold in the grass caused pulmonary problems—I amused myself with history books: the tales of great presidents and political figures. My class rival, Andrea, had even memorized many of the presidents, impressing the teacher. Not to be outdone, I memorized *all* of them. Disease, as it happens, proved to be an effective tutor.

#### *Onye Ocha* (White Person)

Any Caucasian American who takes a stroll along the streets of Enugu or Aba will immediately hear a new label: *onye ocha*: “white person,” essentially. In the United States, being white comes with an element of ease, of unaccountability. I bear no burden to speak for the “white community.” Since its founding, American-ness has been dictated, mediated, and defined by whiteness. Being white meant the right to define terms, to establish institutions, to surveil populations, to access new territories, and to dictate the terms on the lives and existences of ethnic minorities. The profound irony of whiteness in America is capacity to identify itself as a manifestation of victimhood. Tales of white vulnerability to ethnic minorities have circulated in

American life as common coin. “They hate us,” white Americans might tell themselves—providing a pretext for a host of (perceived) retributions. Power proffers access to the title of victimhood.

Walt Whitman observed: “Do I contradict myself? Very well then I contradict myself (I am large, I contain multitudes).”<sup>248</sup> While invoked to justify logical contradictions, Whitman’s commentary was intended, instead, to acknowledge the existence of identity self-contradiction: no one feature, narrative, or backstory defines the complexity of the human soul; histories pile atop each other, intersecting in unexpected—and not always convenient—ways. The saying, *ejighi Igbo agwa ya onye ocha*, a common maxim in Igbo thought, suggests that “Igbo is not used to communicate with white people,” suggesting that some on-the-ground realities are self-apparent and, indeed, shouldn’t be to visitors. Certain realities are self-apparent to those capable of perceiving, and those who do not (e.g. European visitors) ought to remain ignorant. An Igbo proverb holds: *anya na-asu anya*: the eye respects the eye. While this proverb can be used to encourage in-person interactions, on another level, it hints at the importance of a similarity in qualities in order for two parties to understand each other: similar histories, similar worldviews, and similar attributes. Can I—should I—connect with my subject? I, as the foreign interpreter, am daring to re-interpret this scene—to be the *onye ocha* attempting to peel back the linguistic layer. Has the Nigerian academy risen above the raw, on-the-ground anger that “everybody body’s a mother f---ing hypocrite ooo”?

*Okwu Baa N'Ego Ogbenye Agbaa Oso* (When the conversation turns to money, the pauper flees)

I am a child of rural poverty. My maternal grandmother, born and raised in a homestead in a settlement called Osmond; as of 2018, the population totals approximately 300.<sup>249</sup> When my

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<sup>248</sup> Walt Whitman, *Song of Myself* (East Aurora, NY: Roycrofters, 1904), 69.

<sup>249</sup> Data for Osmond CDP, <https://data.census.gov/cedsci/all?q=Osmond,%20WY> <accessed August 12, 2020>.

mother was born in 1948 in the larger town of Afton, the population had reached approximately 1,300.<sup>250</sup>

In Igbo, the term, *ogbenye*, refers to the impoverished—those financially ill-equipped to care for themselves and thus, must rely on the *ogbe* (community) to give (*inye*) them financial support. My family was not always poor. My father had access to a reasonably good education as a young man, receiving a Master's of Public Administration degree at Brigham Young University where he met my mother. He taught full-time religious instruction to teenage youth for nine years in Roy High School in Roy, Utah; they moved to the small town of Afton, Wyoming—where I was born. For most of my childhood, we enjoyed middle-class privilege. I would attend Brigham Young University, it was (more or less) understood, after completing two years of missionary service for the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. As a child, everything changed when my father refused to engage in unethical business practices and subsequently lost his job. Although he received a healthy settlement in litigation, it had limited use over the long haul. My parents insisted on staying in Star Valley, and they paid the price for it. For much of my childhood, we hovered just above the federal poverty threshold; with four dependents to care for, my father used what little settlement money had to transform his home into one suitable for a family of four—but he had no alternative other than to build it with his own hands. My father transformed our home from a musty, battered-down hut into a middling cedar home that blended well into the western Wyoming milieu. He even scraped together enough money to invest in a student condominium at Brigham Young University.

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<sup>250</sup> *Wyoming Census: Number of Inhabitants*, 50-9, <https://www2.census.gov/library/publications/decennial/1950/population-volume-1/vol-01-53.pdf> <accessed August 12, 2020>.

But our claims to bourgeois respectability amounted to a Potemkin Village. The cedar home, the student condo—he never owned them; they owned him. After the Housing Crash of 2008, the value of the home and condominium bottomed, leaving him little profit in either sale. More, his new employment cut his salary by 30%. With neither a pension nor a retirement fund, my parents were forced to relocate to low-cost, unfinished rentals with family in Michigan. To this day, they rely solely on Social Security and enjoy only the capacity to take care of their immediate needs.

Although we never struggled for survival as the homeless, our lifestyle ran the risk of reflecting the lives of the rural poor far more than the halls of academia. At no point was a university education affordable for any of us on our own income; in the absence of Pell grants, our professional futures would have been that of manual laborers in coal mines, auto shops, and construction companies.

My family story is notable as much for what it lacks as it what it contains: I grew up with little access to “intelligentsia.” My hometown had few members of the “reading public” white-collar class, but many, many more men and women with (struggling) two-income households, limited university education, and more than enough weaponry to arm themselves as a semi-sovereign network of settlements. Settled at the foothills of the Tetons, my hometown fostered a kind of internal rhythm; the mountains, the town structure, and the vast fields offered the illusion of timelessness. Yet *nothing* in the social demography, intellectual infrastructure, or cultural milieu of my homeland lent itself to the study of Africa; the extent of my family’s exposure to Africa had been an ancestor functioning as a Mormon missionary in 1850s Afrikaans- and English-speaking South Africa. My mind wandered as a child; I fantasized of a day when I could be a historian in my small hamlet. Surely, a small town had enough room for a big world. While

kids played ball outside, I perused the history books, searching for something that I could *manage* and *control*.

### *Son of Mammon*

I am the son of rural Mormon America; I am named after M. Russell Ballard, a senior Latter-day Saint official who now serves in the Church's top echelons. My father, Kent, grew up in Los Angeles pre-white flight; my mother, in a small town of less than a 1000 people. The grandson of an alcoholic painter and the son of a Los Angeles Police Officer, Kent has worked as a professional religious seminary instructor, a union carpenter, a marketing manager for an electric company, and a credit manager for a convenience store chain. The descendants of prominent Utah Mormon pioneers, his family assumed for themselves a kind of stature: talk of "legacies," "traditions," and "glorious posterity" could be heard at Stevenson family gatherings without a hint of irony or cynicism.

My mother, Nancy Roos Stevenson, descended from Swedish immigrants, one of whom was a linguist for the Swedish royal court but gave up his privileges to marry a Swedish convert to the Latter-day Saints. Her ancestors moved to the frigid climate of Star Valley; as Mormon polygamists, they faced persecution from federal authorities—and with the assistance of the Wyoming territorial government, who were less-than-willing to cooperate with the federal government, they made a life for themselves in sub-zero conditions. Nancy grew up there in a town called Afton.

Star Valley may have enjoyed the serenity of exclusion, but its physical isolation narrowed job prospects to mining, school teaching, and a small handful of local manufacturers. With the majority of the valley's assets in the hands of a select few elite families—the Old Valley Money of the Calls, the Horseleys, and the Gardners—the rest of the valley's residents.

Our household income faced the looming threat thanks only to my mother taking work as a seamstress and later, a bookbinder; had she remained a “Stay-at-Home Mother,” like many women of the valley aspired to—but could not—be, our income would have sunk firmly below the rural poverty line.

I am the descendant of refugees. Stories on both sides of my ancestral lines abound of Latter-day Saint ancestors dodging the state-sponsored terrorism launched against Latter-day Saint residents of Missouri in 1838 and Nauvoo, Illinois in 1846.<sup>251</sup> Targeted, attacked, and hunted solely for religious belief, my ancestors convey how the full powers of a state can, effectively, turn on an “undesirable” population, unleashing information apparati, mechanisms of violent coercion, legal institutions, and political institutions to ensure that a community is expelled from its midst. These stories were not abstractions for our family but rather, reflected an ongoing sense of self bound together by a narrative of persecution; from this soil, we believed, our “glorious legacy” could grow and flourish.

Yet, I am also the descendant of settler colonialists. Although the land of Star Valley itself was not claimed under Native American tribal sovereignty, Mormon settlers utilized the land as a launching point for armed conflict with the nearby Shoshone tribe. My father’s ancestors settled in Utah, disrupting Snake and Creek Amerindians indigenous life and land possession. Yet, as a child of rural America, I have found myself connecting to critiques of coloniality: the sense of external actors with more resources, more money, and more political connections projecting a host of presuppositions onto it. It did not take long to come to hold my home community in disdain as a rural backwater, with only cloistered thinking and cutter races. When Frederick Lugard advises colonial administrators to impose coercive measures to regulate

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<sup>251</sup> Richard E. Bennett, *Mormons at the Missouri: Winter Quarters, 1846-1852* (Norman: University of Oklahoma, 2004), chpt. 1, *passim*.



firearms and implement environmental conservation regimes, even as external capitalists cultivated its natural resources, thoughts of the homeland come to mind: the horrible working conditions of Simplot Mines (owned by well-dressed suits in New York City), all the assurances of progress reeked of assimilation.<sup>252</sup>

The ancestry of both sides of my family reflected complicity in, celebration of, or, at least, ascension to cultural discourses or surveillance structures that disproportionately targeted black American communities. Kent's father, Stanley, while in many ways committed to family life, reflected the racist views common (and arguably, baked-into) to members of the mid-20<sup>th</sup>-century Los Angeles Police Department. When one of his sons asked him if he wanted his grandchildren to see black people in the way he did, his response did not miss a beat: "No." Stanley had a hard-scrabble life; with a deceased mother and a verbally abusive step-mother, 14-year-old Stanley lit out from Utah for his aunt's home in Idaho, with only a handful of items in a knapsack and a few dollars his father handed him as he started down the road.

My mother's ancestor, Samuel Swift Merritt, showed less (known) angst about his racism; he became famous in Star Valley for his blackface comedy. His daughter recalled his impressions with glee and delight, accentuating his popularity from residents throughout the village network. My life offers a whirlwind tour of the vexed nature of non-slaveholding racism in modern America, ranging from blackface comedy to the law enforcement structures devised in order to surveil and contain African Americans from white community interests. The constitutive histories that make up my identity teem with contradictions: descendant of refugees, descendant of racists; the life of the mind alongside life just above the poverty-line.

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<sup>252</sup> For a discussion of Lugardian firearms policy, see Saheed Aderinto, *Guns and Society in Colonial Nigeria* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2018), 57-59.

## *The Self and the Subject*

This chapter uses two separate fieldwork excursions as its content base: June 2018-December 2018 accomplished through disparate funding sources both private and public and July 2019-Jan 2020 through a Fulbright-Hays Doctoral Dissertation Research Abroad fellowship. In this chapter, I engage in self-reflection about the perils and prospects of fieldwork—the simple act of living among the people a scholar claims to know and understand.

Navigating the research field requires that I, in some ways, assume a new identity. The name “Russell Stevenson” was not only difficult for most Nigerians to pronounce; it also bode poorly for someone, such as I, who was making a serious and sustained effort to acquire the language and acquire navigating knowledge of the human landscape. Dr. Nwando Achebe gave me an Igbo name: *Chiebuka*. My name became my conversation-starter. Some questioned the legitimacy of my name, supposing I had (wrongly) given it to myself. The fact that Dr. Nwando Achebe had given me the name facilitated conversations and set minds at ease about my place, even as an outsider, within the Nigerian research milieu.

Yet, language has a cultural politics in *ala Igbo*: a politics of class and privilege. Through access to English-speaking wealth and political structures, many Nigerians have recognized, rightly, that English language skills afford them opportunities that Igbo and other languages do not. Thus, when interviewing these intelligentsia, I made no effort to interview them in Igbo; as lettered elites, they prided themselves on their mastery of the English language and thus, were most properly addressed in that language.

Navigating *ala Igbo* required that I adopt, to the extent necessary, the norms and customs of local society. I indulged in copious amounts of *ofe egusi* v. *ofe ose*. In most instances, I was received with curiosity and bemusement; on one occasion, a taxi driver looked at me and asked:

“You have good universities there; why would you want to come *here*?” as he glanced around one of the more run-down parts of the campus.

To facilitate the interviewing process, I became acquainted with the Vice-Chancellor, Benjamin C. Ozumba. He provided on-campus housing and ensured that the records division provided ongoing access to documents—access that mid-level bureaucrats constantly attempted to mitigate, suspend, or restrict. With a letter from Dr. Nwando Achebe and the blessing of the Vice Chancellor, I could approach a host of faculty members, both young and senior, for interviews. These interviews occurred in offices, classrooms, and on one occasion, in the individual’s home. In most instances, particularly when speaking with Nsukka *ndi isi*, I presented the research subject with kola nuts, and we proceeded with the interview. I offered compensation to many research collaborators; however, only a small few—junior scholars and staff members, primarily—accepted the compensation.

That I was an *onye ocha* never could be removed from the research scenario; conversants rarely brought up matters considered too intricate or esoteric for a foreigner’s mind. In most instances, this did not reflect an effort to obfuscate but rather, to impress—as an *onye ocha*, I reflected opportunity, success, and economic triumph; why discuss local knowledges that, many thought, I would not value? “*I maka!*” (“You are exquisite”) several strangers would say to me, even on days when my attire was decidedly unimpressive. Strangers called me *nwanne m nwoke* (brother) upon first hearing me speak Igbo in a serious way, in spite of my stark (and at times, incomprehensible) accent—an invocation that had less to do with genuine familiarity and more, with an overture to establish a future relationship of exchange.

Therefore, the burden rested on me to gain some measure of intimacy on *their* terms; simple conversation would not suffice. I entered the field as an *oyibo*—a foreigner, a label that

none let me forget quickly. As I walked up and down Okpara Avenue in Enugu, a chorus of “*onye ocha*” and “*oyibo*” sounded in the streets. At times, individuals walking by engaged in an unrelated conversation would make the effort to stop midsentence and say, without missing a beat or turning their head, *onye ocha*. Individuals who had long acquaintance with me used “*onye ocha*” as a replacement for my name, even after repeated requests to say either: *Chiebuka* or *Russ* (the latter of which was many times more difficult). I needed to demonstrate quickly my earnestness and commitment to speaking the local language; any *oyibo* could teach him/herself “*kedu*” and “*o di mma*” as a matter of curiosity. I took care to deploy *asusu Igbo nisi*, such as *ndi ilu* and axioms, such as *ejighi Igbo agwa ya onye ocha*: “don’t use Igbo to speak to a white person.”

I was no longer a mere *onye ocha*: I was an *onye-ocha na-asu Igbo* [an Igbo speaking white person]. Men would throw this new label at me throughout Enugu; I certainly enabled them when I used the altogether too elaborate of greeting: *kedu ka eke si anya anwu?* [how does the python warm itself in the sun?]. Its elaborate-ness functioned well as an icebreaker, allowing conversation to begin with everyone from banana-sellers on the UNN campus to statistics and law professors. Or on other times, I invoked Igbo proverbs to accentuate aspects of our conversation; when an individual enjoined me to keep learning Igbo, to be diligent, I responded: *aka aja aja na-ebute onu mmanu mmanu* [soily hands leads an oily mouth]. Or when highlighting my ignorance of Igbo language, I would observe: *a mam nkea; a mam nke ozo?* (I know this; do I know other things?). Upon hearing my using this saying, one man began to dance with joy; that moment, among many others, highlights the essential necessity of learning the indigenous language in order to forge relationships.

### *Discussing UNN with White Americans*

Countless conversations with white, English-speaking Americans lead to raised eyebrows and confusion when I speak of this dissertation subject. “Random,” some say. “What made you choose that?” with a sub-terranean meaning implying that it did not deserve study. “I don’t want to sound stupid,” another said; “But does Nigeria *have* universities?”

This ill-advised question summed up the dissertation’s *raison d’être*. Centuries of image construction in popular press and media depict Africans through a host of tropes: as dim-witted, jolly dancers and singers, as armed militants, as forlorn and downtrodden, or capable only of suffering. Western media has been less keen to portray Africans as mathematicians, linguists, literary giants, and physicists. That Africans could celebrate a “life of the mind” at all seemed subversive. When I was speaking to an upper-crust professional during a social visit to Southern California, he responded to the entirety of my project with incredulity: “So, Nigeria, huh?” followed up with: “Igbo, eh?”—implying that such endeavors were illegitimate as subjects of study. When I informed him of the spread of the Igbo diaspora throughout the globe and the number of Igbo speakers, he leaned, lowering his voice a few decibels: “Come on,” with a little sneer.

Embarking on the project of the academic study of Nigerian history took a personal toll. Romantic and personal relationships floundered and dissolved during my travels, while others proved abortive. One family member has resented my academic pursuit, feeling it necessary to publicly challenge my intellectual integrity and competence due to their own lack of desire to pursue a similar path. It has invited odd looks, scratched heads, and challenges to personal judgment. While few of those involved in such activities will read my work, these experiences confirmed for me the kind of discourse that a dissertation on Nigerian intellectuals is

challenging—for more than a few white Americans, a “Nigerian intellectual” strikes them as a bit of an oxymoron and the names of those who staffed it, as nothing more than odd and foreign.

Yet, the University of Nigeria, Nsukka as a subject reflects my own longstanding intellectual proclivities: an academic telling the story of academia is certainly the most incestuous of intellectual endeavors, akin to the long host of films about film stars, biographies of biographers, or songs about musicians. Yet, UNN does not represent yet one more case study in University building: as an effort to produce generations of graduates as fluent in soil science as in the liberal arts, it marked a shift toward the ordinary rather than ruminations on the abstractions of an Ivory Tower, even if that Ivory Tower happened to be Makerere University, the University of Fort Hare, or the University College, Ibadan.

### *Conclusion*

As a scholar, a visitor and a guest as Nwando Achebe has written in her exemplary article on positionality in her field research on Igboland, she hoped to be considered “a returned Igbo daughter and guest poised for a historical voyage.”<sup>253</sup> What, then, could my positionality be? Whether my past is my *whiteness*, or my disease, I could not navigate Nigeria without the weight of history pressing itself upon my every interaction. Through my thick Igbo accent, through my existential ruminations in the Nsukka clinic, and through my efforts to explain my experience abroad to outsiders, I feel increasingly that my position in history sits on a vortex, serving as a facilitator of conversation and in some small way, the individual equipped to help people see and engage those things that they would be inclined to resist. But the weight of history also offers the *force* of history—a trajectory for grand potential and hopeful aspiration. The next chapter

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<sup>253</sup> Nwando Achebe, “Nwando Achebe--daughter, wife, and guest--a researcher at the crossroads,” *Journal of Women's History* 14, no. 3 (Autumn 2002): 13.

analyzes anew the role of a young visionary, Nnamdi Azikiwe, in setting the stage for the University of Nigeria, Nsukka—a mechanism for Azikiwe’s vision of Africa as a “continent of light.”<sup>254</sup>

In the next chapter, I will transition from my personal narrative and the existing literature to an effort to recover a new story—a story of an “indigenous” university that was not terribly indigenous, to analyze how Nnamdi Azikiwe conceptualized knowledge, emancipation, and liberation not as a product of a pre-colonial pristine resuscitation but instead, an integration of a variety of knowledge systems in a complicated—and eventually, convoluted—effort to produce an institution in which one could *ma ha dum* (know them all).

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<sup>254</sup> Azikiwe, *Renasant Africa*, 140.

## CHAPTER 2

A sign appears suddenly on the road cutting into the heart of Nsukka: “To Restore the Dignity of Man.” Adorned by a coat of arms, with an upright lion ready to engage, the language sprawls across the gate. The road weaves its way through campus, lined with some landscaped turf, a bus stop, and the occasional flier announcing “deaths of an Amazon” or “grievous passings” of loved ones. Azikiwe’s imprimatur cannot be avoided on this university campus: a road, a statue, a library. This setting represents the modern University of Nigeria, Nsukka, the outcome of a generation-long dream to build an indigenous university in Nigeria.

This chapter will highlight the layered motives underlying Azikiwe’s dream for an “indigenous University” in Nigeria, which would later be situated by his home at Nsukka. Although UNN was far from a pioneering institution in Africa—Fourah Bay College, University of Fort Hare, and Achimota College, preceded UNN by 40-130 years—Azikiwe’s close relationship with American universities explains its origins and development in particularized ways.<sup>255</sup> He thus casts his “odyssey” as a Grecian epoch, situating himself as a Jason-like protagonist in a grand quest to acquire a treasure of great worth against impossible odds: the acquisition of a university education.

Yet, Azikiwe not only places himself in a Grecian epic narrative; he *craved* narrative: to become a man of stories, linkages, languages, and networks: a Scout, a black nationalist, an American patriot, a capitalist, and a philosopher—but above all, as this chapter will show, Azikiwe became a master networker. Azikiwe valued *institutionality* and *patronage*. American education influenced him less as an ideological force and more, as a network of patronage. While

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<sup>255</sup> Daniel J. Paracka, *The Athens of West Africa: A History of International Education at Fourah Bay Freetown, Sierra Leone* (New York: Routledge, 2003).



American universities made the Azikiwe of the public imaginary, they did not make Azikiwe. Black American higher education reflected only Azikiwe's passing racial affinity for black Americans and instead, reflected a keen sense for the possibilities that American patrons held for nation-building Nigerians in the post-colonial moment. Azikiwe's American education took place as much on the train tracks of Pittsburgh and the streets of Sekondi as at Harper's Ferry or Washington, D.C. This re-education—"liberal" in the most liberal sense of the word—shaped the worldview that would produce the University of Nigeria, Nsukka a generation later: "The world has been mis-educated," he argued "to regard people of African descent as backward, primitive, uncouth, boisterous, and ignorant."<sup>256</sup>

In his more candid moments, Azikiwe expressed a sense of submissive agnosticism toward the need for fixed ideologies. "Life is an empty dream," he writes, "and once my task has been done, the wide expanse of eternity is my ultimate destiny."<sup>257</sup> Azikiwe considered narrative appropriation and re-appropriation to be a necessary strategy for surviving the conflict between "idealism" and "materialism" in his mortal sojourn: "draw[ing] the best from each philosophy and make it work to [his] advantage."<sup>258</sup> The account of his decisions, he declared, could serve as "warning on the vanity of human wishes or as an encouragement, or both."<sup>259</sup> Azikiwe attended many schools, both in and outside the classroom, both in the halls of missionary schools in Lagos and on the streets of Pittsburgh., thus attending *many* "universities."<sup>260</sup> Using his life story as an entrepot into various realms of the contemporary world in which he lived—whether his reading

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<sup>256</sup> Nnamdi Azikiwe, *Azikiwe: A Selection of Speeches from Nnamdi Azikiwe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1963), 147.

<sup>257</sup> Anthony Assam Owan Enoh, *Main Currents in Nigerian Education Thought: Nnamdi Azikiwe Obafemi Awolowo, Ahmadu Bello, Tai Solarin, Onyerisara Ukeje, Aliu Fafunwa, Jibril Aminu* (Jos: Midland Press, 1996), 40.

<sup>258</sup> Azikiwe, *My Odyssey*, xii.

<sup>259</sup> Azikiwe, *My Odyssey*, xii.

<sup>260</sup> Azikiwe, *My Odyssey*, 95-96.

of American history, rumors of Marcus Garvey or the rise of Historically Black Colleges and Universities—this chapter illustrates how Nnamdi Azikiwe’s biography reveals a rich conversation of mythologies and narratives in the mind of Nigeria’s most famous nationalist. It reveals that Azikiwe’s “odyssey” was *fundamentally* rooted in the process of seeking out a university education in the United States.

### *Upbringing in Onitsha*

Azikiwe hailed from a life of colonial-era privilege. As the child of royal lineage, his birth, he later recalled, was signaled “by the flash of a comet.”<sup>261</sup> Born in Zungeru in Northern Nigeria, he claimed to hail from a variety of traditions: named Ibrahim after an anti-colonial Emir, Benjamin Nnamdi Azikiwe to illustrate his father’s vitality, and *olobo nma na-ebulu okwu* [the sound of raging words], as an indicator of the jealousy others would feel at Nnamdi’s beauty. Nnamdi grew up as a “Hausa boy,” to the extent that he could speak Hausa almost to the exclusion of Igbo; his father sent him to live with his aunt and grandmother in order to more fully embrace Onitsha’s “lore and traditions.”<sup>262</sup>

For most of his childhood, Azikiwe considered his father to be a patron, rather than an advisor—with little sense of discontent over their circumstances. Azikiwe saw himself as a child of privilege, not a revolutionary-in-the-making. Like a host of other African revolutionaries in the making, his childhood was anything but revolutionary. He loved his mission school education: “It was due to their influence,” he reflected, “that I began to appreciate the value of hard and conscientious study as a means of success in life.”<sup>263</sup> When young Azikiwe informed his father that he wanted to cease schooling to become a teacher, his father intervened; as

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<sup>261</sup> Azikiwe, *My Odyssey*, 7.

<sup>262</sup> Azikiwe, *My Odyssey*, 9.

<sup>263</sup> Azikiwe, *My Odyssey*, 28.

Azikiwe recalled, he “wanted his son to be better educated and more articulate than he was” in the era of high British colonialism.<sup>264</sup>

Azikiwe’s imaginary of “Onicha’s” storied history and etymology reveals his rootedness in his community; his grandmother, he recalled, considered “Onitsha” to mean: “despise others,” from *onini* and *ncha*. The story went that Onitsha people “despised others because [they] descended from the royal house of Benin” and thus felt superior to other peoples “who had no royal blood in their veins.”<sup>265</sup>

We have no reason to believe Azikiwe, at least at an early age, rejected the assumption of regional superiority. Azikiwe’s grandmother’s telling of Onitsha history roots Azikiwe firmly in its history as a Niger-Delta city-state. Generations previous, a Benin prince jostled for power against the Benin Oba; when one of his supporters attacked his mother for trespassing on his farmland. The Oba ordered his brother, Gbunwala, to round up members of the faction. Gbunwanala’s name, “kill the child of the land” was likely given to him by those sympathetic to the prince’s following. Chima, another prince, mounted a civil war against Gbunwala, Chima’s uncle. Eventually, Chima conceded defeat, and the Benin kingdom split; Chima led his followers to the Eastern Niger River, where they could be free from the Oba’s oppression. Azikiwe’s childhood, then, was neither defined by a “Nigerian” identity nor an “African” identity but as a member of the Onitsha people<sup>266</sup>. The story of Onitsha’s founding soothed Azikiwe to sleep at night.<sup>267</sup> Azikiwe imagined Onitsha as the heartland of the Niger identity; citing the arrival of

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<sup>264</sup> Azikiwe, *My Odyssey*, 29.

<sup>265</sup> Azikiwe, *My Odyssey*, 29.

<sup>266</sup> Azikiwe, *My Odyssey*, 4.

<sup>267</sup> Azikiwe, *My Odyssey*, 12.

CMS missionary Samuel Ajayi Crowther to Onitsha, he credited their mission with “disseminating civilising influence.”<sup>268</sup>

As Azikiwe came of age, Lagos had experienced massive commercial and political expansion, increasing its integration into the industrial market both with Europe and Brazil; increased trade called for a large workforce of clerics, in which Lagos was always in short supply. The earliest grammar schools struggled to craft institutions that paid proper attention to both industrial and literary pursuits, often fixating on literary pursuits; the locals. The late early colonial Lagosian elite warned that boys like Azikiwe were raised to see manual labor as dishonorable, turning them into “book learned indolent el[ves].”<sup>269</sup> In 1929, at Queen’s College in Lagos, parents—who had no desire to send their children off to be clerks—expressed consternation that female students were placed in “housewifing class” rather than trained to do “more manual work” or as “nurses, assistants to printing works,” or as shop workers.<sup>270</sup> Parents hoped that Queen’s College could produce “quick returns” through earning Cambridge Certificates—all while the program, as Principal M. Faith Tolfree observe, “bore the stamp of that given in the home & the good boarding school[s] in Europe rather than that given in the primary and secondary schools.”<sup>271</sup> Historian Jacob Ajayi observed in 1963 that the literary trajectory had held sway: “almost every commentator has remarked that education in Nigeria is too literary; that it is not practical, not adapted to the needs of a developing agricultural nation.”<sup>272</sup> Such schools, historian F. O. Ogunlade has argued, were construed to be mechanisms

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<sup>268</sup> Azikiwe, *My Odyssey*, 14.

<sup>269</sup> J.F. Ade Ajayi, “The Development of Secondary Grammar School Education in Nigeria,” *Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria*, vol. 2, no. 4 (December 1963): 526.

<sup>270</sup> “Queen’s College: Development of,” Memo by C.B. Smith, June 4, 1929, DDW 610, National Archives-Ibadan (hereafter referred to as NAI)

<sup>271</sup> M. Faith Tolfree Letter to Administration, June 12, 1929, NAI.

<sup>272</sup> Ajayi, “The Development of Secondary Grammar School Education in Nigeria,” 517.

for parity with colonial expatriate officials.<sup>273</sup> When educational reformers in Lagos attempted to broaden the curriculum to emphasize English language, agriculture, and technology, mission schools mounted direct resistance for efforts to dilute the educational content.<sup>274</sup> But colonial administrators were not always responsive to local needs. When faced with curriculum-related criticism, school inspector C. B. Smith shrugged his shoulders: “it does not follow that what is best will be popular.”<sup>275</sup>

In Onitsha, young Azikiwe, like other civil servants’ children, received missionary-school education.<sup>276</sup> Only loosely connected to government programs, mission education provided Nigerian children the opportunity to assume English manner and culture while, simultaneously, only receiving a loose sense of commitment to the empire. Azikiwe faced colonial partition; as a child of the North but a Christian of the South, government policy considered his religious identity to be a threat to Northern political institutions. When a chief in Bauchi converted in 1910, the Resident removed him.<sup>277</sup>

In his college years, he concluded that British education had contributed to a confusion of the Nigerian self; Nigerians educated abroad became “laden with these sardonic manifestations of bigoted aristocracy and national idiosyncrasies.”<sup>278</sup> Azikiwe reflected a broader class of students, imbued with British ethos that looked upon their indigenous traditions with

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<sup>273</sup> F.O. Ogunlade, “Education and Politics in Colonial Nigeria: The Case of King’s College, Lagos (1906-1911),” 330.

<sup>274</sup> F.O. Ogunlade, “Education and Politics in Colonial Nigeria: The Case of King’s College, Lagos (1906-1911),” 330.

<sup>275</sup> “Queen’s College: Development of,” Memo by C.B. Smith, June 4, 1929, DDW 610, NAI.

<sup>276</sup> Andrew E. Barnes, “Evangelization Where It Is Not Wanted’: Colonial Administrators and Missionaries in Northern Nigeria During the First Third of the Twentieth-century,” *Journal of Religion in Africa* 25, no. 4 (1995): 416.

<sup>277</sup> Andrew E. Barnes, “Evangelization Where It Is Not Wanted’: Colonial Administrators and Missionaries in Northern Nigeria During the First Third of the Twentieth-century,” *Journal of Religion in Africa* 25, no. 4 (1995): 416.

<sup>278</sup> Ben N. Azikiwe, “How Shall We Educate the African,” *Journal of the Royal African Society* vol. 33, no. 131 (Apr. 1934): 144.

bemusement or worse, disdain. Michael C. Echeruo styles Azikiwe's Lagos as a haven for a "negro Victorian ethos," composed of a "largely cosmopolitan élite, professionally competent, black in complexion, western in culture" while "commanding the holy paternalism of the British colonialists."<sup>279</sup> At times, Azikiwe was afforded the opportunity to break free from the Victorianism. He recalled that when Aba lorry drivers went on strike, he and other passengers were forced to "clamor and help in pushing [the lorry] through the mud and slime." Azikiwe relished the experience; it offered him "the thrills of travel and adventure which I could not obtain in reading foreign books."<sup>280</sup>

Azikiwe harbored little commitment to the preservation of a pristine indigenous Igbo culture. He played football and cricket alongside the descendants of Brazilian repatriates. Azikiwe modeled his scholarship after a masculine ethos. Competent in English, Igbo, Yoruba, and Hausa, Azikiwe presents himself in his autobiography as one part Nigerian, one part Onitsha, one part African, and all parts aspirational: he could absorb whatever identity he wished, whether in a CMS grammar school in the countryside or among the urbane sophisticates of the Lagos elites.<sup>281</sup> When Azikiwe was bit by a dog [*nkita*] as a teen, the *ndi dibia* warned that he would become vulnerable to witchcraft, as the *nkita* is frequently associated with the manifestation of a deity's machinations on earth: *ajo nkita ji isi anya oku* ("the evil dog that warms itself using a cooked head").<sup>282</sup> The *nkita* functioned as a component of the *Agwu* shrine; the shrine priest often severed an *isi nkita* as an emblem to invoke vigilance and stewardship

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<sup>279</sup> Michael C. Echeruo, "Nnamdi Azikiwe and Nineteenth-century Nigerian Thought," *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 12, no. 2 (June 1974): 247.

<sup>280</sup> Azikiwe, *My Odyssey*, 30.

<sup>281</sup> Azikiwe, *My Odyssey*, 9, 24.

<sup>282</sup> Ikenna Kamalu and Omeh Obasi Ngwoke "A Metaphorical View of God, the Gods and The Supernatural Among the Igbo of Southeastern Nigeria," *African Identities* 15, no. 3 (2017): 257," *African Identities* 15, no. 3 (2017): 257.

over the welfare of the shrine. A *nkita* bite indicated that Azikiwe was being targeted by an *Agwu* spirit—surely a sign that Azikiwe was shirking a responsibility.<sup>283</sup>

*Azikiwe and Marcus Garvey: An Education in Black Unity*

Understanding Azikiwe's intellectual influences reveals the strength of his connections to American identities. As a child, young Azikiwe felt at ease with his educational prospects. Azikiwe's father arranged for him to be trained at the renowned grammar school, the Hope Waddell Training Institute [H. W. T. I. ] in Calabar, where he would continue in the clerical tradition.<sup>284</sup> Coloniality seemed to be serving Azikiwe well.<sup>285</sup> Azikiwe had never *felt* oppressed or deceived.<sup>286</sup>

Azikiwe had a narrative-driven mind; mythologies, protagonists, and epochs appealed to him. He was a boy of many locales and languages: Hausa, Onitsha, Igbo, or civil servant's son. But *contra* Western perception, he never felt *black* or even terribly African, *per se*. When a “Yoruba boy” at H. W. T. I. told Azikiwe that “a great negro” was coming to “liberate Africa.”<sup>287</sup> Azikiwe felt it all irrelevant.<sup>288</sup> Fingering the spare pocket money he received from his father, he needed no liberation. He had no need for “quick returns,” for selling on the market, or for enjoining the elite to build schools—he had them already, with four shillings a month of allowance. His schoolmates pushed back. A classmate “laughed at [his] ignorance of the conditions of the masses.” After a tussle with an “Ibibio boy,” he was called a “hopeless,

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<sup>283</sup> Ifi Amadiume, *Male Daughters, Female Husbands: Gender and Sex in African Society* (London: Zed Books, 1987), 111.

<sup>284</sup> Azikiwe, *My Odyssey*, 32.

<sup>285</sup> Azikiwe, *My Odyssey*, 32.

<sup>286</sup> Azikiwe, *My Odyssey*, 32.

<sup>287</sup> Azikiwe, *My Odyssey*, 32. For a discussion of rumors re: black liberation movements, see Adam Ewing, *The Age of Garvey: How a Jamaican Activist Created a Mass Movement and Changed Global Black Politics* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2014), chpt. 6.

<sup>288</sup> Azikiwe, *My Odyssey*, 33.

worthless idiot”— a riff on the name of the H. W. T. I.: “How we train idiots.”<sup>289</sup> Azikiwe approached his father about the incident, expecting him to assure him that the boys’ talk was nonsense. It would be his father, not Marcus Garvey, Howard University, nor Lincoln University that first validated black liberation for Azikiwe. When Azikiwe complained about the incident to his father, his father affirmed the boys: “some Africans were ‘hopeless, worthless idiots’” for accepting “alien rule” in submission.<sup>290</sup> But Azikiwe accepted his father’s advice calmly, without any epiphanies; perhaps, then, some Africans *were* “hopeless” and “worthless,” he supposed.<sup>291</sup> Azikiwe was only now beginning to see the limitations Africans faced—and the empowerment they needed.

The anticipated liberator was Marcus Mosiah Garvey, a Jamaica-born businessman from New York. African American “liberators” of Africa took a variety of forms. In Santo Domingo and Haiti, Frederick Douglass promoted annexation to offer them “peace, stability, prosperity, and civilization.”<sup>292</sup> Booker T. Washington sent a band of engineering technocrats to German Togoland.<sup>293</sup> And, as Henryatta Ballah contends, African American elites assumed a positionality of colonial elites in Liberia, imposing English and projecting Anglo-Saxon institutions on the indigenous Liberians.<sup>294</sup> Garvey considered his project, too, not only as a “Return to Africa” but as a call to service in the cultivation in African resources. Garveyism enjoined black Americans, almost in a manner akin to the Christian call to service, to leave behind their lives in America to take up new lives as “pioneers” in Africa.

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<sup>289</sup> Azikiwe, *My Odyssey*, 33.

<sup>290</sup> Azikiwe, *My Odyssey*, 33.

<sup>291</sup> Azikiwe, *My Odyssey*, 33.

<sup>292</sup> Daniel Brantley, “Black Diplomacy and Frederick Douglass’ Caribbean Experiences, 1871 and 1889-1891: The Untold History,” *Phylos* 45, no. 3 (3<sup>rd</sup> Qtr. 1984): 203.

<sup>293</sup> For a full survey of this experiment, see Andrew Zimmerman, *Alabama in Africa: Booker T. Washington, the German Empire, and the Globalization of the New South* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010).

<sup>294</sup> Henryatta L. Ballah, “Liberia: A Colonized Nation and the Role of English in that Process,” *Journal of West African History* 5, no. 1 (Spring 2019): 29-54.



Azikiwe heard word of Garvey as he was reaching the peak of international success; Garvey's Black Star Line shipping company and his United Negro Improvement Association were expanding, while international conferences gathered more Garveyite adherents.<sup>295</sup> Fascinated by Garvey's notions of self-improvement and a common destiny, Azikiwe later claimed, he "resolved to formulate my philosophy of life. . . towards the evangelization of universal fatherhood, universal brotherhood, and universal happiness."<sup>296</sup> Black people are one, Garvey taught Azikiwe. And they must be uplifted as one.

Race was fundamental and irreducible, Garvey held. He self-identified as "brutally a Negro."<sup>297</sup> Blackness assumed the paramount importance for Garvey's followers: as a mechanism for nation-building and for narrative-building. America offered no hope for black people.<sup>298</sup> It was only a matter of time before black Americans, increasingly educated, would face an apocalyptic clash with white elites.<sup>299</sup> Black uplift could not come to black individuals; the power structures were too strong. He supported the colonization of Liberia, much to the chagrin of American interests in rubber cultivation; W.E.B. DuBois suggested that the federal government expropriate Garvey's Black Star Line ships.<sup>300</sup> Garvey had no patience for white philanthropic efforts. "We do not want their money," he retorted when a journalist suggested that he take the money of "certain negrophiles": "this is a black man's movement."<sup>301</sup> Cognizant of black access to social uplift programs, Garvey had little space in his movement for working alongside most white-dominant institutions. The unabashed display of black identity bode poorly

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<sup>295</sup> For a discussion of Marcus Garvey's "exportation" of black politics, see Ramla M. Bandele, *Black Star: African American Activism in the International Political Economy* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2008), chpt. 6.

<sup>296</sup> Azikiwe, *My Odyssey*, 35.

<sup>297</sup> Tony Martin, *Race First: The Ideological and Organizational Struggles of Marcus Garvey and the Universal Negro Improvement Association* (Dover, MA: The Majority Press, 1986), 346.

<sup>298</sup> Martin, *Race First*, 24.

<sup>299</sup> Martin, *Race First*, 24.

<sup>300</sup> Martin, *Race First*, 24.

<sup>301</sup> Martin, *Race First*, 30.

for the overwhelming majority of American whites, with the exception of white radicals engaged in anti-colonial efforts. When UNIA hosted a parade in New York City in 1920, a white woman was reported to have cried out: “And to think, the Negroes will get their liberty before the Irish.”<sup>302</sup>

Like a host of other West Indian black activists, such as George Padmore, C. L. R. James, and Edward Blyden, Garvey claimed not only claimed commitment to black identity but also intended to produce an economically robust and autonomous black nation-state, particularly through expanding African American colonization of Liberia; he took a particularly keen interest in black cultivation of the rubber plantations of Liberia.<sup>303</sup> Garvey imagined a “diasporic and global vision,” historian Adam Ewing writes, that, as one Garveyite advocate wrote in 1925, was then “throbbing in every corner of the globe.”<sup>304</sup> Colonial authorities resisted Garvey’s efforts to organize the United Negro Improvement Association chapters throughout French and British West Africa. From Accra to Ilorin, word spread that Garveyism was “gripp[ing]” the colonies, inspiring black communities with prospects of uprising; missionary A.W. Wilkie, based in the Gold Coast, fretted at how communities were “seething with it.”<sup>305</sup> Colonial authorities resisted Garvey’s efforts to organize the United Negro Improvement Association chapters throughout French and British West Africa.

But for all of Azikiwe’s celebration of Garvey, his engagement with *Garveyism* was limited, amounting to little more than a passing platitude: “One God, One Aim, One Destiny,” a sentiment lacking the full breadth and depth of Garvey’s appeal to his Afro-descended

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<sup>302</sup> Martin, *Race First*, 32.

<sup>303</sup> For instance, see James T. Campbell, *Middle Passages: African American Journeys to Africa, 1785-2005* (New York: Penguin Paperback, 2007), chpts 3, 8.

<sup>304</sup> For a discussion of rumors re: black liberation movements, see Adam Ewing, *The Age of Garvey: How a Jamaican Activist Created a Mass Movement and Changed Global Black Politics* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2014), 131.

<sup>305</sup> Ewing, *Age of Garvey*, 91.

followers.<sup>306</sup> When his father saw him with a copy of the Garveyite newspaper, *Negro World*, he chastised Azikiwe for being reckless. Why, Azikiwe asked, was the “mere possession of any newspaper” a crime, he wondered. His father warned him that if authorities saw him carrying it, Azikiwe would be arrested, since Garvey was a “*persona non grata* with the authorities.”<sup>307</sup> Later, Azikiwe would consider Garvey to be “one of the most far-sighted persons of African descent to walk upon God’s earth,” praise he reserved not even for Jesus, whom he considered to be a flawed savior.<sup>308</sup>

Azikiwe’s father opposed Garvey not for his ideas but for the reasons a father often enjoins a son toward self-preservation and judiciousness. But his father’s anger—the product of that Baldwinian rage that simmered under the façade of congeniality demanded by colonial rule—left an impression.<sup>309</sup> Azikiwe was not a Garveyite, even if he found inspiration in Garvey’s words and waxed eloquent about Garvey’s foresight. Unlike Garvey, Azikiwe would later envision America to be the greatest site of refuge for oppressed black people.<sup>310</sup> But his efforts offered strong overtones informed by Garveyism. Like Garvey, Azikiwe’s University project would later enlist black Americans to support institution building efforts in West Africa.

But Azikiwe’s Garveyist inspiration had limits. Azikiwe’s draw to Garveyism was not due to black exclusionary thought but to black self-affirmation: “One God, One Aim, One Destiny,” a sentiment hardly distinctive to Garveyist thought.<sup>311</sup> Additionally, He was more than

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<sup>306</sup> For a discussion of how Garvey crafted his public image, see Colin Grant, *Negro with A Hat: The Rise and Fall of Marcus Garvey* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), chpt. 11.

<sup>307</sup> Azikiwe, *My Odyssey*, 34.

<sup>308</sup> Nnamdi Azikiwe, *Renascent Africa* (London: Frank Cass, 1968), 98.

<sup>309</sup> David Leeming observes that Baldwin experienced “unpredictable mood change[s]” that were a “Baldwin trademark.” Baldwin himself describes them as “a flash of lightning. . . naked anger, uncontrolled.” See David Leeming, *James Baldwin: A Biography* (New York: Arcade Publishing, 2015): 102.

<sup>310</sup> Azikiwe, *My Odyssey*, 196-197.

<sup>311</sup> For a discussion of how Garvey crafted his public image, see Colin Grant, *Negro with A Hat: The Rise and Fall of Marcus Garvey* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), chpt. 11.

willing to collaborate with white Americans; indeed, he would later seek it out. For all of Garvey's dramatic plans and grand visions for black peoples, Azikiwe's takeaway left behind Garvey's radicalism while celebrating his commitment to black identities worldwide.

*Azikiwe and James Aggrey: An Education in African Uplift*

When Azikiwe returned to Lagos, he attended the Wesleyan Boys School, where a storied African from America came to speak: James Emmanuel Aggrey.<sup>312</sup> Born in the Gold Coast and educated at Livingstone College, Aggrey had become a vocal advocate for black university education. After excelling as a student and instructor at the College, Aggrey left the States to teach at Achimota College, completed in 1924 and the first higher educational institution in the Gold Coast.<sup>313</sup> When invited to become Livingstone's president, he declined: "Africa, my Africa, comes first."<sup>314</sup>

Historian Kenneth King noted, with some rue, that for white Americans and colonial powers, Aggrey's name became "synonymous with the Good African, a man who could effect by his powers of interracial sensitivity such a reconciliation of black with white that colonialism could be made acceptable and the black revolution unnecessary."<sup>315</sup> A vocal advocate for liberal arts education and a spokesman for the Phelps-Stokes Fund, he articulated a vision of race pride for peoples of African descent unmitigated by compromise or the fears of "pretentiousness" that hung over Southern black lives.<sup>316</sup>

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<sup>312</sup> K. A. B. Jones-Quartey, "The Moulding of Azikiwe," 53.

<sup>313</sup> For a treatment of Achimota as an institution, see Cati Coe, "Educating an African Leadership: Achimota and the Teaching of African Culture in the Gold Coast," *Africa Today* 49, no. 3 (Autumn 2002): 23-44.

<sup>314</sup> Sylvia M. Jacobs, "The Impact of African American Education on 19<sup>th</sup>-century Colonial West Africa: Livingstone Graduates in the Gold Coast," *Negro History Bulletin* 58, no. 1/2 (July-September 1995): 9.

<sup>315</sup> Kenneth King, "James E.K. Aggrey: Collaborator, Nationalist, Pan-African," *Canadian Journal of African Studies* 3, no. 3 (Autumn 1969): 511.

<sup>316</sup> For a treatment of the intellectual undergirdings of post-bellum segregation, see Lawrence J. Friedman, "The Search for Docility: Racial Thought in the White South, 1861-1917," *Phylon* 31, no. 3 (1970): 313-323.

Aggrey was one of many New World-associated black activists bearing the tidings of black of black movements.<sup>317</sup> While W. E .B. DuBois launched a cadre of intellectuals to agitate for black liberal arts. The Phelps-Stokes Commission, founded in 1909 and chaired by Welch sociologist T. Jesse Jones, focused on black industrial education, with the sense that “liberal arts” were not appropriate for black minds.<sup>318</sup> An early 20<sup>th</sup>-century white sociologist *par excellence*, Jones hoped to quantify, measure, and ultimately, transform *all* ethnicities into the “Anglo-Saxon ideal,” claiming that through education: “the impulsiveness of the Italian must be curbed. The extreme individualism of the Jew must be modified.”<sup>319</sup> In a similar manner, Dr. G. Stanley Hall, a leading child development theorist, held that if born an African, the potential for personal development would amount to lower civilization, at best—focused on manual labor and crude materialism and certainly nothing akin to high mathematics or theoretical physics.<sup>320</sup>

While serving as the Hampton Institute’s Assistant Chaplain and economic instructor, Jones considered his responsibility to be “toning down” black people: “we want the enthusiasms of the Negro,” he wrote, “his patriotism, his generosity, but we want to tone down his enthusiasm so that it does not become reckless impulsiveness, which contributes to violent mob action and senseless rivalries.”<sup>321</sup> His sociology course for black students fixated on impulse control, declaring: “THE DANGER OF IMPULSIVE ACTION OR UNCONTROLLED EMOTION

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<sup>317</sup> For a discussion of early 20<sup>th</sup>-century black intelligentsia, see Martin Kilson, *Transformation of the African American Intelligentsia, 1880–2012* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2014), chpts. 1-3.

<sup>318</sup> For T. Jesse Jones’ reputation with black reformers and intellectuals, see “Phelps-Stokes Confidential Memorandum for The Trustees of The Phelps-Stokes Fund Regarding Dr. Carter G. Woodson’s Attacks on Dr. Thomas Jesse Jones,” *Journal of Negro History* (1991): 48-60. For a treatment of 20<sup>th</sup>-century black intellectuals, see Pero G. Dagbovie, *African American History Reconsidered* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2010), chpts. 3-5.

<sup>319</sup> Donald Johnson, “W.E.B. DuBois, Thomas Jesse Jones, and the Struggle for Social Education, 1900-1930,” *Journal of Negro History* 85, no. 3 (Summer 2000): 79.

<sup>320</sup> Johnson, “W.E.B. DuBois,” 71-95.

<sup>321</sup> Johnson, “W.E.B. DuBois,” 80.

WHETHER IN RELIGIOUS OR POLITICAL MATTERS” (caps in original).<sup>322</sup> Jones considered inclusion of liberal arts programs at black universities such as Fisk and Atlanta University to be naïve placation of blacks’ “childish” affection for classical literature.<sup>323</sup>

The Phelps-Stokes Commission considered the notion of indigenous-driven education to be absurd; may we consider drumming and gyration to be “education” now, too, they asked? Thus, Jones sensed an opportunity in Aggrey: a man who could cut the Gordian knot of reaching ordinary Africans with Western education, all without upsetting colonial powers; with academic training and diplomatic sensitivities toward white colonizers, Aggrey made no secret that he considered Anglo-Saxon institutions to be superior. “My race, with all these resources that the white man has been finding in Africa, with all these things under their very feet, had not built any ships, or any trains, or any great buildings.”<sup>324</sup> He advocated for black *inclusion* into white-dominant institutions, not for such institutions and systems to be dismantled. One listener reported that Aggrey urged black South Africans to remember Anglo-Saxon successes.<sup>325</sup> Charles T. Loram, the Fort Hare Phelps-Stokes representative, celebrated Aggrey not only for his talent but for his very identity: “a living example of the black man who lives the Christian life. . .who has trod the steep path to civilization and has not tried to get there by shortcuts, who knows the weaknesses of the black man and can interpret them to us.”<sup>326</sup> Aggrey offered an exemplar of “what can be done by work and prayer.”<sup>327</sup> “God sent the black man to America,” Aggrey told one audience: “Was this all a matter of chance?. . . God always has a programme.

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<sup>322</sup> Johnson, “W.E.B. DuBois,” 80.

<sup>323</sup> Johnson, “W.E.B. DuBois,” 86.

<sup>324</sup> Kenneth King, “James E.K. Aggrey,” 520.

<sup>325</sup> Edward H. Berman, “American Influence on African Education: The Role of the Phelps-Stokes Fund Education Commissions,” *Comparative Education Review* 15, no. 2 (June 1971): 140.

<sup>326</sup> Edward H. Berman, “American Influence on African Education: The Role of the Phelps-Stokes Fund Education Commissions,” *Comparative Education Review* 15, no. 2 (June 1971): 140.

<sup>327</sup> Edward H. Berman, “American Influence on African Education: The Role of the Phelps-Stokes Fund Education Commissions,” *Comparative Education Review* 15, no. 2 (June 1971): 140.

He meant America to play a special part in the history of Africa.”<sup>328</sup> When visiting Kenya some years later, he told an audience: “Let the best of the nations especially those who have done something themselves come over here and help us that we may too make a contribution to the world.”<sup>329</sup> Missionaries in Mombasa suggested “keep[ing] Dr. Aggrey permanently in Kenya to explain the white people to the natives!”<sup>330</sup> Aggrey’s educational philosophy, Kenneth King writes, “embodied exactly the spirit of adapted education that the Colonial Office had recently identified as appropriate.”<sup>331</sup> Aggrey considered biracial cooperation to be the most effective approach to black education. “Nothing but the best is good enough for the African” became a functional dog-whistle for opening up access of white institutions to Africana-descended students.<sup>332</sup> It is notable, then, that Azikiwe was finding inspiration in one of the black intellectuals most frequently accused of toadyism.

As with his other narratives, Azikiwe picked and chose; that Azikiwe found inspiration in both Aggrey and Garvey reveals his agility in narrative navigation. Edwin W. Smith has noted that Aggrey “lost no opportunity of pouring scorn and ridicule upon Marcus Garvey’s pretensions.”<sup>333</sup> African National Congress activist James S. Thaele dismissed Aggrey as, “in the American terminology, ‘me-too-boss-hat-in-hand n\*\*\*\*\*.’”<sup>334</sup> In turn, Aggrey told his listeners that “if you love your race, tell it around that Marcus Garvey is their greatest enemy. If you are foolish enough to put money into his pocket—go and do it.”<sup>335</sup> Aggrey promoted voluntary

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<sup>328</sup> Edwin W. Smith, *Aggrey of Africa: A Study in Black and White* (London: The Garden City Press, 1929), 57.

<sup>329</sup> Kenneth King, “James E.K. Aggrey,” 520.

<sup>330</sup> Kenneth King, “James E.K. Aggrey,” 520.

<sup>331</sup> King, “James E. K. Aggrey,” 523.

<sup>332</sup> Azikiwe, *My Odyssey*, 37.

<sup>333</sup> Edwin W. Smith, *Aggrey of Africa: A Study in Black and White* (London: The Garden City Press, 1929), 122.

<sup>334</sup> James S. Thaele, “A Voice from Capetown, South Africa,” in Robert A. Hill, ed., *The Marcus Garvey and Universal Negro Improvement Association Papers: Africa for the Africans, 1923-1945*, 10 vols. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983), 10:40.

<sup>335</sup> King, “James E. K. Aggrey,” 519.

migration to the United States as a path for social uplift: “if I, one of you, could go to the new world and make a man of myself,” Aggrey told the audience, “then you can too.”<sup>336</sup> Upon hearing Aggrey, Azikiwe, once again, felt intellectual rebirth: “the scales fell from my eyes and I began to see a glorious future.”<sup>337</sup> He “lived in a day-dream, hoping against hope for the time when it would become possible for me to be like Aggrey.”<sup>338</sup> Aggrey convinced him to “doggedly [plod] along” as he “plugged [his] way to America.”<sup>339</sup> But the same message that inspired Azikiwe prompted Nkrumah to embrace Ghanaian nationalism, for “It was through him that my [Nkrumah’s] nationalism was first aroused.”<sup>340</sup> Azikiwe’s nationalism was bound up in establishing influential patronage networks and integration into American institutions.

*Azikiwe and Scouting: An Education in Imperiality*

Another instance revealing Azikiwe’s acculturation to patronage networks is his involvement with the Imperial Boy Scouts, founded by Reverend J. R. Oliver, Nigeria’s Scout Commissioner.<sup>341</sup> Oliver managed the Scouts as he did the chieftaincies, issuing warrant for each of the Scout officers. Sufficiently *militaire* to reify hierarchy, the Scout movement functioned as an unofficial arm of Empire—in ritual, in word, in attire, and in purpose.<sup>342</sup> Scouting illuminates Azikiwe’s childhood as much, if not more, than his superficial reading of Garveyism; his reading of Garvey, after all, boiled down to a platitude: meanwhile, few youth institutions were so infused with love for and embrace of empire than Lord Baden Powell, the veteran of the Boer war of recent years. Azikiwe wore a uniform imported from England, recited oath of allegiance

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<sup>336</sup> Azikiwe, *My Odyssey*, 37.

<sup>337</sup> Azikiwe, *My Odyssey*, 37.

<sup>338</sup> Vincent C. Iketuonye, *Azikiwe of New Africa* (London: Macmillan, 1961), 2.

<sup>339</sup> Azikiwe, *My Odyssey*, 122.

<sup>340</sup> Kwame Nkrumah, *The Autobiography of Kwame Nkrumah* (Edinburgh, New York: Thomas Nelson, 1957), 14.

<sup>341</sup> Azikiwe, *My Odyssey*, 36.

<sup>342</sup> For a discussion of the imperial components of the Scouting movement, see Robert H. McDonald, *Sons of the Empire: The Frontier and the Boy Scout Movement, 1890-1918* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993).



to the law, of friendship to animals, and general cheerfulness “under all difficulties.”<sup>343</sup> And certainly, the reminder that “a Scout obeys orders” rang in the ears of young Azikiwe.<sup>344</sup> Azikiwe’s troop had special access, the other Scouts whispered among themselves—and Azikiwe reveled in it.<sup>345</sup>

Scouting revealed the starkness of his particular version imperial ethos more transparently. Stephan Miescher has written of Scouting in the Gold Coast that it had a “pronounced individualistic bent” with a “venue to acquire discipline and practical, marketable skills.”<sup>346</sup> No “indirect rule” was this, as the boys wore the uniforms adorned in imperial-style regalia. With gradated degrees of success, upward mobility in rank, all answerable to a white leader, Scouting *accentuated* the appeal of empire for the Young Azikiwe. Azikiwe loved the pomp of imperial regalia. His Scout-mate and classmate, H. O. Davies, remembers how: “we were always proud to be in Boy Scout uniform.”<sup>347</sup> It would “develop character, manliness, honour, endurance, patriotism, and good citizenship,” its founder, Lord Robert Baden-Powell promised Scout leaders.<sup>348</sup> That Azikiwe found such affection for Scouting highlights the degree to which convention and imperialism held sway in the young student’s mind. His celebration of Garvey, with his celebration lost African pasts filled with grandeur and monarchy, also reveals Azikiwe’s affection for regalia and the Garvey-ite “myth-dream.”<sup>349</sup>

Azikiwe’s involvement in Scouting indicates his affection for British institution; that he was involved at all indicates the privileged access he enjoyed. Outside of Lagos, Scouting had

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<sup>343</sup> “Enugu Boy Scouts,” B.S. 22/1924, ONDIST, 7/11/43, Enugu Archives.

<sup>344</sup> Tim Jeal, *Baden-Powell: Founder of the Boy Scouts* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989), 393.

<sup>345</sup> “Enugu Boy Scouts,” B.S. 22/1924, ONDIST, 7/11/43, Enugu Archives.

<sup>346</sup> Stephan Miescher, *Making Men in Ghana* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2005), 76.

<sup>347</sup> H. O. Davies, *Memoirs* (Ibadan: Evans Brothers, 1988), 23.

<sup>348</sup> Stephan Miescher, *Making Men in Ghana*, 75.

<sup>349</sup> For a discussion of Garvey’s use of ritual and dress to convey African *mythos*, see Phillip McCormick, “Healing Colonial Trauma: Marcus Garvey, Cargo Movements, and Symbolic Empowerment,” *Journal of Black Studies* 39, no. 2 (Nov. 2008): 252-265.

only the thinnest of followings, in part due to officer skepticism. In 1921, the District Officer observed that Scouting seemed “quite foreign to the temperament of the people of this neighbourhood.”<sup>350</sup> While the “‘bush’ youths have not the traditions which would make the Boy Scout movement appeal to them,” the literate would not receive “a direct enough prospect of profit.”<sup>351</sup> When a colonial officer planned to attend Onitsha in 1925, he hoped that the Scouts could greet him with a Guard of Honor; not possible, the Senior Resident, R. A. Roberts informed him, “owing to the small number of boys who own uniforms.”<sup>352</sup> Commissioner G. H. Butterworth bemoaned: “there are no African scouters, who have been properly trained, to undertake the work.”<sup>353</sup> Finally, a barrister with the Electrical Engineer’s office, W. W. Streeting, agreed to head the troop.

And British Scouters took care to control Scouting identification, too: a group of boys in Onitsha formed themselves into an informal unit to “qualify themselves for admission. . . so soon as authorized Troops shall be formed.”<sup>354</sup> The sponsoring CMS school “informed the boys that they must not wear scout uniform[s] or call themselves scouts.”<sup>355</sup> In Enugu, the District Officer advised the Senior Resident that this “artificial creation” of a town and “the class of citizens on the whole” is “not calculated to breed good Boy Scout recruits.”<sup>356</sup> Even by 1948, British scouting officials considered Southern units were “half-hearted,” and potential recruits largely “showed a lack of leadership.”<sup>357</sup> Boys preferred to play football, and Chief Commissioner Arthur Brown reminded one inquirer that Scouting was no “mere game” but an institution with

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<sup>350</sup> John Pollim, Letter to District Officer, February 16, 1921, ONITP 450/1920, EFA.

<sup>351</sup> John Pollim, Letter to District Officer, February 16, 1921, ONITP 450/1920, EFA.

<sup>352</sup> R.A. Roberts, Memo to Onitsha Scoutmaster, August 19, 1925, ONITP 450/1920, EFA.

<sup>353</sup> R.A. Roberts, Memo to Onitsha Scoutmaster, August 19, 1925, ONITP 450/1920, EFA.

<sup>354</sup> S.R. Smith, CMS, Letter to Church Mission House, November 19, 1924, ONITP 450/1920, EFA.

<sup>355</sup> S.R. Smith, CMS, Letter to Church Mission House, November 19, 1924, ONITP 450/1920, EFA.

<sup>356</sup> District Officer, Letter to Senior Resident, January 7, 1921, ONITP 450/1920, EFA.

<sup>357</sup> Arthur Brown, Chief Commissioner of Scouts to V.B.V. Brown, Edo College, February 27, 1948, CIW 171, NAI.

“religious and moral value” geared to cultivating leaders in a colony where “leaders are and will be in great demand.”<sup>358</sup> As a youth, Azikiwe constantly sought meaning, purpose, and above all, access to networking opportunities. After attending a Methodist worship service, it “dawned upon [him] that life had a meaning and I had a mission to fulfill.”<sup>359</sup>

By the time of Azikiwe’s affiliation in 1920, Lord Robert Baden-Powell had retired from military service nearly a decade earlier and was now expanding scouting to be a worldwide institution; he convened the first International Boy Scout Jamboree the same year of Azikiwe’s arrival to Hope Waddell Training Institute.<sup>360</sup> The Victorian branch became the “Imperial Boy Scouts,” and in 1910, Baden-Powell imagined that “if this is carried out universally, in all the Colonies, we shall establish a standard and bond throughout the cadets of the coming Imperial Army.”<sup>361</sup> When explaining how Scouts should identify their homeland, Baden-Powell wrote forcefully: “THE BRITISH EMPIRE is my COUNTRY; ENGLAND (or SCOTLAND or wherever it may be) is my HOME.”<sup>362</sup> Azikiwe’s patrol, the Second Lagos Patrol, claimed a number of future luminaries: a chief, two barristers, the Chief Justice of Western Nigeria, and two doctors.<sup>363</sup> Azikiwe embraced his scouting heritage, speaking at events and accepting awards for the remainder of his public life; he was considered the “Chief Scout of the Federation” and raised 10,000 pounds in its support.<sup>364</sup>

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<sup>358</sup> Arthur Brown, Chief Commissioner of Scouts to V.B.V. Brown, Edo College, February 27, 1948, CIW 171, NAI.

<sup>359</sup> Azikiwe, *My Odyssey*, 36.

<sup>360</sup> Mischa Honeck, “The Power of Innocence: Anglo-American Scouting and the Boyification of Empire,” *Geschichte und Gesellschaft*, 42. Jahrg., H. 3 (Juli – September 2016), 453.

<sup>361</sup> John C. Mitcham, *Race and Imperial Defence in the British World, 1870-1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 189.

<sup>362</sup> John C. Mitcham, *Race and Imperial Defence in the British World, 1870-1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 189.

<sup>363</sup> Azikiwe, *My Odyssey*, 36.

<sup>364</sup> “Azikiwe Gets Best Scout Honor,” *Eastern Nigeria Outlook*, April 24, 1962, 4; “Azikiwe Speaks to Scout Committee,” *Eastern Nigerian Guardian*, June 23, 1962, 1.

Frontier Americana further shaped Azikiwe's worldview. Azikiwe further remodeled his life when he happened upon a biography of the less-than-notable American president, James A. Garfield, *From Log Cabin to White House*. Azikiwe read the book twenty times. Thayer's biography was his "prize of prizes," which "revealed the possibilities of willpower in the face of abject poverty, and the rewards of the frontier spirit."<sup>365</sup> What made this short-lived American presidential profile, written up by a relatively obscure author, appealing to young Azikiwe? A review of Thayer's narrative is essential for understanding how Azikiwe envisioned his own narrative—and his capacity to mold himself as the political circumstances permitted.

Written in a conversational style, more as a primer for children than as a serious biography, the book tells of a young "Jimmy" growing up in the educational environment of rural America. Azikiwe likely saw himself in young James. It celebrated American masculinity; James Garfield's father was a "tall, heavy, handsome man" who could "plunge into the wilderness to make a home."<sup>366</sup> His mind, too, "was in fair proportion to his body, large and active."<sup>367</sup> Hearty and winter-trained, the Garfields braved the winter storms with a resilience contemporary writers associated with Anglo-Saxon stock—a virtue that Azikiwe, too, would later associate with Europeans.<sup>368</sup> His mother was a descendant of a Huguenot refugee, pious and articulate, from whom "a race of preachers sprang." Given her stock, Thayer wrote, "it is not, therefore, difficult to discover the origin of Mrs. Garfield's. . . great fortitude, indomitable perseverance, tact, talents, and large executive ability."<sup>369</sup> As a man, James revered scripture and

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<sup>365</sup> Azikiwe, *My Odyssey*, 42.

<sup>366</sup> William H. Thayer, *From Log Cabin to White House* (Boston: James Earle, 1881), 29.

<sup>367</sup> William H. Thayer, *From Log Cabin to White House*, 29.

<sup>368</sup> For Azikiwe's views of Anglo-Saxon racial attributes, Ben N. Azikiwe, "Ethics of Colonial Imperialism," *Journal of Negro History* 16, no. 3 (July 1931): 307.

<sup>369</sup> Azikiwe, *My Odyssey*, 43.

prophesied of a new birth of American identity in the wake of the American civil war, building over the “ruins of our own national errors a new and enduring fabric” rooted in “larger freedom and higher justice.”<sup>370</sup> With a sense of punctual exactness—he chartered an engine to catch up with a regiment rather than be late—Garfield’s persona “inspired hearts around him with a kindred spirit.”<sup>371</sup> During one battle, Thayer recounts, Garfield stood on a rock “with his head uncovered, and his hair streaming in the wind, his face upturned in earnest prayer” and then cast his coat aside, crying: “Come on boys! We must give them Hail Columbia!” Right as Garfield ordered the advance, another regiment as the “star spangled banner wav[ed] among the trees!”<sup>372</sup>



Figure 2: Cover to William Thayer, *From Log Cabin to White House*, 1920.

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<sup>370</sup> Thayer, *From Log Cabin*, 445.

<sup>371</sup> Thayer, *From Log Cabin*, 451.

<sup>372</sup> Thayer, *From Log Cabin*, 455.

For Azikiwe, the Americana mythos resonated as a political fantasia and, perhaps, a model for Nigeria. Azikiwe identified with Thayer's Garfield, a bit like Chinua Achebe would later do while reading British adventure novels: identify himself with the white adventuresome protagonist.<sup>373</sup> Perhaps, Azikiwe believed, the frontier mythos would be exactly what Nigerians needed to break free from coloniality.

Azikiwe's sources were eclectic and at times, incompatible. Aggrey considered the United States to be a promised land for black people; Garvey considered it to be their land of exile. Thayer centered white American identity; Garvey's mission was to reject it, calling the Ku Klux Klan the "invisible government of the United States."<sup>374</sup> Aggrey expressed frustration at the lack of great black intellectuals, attributing it to black intellectual deficiency.<sup>375</sup> Garvey did, too, though he attributed failings to systemic segregation. But all three voices concurred with and celebrated the legitimacy of a white-dominant America. Azikiwe, too, ruminated on the grandeur of the American spirit.<sup>376</sup> While Azikiwe rejected Garvey's dim portrayal of American race relations, he concurred with all three that Anglo-Saxons had transformed America from a colonial backwater into a powerful nation-state.<sup>377</sup>

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<sup>373</sup> Chinua Achebe, "The Song of Ourselves," *New Statesman*, February 9, 1990, reprinted March 22, 2013, <<https://www.newstatesman.com/books/2013/03/song-ourselves>> (accessed May 13, 2020).

<sup>374</sup> Adam Ewing, *The Age of Garvey*, 118.

<sup>375</sup> Kenneth King, "James E.K. Aggrey," 520.

<sup>376</sup> Ulansky, "Nnamdi Azikiwe and the Myth of America," 247-278.

<sup>377</sup> For a discussion of Nnamdi Azikiwe's views of America, see Ulansky, "Nnamdi Azikiwe and the Myth of America." *Passim*.



Figure 3: Marcus Mosiah Garvey, 1922. Courtesy of New York Public Library.

These narratives blended in Azikiwe's mind to render him a man seeking not only colonial ascendancy but also, with flexible ideological commitments. After completion of his secondary schooling, he took a Civil Service Examination and procured work as a clerk, third class, at the rate of five pounds a month.<sup>378</sup> The examination would have taken a full day to complete, requiring a two hour assessment in arithmetic, an hour-long essay, a thirty minute test in writing/dictation, and a final two-hour long assessment of "general intelligence."<sup>379</sup> In his later years, Azikiwe spurned such tests as "false and misleading. . . pseudo-ethnolog[ies]" intended to justify racial dominance.<sup>380</sup> He saw his monthly wages disappear well before month's end "simply because [he] was underpaid and therefore could not maintain a decent living standard."<sup>381</sup>

Azikiwe's education, he believed, was guided by divine providence. One day, in early 1922, he decided that God would guide him to his university choice.<sup>382</sup> He closed his eyes, opened a book, *Negro Education: A Study of the Private and Higher Schools for Colored People in the United States*; he turned to page 311. Closing his eyes again, he "placed the pencil blindly on the page," all while "pray[ing] to God to guide me aright."<sup>383</sup> The pencil fell to Howard University. He inquired of Howard President J. Stanley Durkee, who, while declining admission to Howard University, re-directed them to Storer College in Harper's Ferry, Virginia.<sup>384</sup> When Azikiwe approached Storer President Henry T. McDonald, he assured them admittance—but Azikiwe lacked the means to pay passage to the United States. McDonald offered no assistance,

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<sup>378</sup> Azikiwe, *My Odyssey*, 42.

<sup>379</sup> Clerical Examination Copy, Owerri District, OWDIST 9/17/30.

<sup>380</sup> Azikiwe, *Renascent Africa*, 62.

<sup>381</sup> Azikiwe, *My Odyssey*, 44.

<sup>382</sup> Azikiwe, *My Odyssey*, 40.

<sup>383</sup> Azikiwe, *My Odyssey*, 40.

<sup>384</sup> Azikiwe, *My Odyssey*, 46-47.



instead advising them: “God works in a mysterious way, His will to perform.”<sup>385</sup> But poverty would not stop him: Azikiwe would seek his fortunes in the United States.

*Nigerian Odysseus: Azikiwe's Voyage to an American Education*

Inspired by a motley band of influences both black and white American, Azikiwe began what he considered to be the “quest of the golden fleece,” an epic he couched as an “odyssey”: the plight for university education in America.<sup>386</sup> The narrative of personal journey, exploration, and discovery illustrate how he mythologized American higher educational institutions, a mythology that rubbed against the prevalent colonial narratives that pointed to the United Kingdom as the center for hopeful, aspiring peoples of the Niger Region.<sup>387</sup> Historian Gene Ulansky observes that Azikiwe “took strands from various traditions to weave a new conception” of what an ideal African state would look like.<sup>388</sup> Through Azikiwe’s new visionary of the American milieu, he, in some ways, created a new version of Americana, one translatable for aspiring African nationalists.

In 1925, Azikiwe joined a band of friends to leave Nigeria as stowaways for university education in the United States: in addition to his schoolmate, Samuel Adibuah, he also recruited Sidney Brown, a telegraph operator, John Anyaso, a printer, and a Messrs Johnson and Jackson to join him in the voyage; by the time came to embark, only Azikiwe, Brown, and Anyaso would commit to it.<sup>389</sup> They swore an oath of loyalty to complete the journey and gathered enough funds to pay off three crew members with fifteen pounds for passage to Liverpool. Travel plans deteriorated quickly. Sidney fell badly ill, making loud moaning sounds that threatened to alert

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<sup>385</sup> Azikiwe, *My Odyssey*, 48.

<sup>386</sup> Azikiwe, *My Odyssey*, 68.

<sup>387</sup> Ulansky, “Nnamdi Azikiwe and the Myth of America,” 12.

<sup>388</sup> Ulansky, “Nnamdi Azikiwe and the Myth of America,” 13.

<sup>389</sup> Azikiwe, *My Odyssey*, 50, 53.

the crew to their presence. John attempted to conspire with Azikiwe in a plot to throw Sidney overboard. Azikiwe “convinced him of its inhumanity, and we agreed to bear with Sidney. . . and to pray to God for better luck.”<sup>390</sup> Upon their arrival to Sekondi, Sidney issued an ultimatum: either they disembark, or he would report the lot of them. The two agreed, and Azikiwe reported their presence to the seaman’s spokesperson. Speaking pidgin, the English spokesperson immediately identified them as stowaways: “You know say ebee crime to stoweaway on board?. . Me dey go report to the Purser say some stowe-away on board.”<sup>391</sup> When Azikiwe implored for mercy, the spokesman replied that “you Africans, una too sentimental. . . Why you not heab the poor devil overboard and go your way?”<sup>392</sup> The spokesperson informed them that the money had been spent on “some Lagos women for Porto Novo Market Street.”<sup>393</sup> The three decided to give up their money and go ashore. Disoriented, the three wandered around Sekondi. John was despondent, “sulky and irritable.”<sup>394</sup> Within a few weeks, Azikiwe saw that he would be making the trip alone to America. Sidney had formed a romantic relationship with a hotel owner and thus, was “economically secure.”<sup>395</sup> John became a compositor at the Methodist mission.<sup>396</sup>

Azikiwe came to question the utility of his education altogether: ““Unemployed and disappointed,” he bemoaned, “I was the only one with secondary education; yet I was the only one of the three who was still unemployed after two weeks stay in Sekondi.”<sup>397</sup> After his brief

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<sup>390</sup> Azikiwe, *My Odyssey*, 55.

<sup>391</sup> Azikiwe, *My Odyssey*, 56.

<sup>392</sup> Azikiwe, *My Odyssey*, 56.

<sup>393</sup> Azikiwe, *My Odyssey*, 56.

<sup>394</sup> Azikiwe, *My Odyssey*, 56-57.

<sup>395</sup> Azikiwe, *My Odyssey*, 58.

<sup>396</sup> Azikiwe, *My Odyssey*, 58.

<sup>397</sup> Azikiwe, *My Odyssey*, 58.

stints working for an electric company and as a police officer, his mother traveled from Onitsha to beg him to return to Onitsha; his father promised to assist him in continuing on to America.<sup>398</sup>

Being back in Onitsha revived Azikiwe's mind, but here, too, his life as a member of the Onitsha people reflected little of a pristine indigenous society. He founded the Onitsha Literary Club, formed inter-religious football games, held debates, and presented lectures; he recalled with glee: "We gauged our intellectual brilliance in those days by the polysyllables we could use in our oratorical displays."<sup>399</sup> But Azikiwe had not forsaken aspirations to embark to America. Onitsha represented not the homeland but an interregnum, a period of preparation and waiting while the hero could find his footing—and he did not do so with the language of his birth but with the language of coloniality. The climax of Azikiwe's first life story would be America, in which he would conquer the dragon guarding his golden fleece.

Using money saved over the years, his father "asked [him] to kneel down," and then he prayed to "guide [him] in his long journey to America"—and handed Azikiwe the cost of passage.<sup>400</sup> Azikiwe effused: "To say that I was in a state of ecstasy would be an understatement. . . I was an entirely new man."<sup>401</sup> Before his departure, he said a prayer in his bedroom. In this prayer, a host of narratives seemed to blend together, revealing the lack of depth to which he engaged any one ideology.

O God, who gave Marcus Garvey the courage to stand for what is right, and inspired Kwegiyr Aggrey to open the eyes of the blind to see the great opportunities available to thy African children, grant me the privilege to be zealous and discreet in seeking for knowledge in the land of James Arthur Garfield.<sup>402</sup>

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<sup>398</sup> Azikiwe, *My Odyssey*, 58-59.

<sup>399</sup> Azikiwe, *My Odyssey*, 64.

<sup>400</sup> Azikiwe, *My Odyssey*, 74.

<sup>401</sup> Azikiwe, *My Odyssey*, 74.

<sup>402</sup> Azikiwe, *My Odyssey*, 74.

When he met C. O. Robertson, a West Indian steward on the ship from Lagos to Liverpool, Azikiwe showed him his admission letter from Storer College: Robertson “embraced [Azikiwe], and we danced on board with glee” at Azikiwe’s hopes for a future in America<sup>403</sup>

Azikiwe did not seek ideas as much as *connection* and *networks*—binding himself to narratives; historian Gene Ulansky observes that he “took strands from various traditions to weave a new conception.”<sup>404</sup> Azikiwe craved place within systems and institutions. Committed to none and open to all, Azikiwe and his fellow travelers mythologized America as the land perfectly suited to their dreams of unpredictable outcomes, of grand aspirations, and of new futures.<sup>405</sup> America was no colonizing nation but rather, an alternative linkage could bring the British system, both in mind and structure, to its knees.<sup>406</sup> “The Onitsha in him,” one fellow Onitshan observed, offered “a combination of instinct, policy, and moral philosophy” that provided the intellectual flexibility to adapt to the American milieu.<sup>407</sup>

#### *Azikiwe Arrives in America*

On September 29, 1925, Azikiwe arrived to Ellis Island, New York in the midst of a late wave of mass movements from and within Europe.<sup>408</sup> World War I had displaced large swaths of the European population, to say nothing of prompting wide-scale disenchantment with European “civilization.” Orthodox Jews came to America in troves; the trumped-up accusations leveled against Jewish captain Alfred Dreyfus roiled the French Third Republic, prompting Jews throughout France and Europe generally to reconsider their place as assimilated citizens.<sup>409</sup>

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<sup>403</sup> Azikiwe, *My Odyssey*, 75.

<sup>404</sup> Ulansky, “Nnamdi Azikiwe and the Myth of America,” 12.

<sup>405</sup> Ulansky, “Nnamdi Azikiwe and the Myth of America,” 247-280.

<sup>406</sup> Azikiwe, *My Odyssey*, 75.

<sup>407</sup> Vincent C. Ikeotuonye, *Azikiwe of New Africa* (London: P.R. Macmillan, 1961), 64.

<sup>408</sup> For a brief discussion of immigration policy and flows in the 1920s, Aristide R. Zolberg, *A Nation by Design Immigration Policy in the Fashioning of America* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2009), chpt. 8.

<sup>409</sup> For a treatment of the Dreyfus Affair, see Frederick Brown, *For the Soul of France: Culture Wars in the Age of Dreyfus* (New York: Knopf, 2010).

Eastern European Jews lost their homes to a host of pogroms, displacement, and starvations between the pogroms of Tsar Nicholas and the horrors of War on the Eastern front.<sup>410</sup> Azikiwe stood as a lone African, privileged in some ways, amidst a host of stories about Jewish suffering.

At Storer, Azikiwe not only reflected the challenges of a *black* student but also, of an *immigrant* student. Azikiwe arrived just over a year following the passage of the Johnson-Reed Immigration Act, which severely limited immigration.<sup>411</sup> One fellow passenger, a professor, “tried to explain. . . some of the difficulties confronting immigrants in the United States.”<sup>412</sup> Congress reduced European immigration quotas to 3% of the country’s population in 1921, and then further, to 155,000 per year in 1924; similar regulations peppered Latin America and Southern Pacific states as well as South Africa and Japan.<sup>413</sup> His visa was a new innovation for American immigrants; the new regime demanded a passport, a visas, and tax.<sup>414</sup>

But Azikiwe had a more pressing problem: his student visa had expired. Admitted under Provision 4 (e) of the 1924 Act as a “non-quota national”: a student attending an accredited university approved by the Secretary of Labor.<sup>415</sup> International jurist Phillip C. Jessup bemoaned that “present restrictions upon foreign students are so onerous that that they are fast being diverted to the universities of other more hospitable lands.”<sup>416</sup> Henry Hull, Commissioner General from the Department of Labor, chided Storer College, for failing to notify the Bureau “immediately” of their arrival as well as particulars: Azikiwe’s contact in the United States, that

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<sup>410</sup> For a discussion of anti-Jewish pogroms in Nicholas’ Russia, see Benjamin Nathans, *Beyond the Pale: The Jewish Encounter with Late Imperial Russia* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004), chpts. 1-2.

<sup>411</sup> Azikiwe, *My Odyssey*, 77.

<sup>412</sup> Azikiwe, *My Odyssey*, 77.

<sup>413</sup> Mae M. Ngai, “Nationalism, Immigration Control, and the Ethnoracial Remapping of America in the 1920S,” *OAH Magazine of History* 21, no. 3 (July 2007): 12.

<sup>414</sup> Mae M. Ngai, “Nationalism, Immigration Control, and the Ethnoracial Remapping of America in the 1920S,” 12.

<sup>415</sup> Form 98524-384 for Benjamin Nnamdi Azikiwe, September 29, 1925, Storer College Records, West Virginia and Regional History Center.

<sup>416</sup> Phillip C. Jessup, “Some Phases of the Administrative and Judicial Interpretation of the Immigration Act of 1924,” *Yale Law Journal* 35, no. 6 (April 1926): 720.

contact's address, and the student's course of study; failure to comply, Hull warned, would lead to removal of Storer College's approved status.<sup>417</sup> McDonald all but apologized for the "lack of information" and urged the Bureau to send him the necessary documents.<sup>418</sup>

Azikiwe cut a rare presence in 1920s America; the number of non-Egypt African immigrants arriving to the United States between July and November 1925 totaled 123.<sup>419</sup> Azikiwe's status as a British subject enabled him to enter the United States under the British quota of over 34,007.<sup>420</sup> A number of other black immigrants were entering and exiting the United States, too: 415 entered and 488 exited during this time period; these, however, were likely Liberia colonizing expeditioners such as those referenced by Andrews.<sup>421</sup> For a host of African countries, the quota totaled 100 *per annum*.<sup>422</sup> And those that did make it tended to be either elites like himself, James Aggrey, or Kwame Nkrumah or struggling wayfarers living on the good graces of forgiving landlords and university administrators.<sup>423</sup>

Azikiwe initially gained an ill rapport with his first known black American acquaintance.<sup>424</sup> While riding the train, one black commuter asked Azikiwe why he wasn't naked and if, in Azikiwe's rendering of urban black language, he "belong[ed] to dem cannibal tribes who used to eat people?" Peppering him with more, the man asked: "How does human steak taste? How does elephant steak taste? I betcha a dime to a dollar that lion steak ain't so tough but

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<sup>417</sup> Harry E. Hull, Letter to Henry T. McDonald, October 30, 1925, Storer College Records, West Virginia and Regional History Center.

<sup>418</sup> McDonald, Letter to Harry Hull, November 2, 1925, Storer College Records, West Virginia and Regional History Center.

<sup>419</sup> J.J. Kunna, "Immigration," *Monthly Labor Review* 22, no. 2 (February 1926): 234.

<sup>420</sup> Kunna, "Immigration," 237.

<sup>421</sup> Kunna, "Immigration," 237.

<sup>422</sup> Kunna, "Immigration," 237.

<sup>423</sup> For a contextualization of this wave of African students, see Michael Omolewa, "The Impact of U.S.-Educated African Students on Educational Developments in Africa, 1898–1955," *Journal of African American History* 100, no. 2 (Spring 2015): 272–289.

<sup>424</sup> Henry T. McDonald, Letter to Harry E. Hull, Bureau of Immigration, November 2, 1925, Storer College Papers, West Virginia and Regional History Center.

juicy?”<sup>425</sup> Azikiwe was stunned: how could a gentleman of African descent in the United States “ask [him such foolish questions]”?<sup>426</sup> Apologetically, the man said that his only experience with Africa had been films and missionary retellings; could he not show Azikiwe the way to the next train station? Still annoyed, Azikiwe accepted the offer, and when the two parted, the man offered a “hearty handshake and assured [him] that his impressions of Africans had changed.”<sup>427</sup> Azikiwe responded that his view of “Yankees” had been that of “Cowboys with ten gallon hats and lassos seeking out Negroes to lynch for fun!”<sup>428</sup> The man blanched at the joke, until, Azikiwe observed, “he realized . . . the levity with which those who controlled the mass information media slanted their news or films to amuse their clientele.”<sup>429</sup> Azikiwe wended his way from New York to Harper’s Ferry, anticipating something akin to the grandeur he expected from men of prominence and high standing; coloniality had taught him something of propriety and boundaries.<sup>430</sup>

Upon locating the College president’s home, he saw a man laboring in the garden. Could he please direct him to the college president, President McDonald, he asked? The man stood upright and asked him what business he had with him. Azikiwe raised his eyebrow in that resentment he had grown accustomed to feeling; I am an English gentleman, he told the man, and “it was not the business of a gardener to find out the nature of discussion between gentlemen.”<sup>431</sup> The gardener chortled and responded: “If you are an English gentleman, why don’t you look like an Englishman?”<sup>432</sup> Further infuriated, Azikiwe replied: “Not all Englishmen [are] white, and

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<sup>425</sup> Azikiwe, *My Odyssey*, 80.

<sup>426</sup> Azikiwe, *My Odyssey*, 81.

<sup>427</sup> Azikiwe, *My Odyssey*, 81.

<sup>428</sup> Azikiwe, *My Odyssey*, 81.

<sup>429</sup> Azikiwe, *My Odyssey*, 79-81.

<sup>430</sup> Azikiwe, *My Odyssey*, 84-85.

<sup>431</sup> Azikiwe, *My Odyssey*, 85.

<sup>432</sup> Azikiwe, *My Odyssey*, 85.

English was a universal language.”<sup>433</sup> Gardeners have no business being intelligent, he snipped; would he please point him to the president—and could he please leave him alone?<sup>434</sup> The gardener removed his glove, laughed again, and said: “Good afternoon, Mr. Azikiwe. I am very glad to know you. I am Dr. McDonald. . . I will change my overalls and be with you in five minutes.”<sup>435</sup> McDonald assured him that an apology was unnecessary; Azikiwe was a “victim of [his aristocratic] environment” and had been “infected by its virus.”<sup>436</sup>

*Azikiwe and Black Education in America*

As Azikiwe sat in McDonald’s parlor, he stood at the nexus of vexed battles of racial memory. Established by the Freedmen’s Bureau, Storer College stood in stark contradistinction to Shepherd College, the whites-only college also based in Harper’s Ferry. Founded in 1867 in a collaborative effort between John Storer and a cohort of Free-will Baptists as a *free* college for blacks, Storer College was one among the first class of black colleges and universities in the post-bellum South.<sup>437</sup> Founded on the T. Jesse Jones model for teaching black communities agriculture and mechanics, Storer College reflected later black higher educational endeavors such as Hawaiian-born former Union general Samuel C. Armstrong’s Hampton Institute and Hampton student Booker T. Washington’s famed Tuskegee Institution machine.<sup>438</sup> Shortly after the close of the war, Bates College President O. B. Cheney approached Storer, and Storer promised the Free-will Baptists \$10,000 dollars for the building of a school in the South for newly-emancipated blacks for educating newly-emancipated Africans.<sup>439</sup> Initially conceived as

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<sup>433</sup> Azikiwe, *My Odyssey*, 85.

<sup>434</sup> Azikiwe, *My Odyssey*, 85.

<sup>435</sup> Azikiwe, *My Odyssey*, 85.

<sup>436</sup> Azikiwe, *My Odyssey*, 86.

<sup>437</sup> Dawne R. Burke, “Storer College: A Hope for Redemption in the Shadow of Slavery, 1865-1955,” Ph.D. dissertation, Virginia Tech, 2004, 28.

<sup>438</sup> For a discussion of Washington’s involvement with the Hampton Institute, see Robert J. Norrell, *Up from History: The Life of Booker T. Washington* (Cambridge: Belknap Press, 2011), 29-42.

<sup>439</sup> G.F. Richings, *Evidences of Progress Among Colored People* (Philadelphia: Ferguson, 1904), 37.



“mixed school,” Storer’s very existence proved fodder for racial politics in West Virginia, requiring politicians to distance themselves from it, lest they be considered supportive of racial integration.<sup>440</sup> Some considered the Storer College to be aspirational: “a railroad to the moon,” as one early administrator considered it.<sup>441</sup> Headed by Reverend N. C. Brackett, the Freeman’s Bureau Superintendent for Schools.<sup>442</sup> Their purpose was explicitly religious; these black students were trained to “bear the light of the Gospel and of civilization to the ‘dark continent’ of Africa teeming with uncounted millions of darkened souls.”<sup>443</sup>

The school faced considerable opposition; the female teachers were assigned a military security detail, and one teacher wrote that he was regularly “hooted at” when visiting the mailbox and twice had been “stoned on the streets at noonday.”<sup>444</sup> Hostile rumors circulated: “no scandal concerning them could be too absurd and vile for general belief.”<sup>445</sup> By 1891, the *Wheeling Daily Intelligencer* took note of the College’s successes: “In spite of its limited resources,” it acknowledged, “the school is accomplishing something in the way of instruction in agriculture and mechanic arts”—fields similar to the University of Nigeria, Nsukka’s specialization 80 years later.<sup>446</sup> The College aimed to cultivate an “education of the instincts, the feelings, the habits, the will, the conscience.”<sup>447</sup> It was said that “even if [a student] never opened nor saw the outside of a book, to come here would repay any labor, any denials, for just what we learn in good habits and character.”<sup>448</sup> Indeed, one staff member emphasized: “the most

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<sup>440</sup> J. Garland Hurst, “A Card from J. Garland Hurst,” *Shepherdstown Register* [West Virginia], May 24, 1900, 2.

<sup>441</sup> Kate J. Anthony, *Storer College* (Boston: Morning Star, 1891), 5.

<sup>442</sup> Anthony, *Storer College*, 5.

<sup>443</sup> Anthony, *Storer College*, 14.

<sup>444</sup> Anthony, *Storer College*, 10.

<sup>445</sup> Anthony, *Storer College*, 11.

<sup>446</sup> “A College for Coloured Youth,” *Wheeling Daily Intelligencer* [Wheeling, WV], January 28, 1891, 2.

<sup>447</sup> William T. Alexander, *History of the Colored Race in America, Containing Also Their Ancient and Modern Life in Africa* (Charleston, SC: Palmetto Publishing, 1887), 466.

<sup>448</sup> “College Status is Affected by High Court Rule,” *Alabama Tribune* [Montgomery, AL], June 17, 1955, 8.

characteristic feature of Storer College is its effort to stimulate self-reliance among the people.” Its peak enrollment totaled 279.<sup>449</sup>

McDonald’s record on black education and sovereignty was, as with many other white administrators of black education, ambivalent. In 1906, he opened the second annual Niagara Movement meeting held at Storer College and declared that, as the *Greensboro Daily News* summarized it: “as men made in the image of God, the negro race should have equal rights.”<sup>450</sup> He celebrated Storer College’s placement by John Brown’s grave.<sup>451</sup> Yet, he frowned on anti-colonial agitation against white rule; when *The Crisis* published a story on imperial colonization of Africa, he chided them for generalization: “Italy, France, and Britain are not all thieves and conspirators” and rejected a tablet in honor of John Brown at Storer College lauding “his crucified corpse” that “woke a guilty nation.”<sup>452</sup> But McDonald gladly utilized Brown’s legacy when courting university benefactors.<sup>453</sup>

Simultaneously, McDonald attempted to placate local pro-Confederate grandees. Conceived in 1906, the local United Daughters of the Confederacy and the Sons of Confederate Veterans attempted to build a memorial to Heyward Shepherd, a free black victim (though the UDC and SCV misidentified him as enslaved) that John Brown’s men shot during his planned raid on Harper’s Ferry to overthrow slavery in America.<sup>454</sup> The UDC and SCV wanted a memorial to “the loyal slaves. . . who watched the fireside, tilled the soil, helped spin weave, and

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<sup>449</sup> “College Status is Affected by High Court Rule,” 8.

<sup>450</sup> “Time for Negro to Assert Rights,” *Greensboro Daily News* [Greensboro, North Carolina], August 16, 1906, 2

<sup>451</sup> Henry T. McDonald, Letter to George Eastman, November 7, 1925, Storer College Records, West Virginia and Regional History Center.

<sup>452</sup> “Deplores Ethiopian Article and Lynching Picture,” *The Crisis* [The Crisis], April 1935, 123

<sup>453</sup> Henry T. McDonald, Letter to George Eastman, November 7, 1925, Storer College Records, West Virginia and Regional History Center.

<sup>454</sup> Brian Gabriel, *The Press and Slavery in America, 1791-1859* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2016), 66.

make raiment for the master and sons on the battlefield.”<sup>455</sup> McDonald was alone among the speakers in contriving a racial utopia; following his remarks, Matthew Page Andrews justified American enslavement: “When we stop to think of the Dark Continent in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, are we not justified in wondering if the bondage of the body in America, which, however, freed the soul of the captive, was not preferable to the bondage of both soul and body which enveloped the majority of those captured in the Congo?”<sup>456</sup> As enslaved Africans in northern Virginia and Appalachia had hailed largely from Igbo communities in Nigeria, Andrews was speaking, in some regards, of Azikiwe’s *obi nne*: kith and kin.

*Azikiwe Becomes a “Black Laborer”*

During Azikiwe’s enrollment at Storer College, he, perhaps for the first time, assumed yet another label, among many: *black*. Dances such as the “Charleston” and “the Black Bottom” charmed the aspiring Nigerian: “Although it was vigorous,” he “became a willing student.”<sup>457</sup> When Professor Saunders offered him work, he asked about Azikiwe’s skillset: “I have done clerical work, and when I was a lawyer’s clerk, I did a lot of typing.”<sup>458</sup> Saunders dismissed his training; as McDonald had implied, Storer faculty did not often consider literary arts to be the purview of black people. Azikiwe was a “mis-educated person,” Saunders lectured him, given his “age and physique.” Saunders continued that “in America. . .education emphasized the use of the head, heart, and hands, co-ordinately”—at least for southern America’s black population. If

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<sup>455</sup> Paul A. Shackel, *Memory in Black and White: Race, Commemoration, and the Post-Bellum Landscape* (Lanham, MD: Rowman Altamira, 2003), 87.

<sup>456</sup> All quotes from Paul A. Shackel, “Heyward Shepherd: The Faithful Slave Memorial,” *Historical Archaeology* 37, no. 3 (2003): 138-148.

<sup>457</sup> Azikiwe, *My Odyssey*, 88.

<sup>458</sup> Azikiwe, *My Odyssey*, 88.

Azikiwe was unwilling to be “re-educated,” Saunders warned, then his “coming to America would be futile.”<sup>459</sup> Azikiwe was ready to try.<sup>460</sup>

Azikiwe assumed yet another identity: that of laborer, alongside his other identities of black and immigrant. The intersection of these identities, in particular, Azikiwe’s placed him in a legally vulnerable position. The Immigration Regime of 1924 required that “non-quota” students, such as Azikiwe, “working [their] way” through school needed to cede their student status.<sup>461</sup> Yet, Azikiwe became an assistant fire man, a janitor, and during a short-lived stint in Baltimore, served on a construction gang as a wheel barrowman.<sup>462</sup>

Storer College officials did not consider simply black Americans to be best suited for manual labor but all of Africana. Storer faculty attempted to transform Azikiwe from an elitist member of the colonial network into a hard laborer.<sup>463</sup> But Azikiwe heard a different messaging. University education enabled him to embark on the journey of becoming a *man in America*. He became a boxer, a distance runner, and a high jumper. Pain became his curriculum: “from athletics,” he reflected, he “learned to suffer in silence” and “how to act as if I was helpless, even though I was as powerful as an ox.”<sup>464</sup> But Azikiwe kept up his literary hand, submitting little ditty to the Baltimore *Evening Sun*: “Father seemed to eat quickly,” the narrator said, “for he was in a hurry.” Dan, the narrator’s “little cousin” quipped: “D’ye see how Pop eats? He must have a big pocket under his throat.”<sup>465</sup> In 1927, after finishing a year at Storer, McDonald took him aside. Storer College had “done its part in my educational career,” and he would be happy to

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<sup>459</sup> Azikiwe, *My Odyssey*, 88.

<sup>460</sup> Azikiwe, *My Odyssey*, 88.

<sup>461</sup> Jessup, “Some Phases,” 720.

<sup>462</sup> Jessup, “Some Phases,” 720.

<sup>463</sup> Azikiwe, *My Odyssey*, 88.

<sup>464</sup> Azikiwe, *My Odyssey*, 94.

<sup>465</sup> Ben N. Azikiwe, in *Evening Sun*, Jan. 12, 1926, 14

write a testimonial to his character.<sup>466</sup> Azikiwe left the University for Pittsburgh, the “smoky city,” in hopes of employment in the city’s considerable industrial wealth.<sup>467</sup>

### *Azikiwe in Pittsburgh*

Pittsburgh provided Azikiwe the next theater for his higher education. Azikiwe arrived in Pittsburgh at the height of the massive demographic shift considered to be the Great Migration; while Azikiwe’s background shared little in common with black Americans, the demographic flows cared little for the particularities of his upbringing; by 1925, just over a million black (and three million white) migrants relocated from the struggling post-war American South to industrial centers in Chicago, Detroit, and Pittsburgh.<sup>468</sup> A city seeming to bustle with opportunities for labor advancement. Pittsburgh felt lush, boasting an industrial boom with automobiles, railways, and oil wealth. “Even to Negroes,” the *Courier* reported, “here one finds boundless wealth and almost inexhaustible natural resources. . . thrift, frugality, and an alert eye for every passing opportunity can triumph even over color prejudice.”<sup>469</sup> Publishing C. Benjamin Curley’s syndicated column enjoining black business owners: “When Negro business shall have attracted the earnest attention of the rest of the world, it will no longer be ‘Negro business;’ it will be simply business.”<sup>470</sup> With several opportunities for skilled black labor, income levels increased for the majority of black migrants; the initial wave of migrants arriving to Pittsburgh during boom periods (e.g. 1916-1919 and 1922-123) had guaranteed jobs upon arrival. Westinghouse’s 1,500 black employees claimed some 1,350 as experts in their field.<sup>471</sup> But at the

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<sup>466</sup> Azikiwe, *My Odyssey*, 96.

<sup>467</sup> Azikiwe, *My Odyssey*, 95-96.

<sup>468</sup> James N. Gregory, *The Southern Diaspora: How the Great Migrations of Black and White Southerners Transformed America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006), 15.

<sup>469</sup> “Alonzo F. Herndon,” *Pittsburgh Courier*, August 6, 1927, A8.

<sup>470</sup> C. Benjamin Curley, “Through Business Church Can Win Men to Jesus,” *Pittsburgh Courier*, July 23, 1927, 2

<sup>471</sup> Peter Gottlieb, *Making Their Own Way: Southern Blacks’ Migration to Pittsburgh* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1997), 97.

same time, black migrants paid higher rents for poorer housing.<sup>472</sup> As a manual laborer staying at the Y, Azikiwe was at the bottom of the black hierarchy, indeed.



Figure 4: Pittsburgh, 1927.  
Courtesy of University of Pittsburgh Special Collections

In addition to Azikiwe's income choices, black people had struggled to break into white-dominant neighborhoods as throughout the industrial North.<sup>473</sup> As a black man navigating Pittsburgh, Azikiwe was vulnerable; a few years later, forty blacks were deported from the state—dropped off in the middle of a rainstorm on the West Virginia border for

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<sup>472</sup> Peter Gottlieb, *Making Their Own Way*, 76-78.

<sup>473</sup> Joe T. Darden, "The Effect of World War I on Black Occupational and Residential Segregation: The Case of Pittsburgh," *Journal of Black Studies*, vol. 18, no. 3 (March 1988): 309.

“disorderliness.”<sup>474</sup> A single misstep, and the privileged cleric from Onitsha could find himself incarcerated or expelled from the state.<sup>475</sup>

Azikiwe managed to attain work as a ditch digger at the Duquesne Electric Company [DEC], he anticipated steady employment.<sup>476</sup> Founded in in the late 19<sup>th</sup>-century, Duquesne rose to prominence through lucrative, occasionally backdoor government contracts and manipulative methods, often without the proper public approval process for land acquisition.<sup>477</sup> Following World War II, DEC acquired joint ownership with the US Atomic Energy Commission over the Shipping port Atomic Power Station, the first nuclear power plant devoted exclusively to nuclear energy production.<sup>478</sup> Azikiwe wondered at the American mathematicians utilizing trigonometry (he considered it “tricks”) to determine the location for ditches. “The experience was simply thrilling.”<sup>479</sup> Azikiwe’s build incentivized physical activity; staying in one location or even sitting in one place felt stifling, constraining. To pass the time, Azikiwe competed in a sprint meet in Pittsburgh.<sup>480</sup> He read the newspapers, followed sports news, and even responded to boxing promoter, Frank Getty’s, attacks on the National Boxing Federation. He was but “peaceful Pittsburgher who respects law and order.”<sup>481</sup> But after two weeks’ labor, the foreman determined that Azikiwe’s “energy was flagging” and that he “had no pep.”<sup>482</sup> He was fired. The

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<sup>474</sup> Constance A. Cunningham, “Homer S. Brown: First Black Political Leader in Pittsburgh,” *The Journal of Negro History* 66, no. 4 (Winter 1981-1982): 306.

<sup>475</sup> Constance A. Cunningham, “Homer S. Brown: First Black Political Leader in Pittsburgh,” *The Journal of Negro History* 66, no. 4 (Winter 1981-1982): 306.

<sup>476</sup> Azikiwe, *My Odyssey*, 97.

<sup>477</sup> “A Very Vigorous Kick,” *Pittsburgh Daily Post*, March 30, 1888; “The Wilksburg War,” *Pittsburgh Press*, February 6, 1893, 2.

<sup>478</sup> Said Mansoor Zeksavat, “The Possible Economic Uses of Atomic Energy in Consumer Type Industries,” M.A. Thesis, University of Southern California, Economics, 1962, 40.

<sup>479</sup> Azikiwe, *My Odyssey*, 97.

<sup>480</sup> “Catholic Meet is Getting Big Entry,” *Pittsburgh Press*, June 20, 1927, 27.

<sup>481</sup> Ben N. Azikiwe, Letter to the Editor, *Pittsburgh Press*, October 24, 1927, 12.

<sup>482</sup> Azikiwe, *My Odyssey*, 97.

employment purging was typical—every two weeks, the foreman was directed to release the existing cohort of workers to inject “fresh blood.”<sup>483</sup>

Unemployed and displaced, the son of Onitsha now wandered the streets of Pittsburgh. The morning after his termination, his landlady woke him: “Wake up, Mr. Azikiweiwacki or whatever is your moniker. . . I’s got five children to care for. I’s got a husband to care for. I’s got myself to care for. If you ain’t gonna your rent and board, how do you ‘spect us to live?”<sup>484</sup> Azikiwe paid her \$30, all for a “hen coop” and “garbage” food. He gave this “semi-literate Alabama-corn-fed-lady” the “length of [his] tongue” and told her that he would be moving; she retorted that “cannibals” should not be going to college.<sup>485</sup> Careening toward despondence, Azikiwe took up lodging at the Pittsburgh YMCA and “wandered from place to place seeking for employment, but it was in vain,” all while his funds from the short-lived electric job disappeared.<sup>486</sup>

Azikiwe became suicidal. When Azikiwe placed his body on the tram track, he seemed to be fitting a type: the troubled black man whose life was, like so many others, meeting an untimely end. Azikiwe walked to the tram from his small room, looking around at the black district he inhabited—the Rex Racquet Club and the Y. The Avenue was “practically deserted”—the perfect time to end the suffering.<sup>487</sup> As soon as the tram began to approach, a “Good Samaritan” dragged him from the tracks, much to Azikiwe’s frustration. The tram screeched to a halt, and the largely white passengers shrieked over what almost was a bloody end for the young African immigrant.<sup>488</sup> Now free from danger, the tram started anew, and the

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<sup>483</sup> Azikiwe, *My Odyssey*, 97.

<sup>484</sup> Azikiwe, *My Odyssey*, 99.

<sup>485</sup> Azikiwe, *My Odyssey*, 99.

<sup>486</sup> Azikiwe, *My Odyssey*, 99.

<sup>487</sup> Azikiwe, *My Odyssey*, 101.

<sup>488</sup> Azikiwe, *My Odyssey*, 102.



conductor appeared to be satisfied, as Azikiwe observed, that it was “only a ‘n\*\*\*\*\*’ who wanted to die.”<sup>489</sup> Azikiwe raged, why did God leave him friendless and starving in this hostile city. The man listened but said little; instead, he gave him some money, paid for a night’s stay at the YMCA, a pint of milk, and a note of introduction to a friend who would see him in the morning.<sup>490</sup> Perhaps, Azikiwe felt, life “was not a wilderness.”<sup>491</sup>

The streets of Pittsburgh provided Azikiwe a new kind of education. The work cycle of Azikiwe—job to job, home to home—played a more influential role in his education than anything Storer or subsequent universities had to offer. In coal country, Azikiwe took work in a mine as a strike-breaker, where he sparred with a racist Southerner over underpaid wages (“breast-fed by Aunt Jemima,” he said).<sup>492</sup> Only after working at three different jobs did he become again “the confident boy [he] was when [he] left Africa two years previously.”<sup>493</sup>

This, perhaps, is the great irony of his narrative: his greatest enjoyment and his most profound exchanges took place far removed from Storer, Howard, or Lincoln. His later radicalism likely was not born of coffee shop talk with Kwame Nkrumah at Lincoln or black student clubs; it was born on Centre Avenue, walking in the streets of the hill district. The mines taught him negotiations. The roads taught him endurance. The tram taught him of racist complacency *and* of personal kindness.

#### *Azikiwe and “Brisk Business” at Howard*

President McDonald advised Azikiwe that Storer had served its purpose and that he should attend another university, such as Howard or Lincoln Universities.<sup>494</sup> He opted for

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<sup>489</sup> Azikiwe, *My Odyssey*, 102.

<sup>490</sup> Azikiwe, *My Odyssey*, 102.

<sup>491</sup> Azikiwe, *My Odyssey*, 102.

<sup>492</sup> Azikiwe, *My Odyssey*, 107.

<sup>493</sup> Azikiwe, *My Odyssey*, 111.

<sup>494</sup> Azikiwe, *My Odyssey*, 114.

Howard; after attending Howard in his first few months, he experienced not a socialist radicalization but rather, an embrace of liberal democracy: the celebration of private property, a co-existence of “individual enterprise and public welfare, under the aegis of the state,” and above all, an embrace of “pragmatism” in “allow[ing] reason and experience to influence my thinking and way of life.”<sup>495</sup> Man was “the controller of his environment,” he concluded—and enjoyed the capacity to shape his future.<sup>496</sup>

In his autobiography, Azikiwe only hints at ideological disagreement; he “absorbed Dr. Harris’ lectures,” he recalled with some flattery, cheekily adding that he “did not hesitate to follow through with a number of irritating questions.”<sup>497</sup> His coursework did not radicalize him but rather, taught him to navigate different social and intellectual environments and discourses, whether it be free market or Marxist economics.<sup>498</sup> Approached by the Phi Beta Sigma fraternity, Azikiwe joined, becoming a “Sigma man,” proud to be counted among the Greek life fraternity members such as James Weldon Johnson and agricultural scientist and innovator, George Washington Carver.<sup>499</sup> Integrated in a network of radicals and activists, Azikiwe came to believe that—and perhaps, he alone—could actualize a dream for the birth of a “new Africa.”<sup>500</sup> While Azikiwe co-fraternized with radicals, however, he was loathe to *become* radical. Disoriented by “conflicting ideas and ideologies” and trapped in a “mental labyrinth,” he established contact with a network of fellow activists: Malcolm I. Nurse (a.k.a. George Padmore), West African

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<sup>495</sup> Azikiwe, *My Odyssey*, 121.

<sup>496</sup> Azikiwe, *My Odyssey*, 121.

<sup>497</sup> Azikiwe, *My Odyssey*, 120.

<sup>498</sup> For a discussion of T.R.M. Howard, a noted advocate for black free market thought in early 20<sup>th</sup>-century America, see *Black Maverick: T.R.M. Howard’s Fight for Civil Rights and Economic Power* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2009), chpt. 3. See E. Franklin Frazier, *The Black Bourgeoisie* (New York: Free Press, 1997) for a critical assessment of the black middle-class.

<sup>499</sup> Matthew W. Hughey, “Brotherhood or brothers in the ‘hood’? Debunking the ‘educated gang’ thesis as black fraternity and sorority slander,” *Race Ethnicity and Education* 11, no. 4 (2008): 444.

<sup>500</sup> Echeruo, “Nnamdi Azikiwe and Nineteenth-century Nigerian Thought,” 263.

Student Union head, Ladipo Solanke, and Liberian advocate, Phillip Davies.<sup>501</sup> For Azikiwe, being a new, liberated African meant the ability to hustle on a far grander scale, to forge linkages and to build institutions.



Figure 5: Howard University, mid-20<sup>th</sup>-century.  
Courtesy of Theodor Horydczak Collection, Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division.

#### *Azikiwe and “The Black Man’s Burden” at Lincoln University*

In summer 1929, Azikiwe found that he could no longer afford to attend Howard University.<sup>502</sup> Azikiwe looked to Lincoln University, a long-established Presbyterian University for blacks an hour outside Philadelphia—and the longest-established university in the country.<sup>503</sup>

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<sup>501</sup> Azikiwe, *My Odyssey*, 141.

<sup>502</sup> Azikiwe, *My Odyssey*, 130.

<sup>503</sup> Cynthia L. Jackson and Eleanor F. Nunn, *Historically Black Colleges and Universities: A Reference Handbook* (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 2003), 2.

With University President W. H. Johnson's blessing, he applied. Azikiwe's application essay reveals his vision for higher education: "not necessarily to acquire an academic training. . . and a cultural background" but rather, "social contact and mutual understanding."<sup>504</sup> He sought engagement with "Christian ideals" and "noble purposes."<sup>505</sup> Azikiwe himself had little taste for Christianity, even if self-identified as one. But he was willing to use the language of the patron institution to further his ends, famously referring to himself in Messianic or Jesus-like terms, much to the chagrin of more orthodox critics.<sup>506</sup> The National Council of Nigeria and the Cameroons party even offered up a parody of the Apostles' Creed, in honor of Azikiwe: "I believe in Heelas [sic] Macaulay the prophet the doyen of Nigerian journalists and politicians, And in his only political son, Nnamdi Azikiwe, who was conceived by Mother Nigeria, born of the noble mother Chinwe Azikiwe."<sup>507</sup>

"When all of Europe and Western Asia lay sunk in deep darkness," one student observed, "there was light in Africa."<sup>508</sup> Formerly the Ashmun Institute, Lincoln University was the nation's oldest black university, with long-roots in a host of black "uplift" projects: sending missionaries to Liberia and, as one paper summarized a commencement: "showing how the Republic had hitherto failed in its duty to that race, and how we should make amends for the past by justice, liberty, magnanimity, and affluent love of all men in the future."<sup>509</sup> As a mission-oriented institution, it trained ten Africans in 1873 and then sent them back, likely to Liberia, to

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<sup>504</sup> Azikiwe, *My Odyssey*, 146.

<sup>505</sup> Azikiwe, *My Odyssey*, 146.

<sup>506</sup> See Patrick J. Furlong, "Azikiwe and the National Church of Nigeria and the Cameroons: A Case Study of the Political Use of Religion in African Nationalism," *African Affairs* 91, no. 364 (July 1992): 433-452.

<sup>507</sup> Furlong, "Azikiwe and the National Church of Nigeria and the Cameroons," 435-436.

<sup>508</sup> David McBride, "Africa's Elevation and Changing Racial Thought at Lincoln University, 1854-1886," *Journal of African American History* 62, no. 4 (1977): 363.

<sup>509</sup> David McBride, "Africa's Elevation and Changing Racial Thought at Lincoln University, 1854-1886," *The Journal of Negro History* 62, no. 4 (October 1977): 364.

engage in ecclesiastical service.<sup>510</sup> When they participated in a reception sponsored by Henry Highland Garnet in New York, it scandalized the city's high society.<sup>511</sup> Many Lincoln students, like their white colleagues, considered Africa to be the "Dark Continent"; a student, A. G. Davis, bemoaned Africa's potential compared with its present: "lying in all her wealth of rich fields and mines of gold, held down by the power of superstition. . . . Christianity and civilization will march hand and hand under the power of the Almighty."<sup>512</sup> Religion, like institutions, tended to be powerful tools in Azikiwe's hands.

Azikiwe was accepted to Lincoln University and enrolled for fall 1929.<sup>513</sup> George M. Johnson, then a dean at Lincoln University (and later, the Principal and Vice-Chancellor of UNN) notified him of his admittance.<sup>514</sup> As of 1930, when Azikiwe was attending Lincoln University, it staffed no black professors, only a handful of black instructors, and the facilities remained completely segregated well after World War II.<sup>515</sup> Faculty and students called for their recruitment. The white dominant space of Lincoln University provided Azikiwe the space to find his literary voice. Now competent in the language of black leftist thought, he spurned Western capitalism as a "vicious net of industrialism," but celebrated the individual merits of African *literati* civil servants.<sup>516</sup> He was no economic ideologue; Azikiwe "admit[ted] that the capitalist system is a universal practice in Africa and, until it is universally rejected or radically modified," Africans needed to "adapt ourselves to it."<sup>517</sup> Instead of dismantling capitalism, he hoped to re-

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<sup>510</sup> David McBride, "Africa's Elevation and Changing Racial Thought at Lincoln University, 1854-1886," 366.

<sup>511</sup> David McBride, "Africa's Elevation and Changing Racial Thought at Lincoln University, 1854-1886," 366.

<sup>512</sup> David McBride, "Africa's Elevation and Changing Racial Thought at Lincoln University, 1854-1886," 363, 367.

<sup>513</sup> Azikiwe, *My Odyssey*, 145-146.

<sup>514</sup> Azikiwe, *My Odyssey*, 145-146.

<sup>515</sup> Marvin Wachman, *Confronting the Race Problem: Lincoln University* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2005), 78.

<sup>516</sup> Ben N. Azikiwe, "How Shall We Educate the African?" *Journal of the Royal African Society* 33, no. 131 (April 1934): 146.

<sup>517</sup> Azikiwe, *My Odyssey*, 44-45.

appropriate it; he would become a wealthy philanthropist who could “practice my ideas of a new social order.”<sup>518</sup> With this yet-to-be-determined wealth, he would disseminate scholarships and employment for the poor. When noted black critic of civil rights agitation, George Schuyler, attacked Liberia, Azikiwe fired back that he was complicit in the “scheming propaganda of imperialism that is in the making.”<sup>519</sup>

Azikiwe was no purist; he believed in international collaboration in resolving Africans’ domestic affairs. When, in the early 1930s, the government of Liberia was faltering in payment of a debt to the Firestone rubber company, Azikiwe advocated for the League of Nations to intervene and embrace Liberia “as a trust of Western civilization.” The United States had sent a military officer to “straighten out tangled affairs,” and Azikiwe was suspicious that a military occupation was imminent. If Liberia continued to exist, he continued, it would prove to Africans whether the “innovations and beautifully worded phrases” of the League’s bylaws allowing for trusteeship were “realities or vague ephemeralities.”<sup>520</sup> As an African, trained at black American institutions, he had adopted the sense of obligation toward the ancestral homeland to use American resources to build up indigenous institutions.

In 1932, following his graduation with an M.A. at Lincoln University, Azikiwe continued studies at the University of Pennsylvania, where he received education in international law, foreign policy, and the functioning of the global British Commonwealth; he also enrolled in some coursework in journalism from Columbia University.<sup>521</sup> He considered a Ph.D.—the salary was good and the lodgings comfortable. “The life of a university instructor is almost ideal,” he

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<sup>518</sup> Azikiwe, *My Odyssey*, 45.

<sup>519</sup> Ben N. Azikiwe, “On Schuyler’s Stunt,” *Negro World*, July 11, 1931, 4.

<sup>520</sup> Ben N. Azikiwe, “Liberia’s Default to Firestone,” *Washington Tribune*, June 23, 1933, 4.

<sup>521</sup> Azikiwe, *My Odyssey*, 154-157.

acknowledged.<sup>522</sup> An instructor could play a formative role in shaping his students to become advocates and upstanding citizens.<sup>523</sup> The University—and perhaps the University alone—“enables an individual to discover himself.”<sup>524</sup> Indeed, Azikiwe also sensed broader potential: the University could revolutionize Nigeria and African selfhood. While he enjoyed the benefits of American education, communities in Nigeria could not “appreciate their unlimited opportunities,” and they harbored “ignorance of their latent giant’s strength.”<sup>525</sup> A University could provide a “renaissance in thought and action” for his colonized homeland.<sup>526</sup>

While attending University of Pennsylvania, Azikiwe commenced his life’s work as a journalist, polemicist, and newsmaker and scholar. In 1931, he published an article for the *Journal of Negro History* that reveals his veneration for American institutions and identities.<sup>527</sup> Azikiwe accepted imperialism as an “inevitable” manifestation of a Darwinian hierarchy of races, and that imperialism invited a host of “amenities,” such as hospitals, roads, and a host of infrastructural features.<sup>528</sup> His own communities had exhibited an “inability to organize a stable civilization,” after all.<sup>529</sup> Given this, it was in the interests of the “universal order” that “stronger races rule the weaker races.”<sup>530</sup> Imperial rulers should act only as “guides” until the colonized “is fledged for political independence.”<sup>531</sup> While he challenged any nation’s claims to being a “model of civilization,” he allowed that perhaps “Anglo-Saxon civilization is probably productive of a special degree of virility.”<sup>532</sup> He cites Christianity as a moral equalizer, and

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<sup>522</sup> Azikiwe, *My Odyssey*, 157.

<sup>523</sup> Azikiwe, *My Odyssey*, 157.

<sup>524</sup> Azikiwe, *My Odyssey*, 158.

<sup>525</sup> Azikiwe, *My Odyssey*, 159.

<sup>526</sup> Azikiwe, *My Odyssey*, 160.

<sup>527</sup> Ben N. Azikiwe, “Ethics of Colonial Imperialism,” *Journal of Negro History* 16, no. 3 (July 1931): 287-308.

<sup>528</sup> Azikiwe, “Ethics of Colonial Imperialism,” 290.

<sup>529</sup> Azikiwe, “Ethics of Colonial Imperialism,” 307.

<sup>530</sup> Azikiwe, “Ethics of Colonial Imperialism,” 307.

<sup>531</sup> Azikiwe, “Ethics of Colonial Imperialism,” 295.

<sup>532</sup> Azikiwe, “Ethics of Colonial Imperialism,” 307.

natural rights, as a guiding philosophy in Nigerian self-government. His anti-coloniality is of a peculiar, individualistic kind. He advocates for African gun ownership, and he celebrates the “progress of civilization in backwards lands.”<sup>533</sup> Azikiwe accepts uncritically the conclusion: “the more widespread education becomes, the greater becomes the black man’s antagonism” to a system “designed to maintain him in serfdom.”<sup>534</sup> He did not reject imperialism out-of-hand but urged the “strengthen[ing] [of] the constructive ethics of imperialism.”<sup>535</sup> He believed that Africans had not “organize[d] a stable civilization”; however, this failing “does not necessarily imply inherent racial incapability.”<sup>536</sup> The Anglo-Saxon race enjoyed “vitality,” so he argued—and a “renascent Africa” needed virile thoughts, not constraining limits imposed through the artifices of racial constructs.<sup>537</sup>

His collective experience at Storer, Lincoln, and Howard Universities instilled in Azikiwe a fundamental confidence in the American educational mythos. He must “build a university for the education of those who had the brains but could not go overseas to study because of financial handicaps.”<sup>538</sup> At Storer College, Howard University, Lincoln University, and the University of Pennsylvania, he also acquired a skill that would be essential for the coming generation: the business of journalism. Journalism was a “brisk business” in America, he observed; he needed to move provocative, high-drama content quickly in order to stay relevant and stay profitable.<sup>539</sup> The skillset he acquired at these universities shaped public discourse for the next generation. After his return to Nigeria, he founded the *West African Pilot* and eventually, several other presses. Specializing in the same kind of high-drama stories that

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<sup>533</sup> Azikiwe, “Ethics of Colonial Imperialism,” 303.

<sup>534</sup> Azikiwe, “Ethics of Colonial Imperialism,” 306.

<sup>535</sup> Azikiwe, “Ethics of Colonial Imperialism,” 306.

<sup>536</sup> Azikiwe, “Ethics of Colonial Imperialism,” 307.

<sup>537</sup> Azikiwe, “Ethics of Colonial Imperialism,” 307.

<sup>538</sup> Azikiwe, *My Odyssey*, 45.

<sup>539</sup> Azikiwe, *My Odyssey*, 153.



Azikiwe had pushed in the States, the *Pilot* became the leading voice of anti-colonial sentiment. American higher education made not only Azikiwe's version of a university but also, provided the journalistic style for Nigerian nationalism.<sup>540</sup>



Figure 6: Nnamdi Azikiwe as a university student, 1930s. L to R: Judge James S. Watson, Alain Locke, Nnamdi Azikiwe, K.O. Mbadiwe, Eleanor Roosevelt, and Clarence Holt. Courtesy of New York Public Library

### *Azikiwe's Made-in-America Pragmatism*

Azikiwe experienced a re-education in several theaters: as a laborer, as a black man, as a college student. Exposed to American institutions of higher learning, with the full range of curricula, Azikiwe expanded his view of what education could offer. As an athlete, he

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<sup>540</sup> See Lai Oso, "The Commercialization of the Nigerian Press: Development and Implications," *Africa Media Review* 5, no. 3 (1991): 47-50.

recognized the necessity for manual instruction.<sup>541</sup> As a student of ancient languages, he explored linguistics.<sup>542</sup> He had been vulnerable, tossed about from job-to-job and left to the whims of factory owners “So as long as the African would be content with menial tasks, and would not seek complete social, political, and economic equality with the Western world, he is deemed to be a ‘good’ fellow.”<sup>543</sup> Should he “question the right to keep him in political and economic servitude,” he wrote, . . . he “is immediately branded as an ‘agitator.’”<sup>544</sup> Gone was the fascination with the shovel and the dish-washing. “Education in Africa should consist of both literary and technical, and moral subjects in the curriculum of schools.”<sup>545</sup> Money mattered most, he said, not the charmed life. “With all the academic distinctions one might acquire,” he noted, in his typical grounded fashion, “if one does not have a good job from which to earn a steady income, to have food, shelter, clothing, and the necessities of life, one’s education could be regarded as a dismal failure.”<sup>546</sup> He now rejected strict ideology: “I am returning semi-Gandhic, semi-Garveyistic, non-chauvanistic, semi-ethnocentric, with a love for everyone, of every clime on God’s earth.”<sup>547</sup>

Azikiwe’s university experience in America shaped his educational outlook, turning him into a consummate pragmatist. American higher education highlighted the power that knowledge could wield in providing access to resources. Jason Parker has written of Azikiwe manufacturing a “Made-in-America” revolution, with inspiration from African American agitation and “New Negro”-ism expanding throughout the African continent.<sup>548</sup> Azikiwe himself lends some

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<sup>541</sup> Azikiwe, *My Odyssey*, 93.

<sup>542</sup> Azikiwe, *My Odyssey*, 156.

<sup>543</sup> Azikiwe, “How Shall We Educate the African?” 146.

<sup>544</sup> Azikiwe, “How Shall We Educate the African?” 146.

<sup>545</sup> Azikiwe, “How Shall We Educate the African,” 149.

<sup>546</sup> Azikiwe, “How Shall We Educate the African,” 160.

<sup>547</sup> Azikiwe, *My Odyssey*, 162.

<sup>548</sup> Ewing, *The Age of Garvey*, chpts. 5-6.

credence to the theory; the “New Negro” movement, he notes, took root in America first, and he intended to revert it back to his homeland.<sup>549</sup> In casual parlance, it referred to black people born after the end of slavery and who refused to abide by the assumptions that had defined enslavement.<sup>550</sup> Virtually all of his universities expected him to do the same: to export the enlightenment of the black American struggle to black Africa against colonial oppression.<sup>551</sup>

Azikiwe identified with the “New Negro” movement, even imagining himself to be a “new negro” in the process of mental emancipation from British coloniality. It connoted a sense of rebellion, of defiance, and of advocacy. “New Negroes” attempted to integrate themselves into white dominant neighborhoods and spoke, alternatively, of a return of Africa *a la* Garveyism.<sup>552</sup> “The New Negro,” connoted youthfulness, vibrancy, and black rebirth. Azikiwe’s Howard sociology professor and leading figure of early 20<sup>th</sup>-century black literature and thought, Alain Locke. The heritage of enslavement would not fade into the distance; the “New Negro” would overturn it and rend it. And it would be brought to pass by the youthful generation—visionaries and aspirants like Azikiwe. Azikiwe believed in “race pride, race consciousness, nationalism, and its correlant of economic stability,” while rejecting “chauvinism or ethnocentrism.”<sup>553</sup> Azikiwe’s “new negro” meant Africans equipped and dedicated to the construction of the African nation-state.

Azikiwe’s sprawling mind and commitments made him both a fierce advocate—and occasionally, a rogue one.<sup>554</sup> Azikiwe did not exhibit the same anxieties about the “American

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<sup>549</sup> Azikiwe, *My Odyssey*, 136.

<sup>550</sup> Jeffrey C. Stewart, *The New Negro: The Life of Alain Locke* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2018), 436.

<sup>551</sup> Jason C. Parker, “‘Made-in-America Revolutions’? The ‘Black University’ and the American Role in the Decolonization of the Black Atlantic,” *The Journal of American History* 96, no. 3 (December 2009): 727-750.

<sup>552</sup> Stewart, *The New Negro: The Life of Alain Locke*, 436.

<sup>553</sup> Ula Y. Taylor, *The Veiled Garvey: The Life and Times of Amy Jacques Garvey* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002), 167.

<sup>554</sup> Taylor, *The Veiled Garvey*, 168.

dream. Indeed, calling Azikiwe an American patriot—particularly his celebration of Anglo-Saxon dominant institutions (which both Storer and Lincoln were)—requires little imagination. Azikiwe downplayed the significance of lynching in the American South, assuring his late readers that lynching was but a “passing phase in the saga of American history” and that proper law enforcement was a “clear indication that the era of unbridled fanaticism and anarchy was in the process of becoming an unlamented closed chapter in American history.”<sup>555</sup>

Azikiwe saw the United States as the refining fire that prepared him for Nigerian national leadership. In the United States, Azikiwe changed his English name, “Benjamin” and became “Zik.” Troubled as American racial policies were, Azikiwe saw in American educational institutions a place to provide him the tools for dismantling colonial hierarchies. In America, Azikiwe “imbibe[d] the spirit of 1776.”<sup>556</sup> Seeing the victory of Franklin D. Roosevelt, he believed in the “eventual emergence of the United States as a moral force in the world.”<sup>557</sup> The country was “saturated with racial intolerance,” to be sure.<sup>558</sup> But such difficulties were episodic, at most: “a passing phase in the saga of American history.”<sup>559</sup> The America that he believed in—the “real America”—was made up of hearty, “go-getting” pioneers and hustlers, fired with an “adventurous spirit that ignores all hazards.”<sup>560</sup> With the promise of liberal democracy and fundamental rights that cannot be violated, America, Azikiwe mused, was a grand experiment. “If such a country is described as ‘God’s country,’ the exaggeration can be excused.”<sup>561</sup> America was a “haven of refuge for the oppressed sections of humanity.” One should “not blame me for calling it God’s country,” he wrote, when imagining of his departure from America—with the

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<sup>555</sup> Azikiwe, *My Odyssey*, 195.

<sup>556</sup> Azikiwe, *My Odyssey*, 181.

<sup>557</sup> Azikiwe, *My Odyssey*, 194.

<sup>558</sup> Azikiwe, *My Odyssey*, 195.

<sup>559</sup> Azikiwe, *My Odyssey*, 195.

<sup>560</sup> Azikiwe, *My Odyssey*, 195.

<sup>561</sup> Azikiwe, *My Odyssey*, 195.

Statue of Liberty seeming to fade in the distance.<sup>562</sup> Even if his fellow Africans were fed “the bread of bitterness” from the hands of a “microscopic section of the backward elements,” the Americas Azikiwe saw “turned the wrong of inhumanity down bluntly and lent a helping hand to the forces of righteousness.”<sup>563</sup> His university experience taught him that the United States still stood supreme as a “bulwark of human liberty and the haven of the children of God.”<sup>564</sup> Being a “New Negro,” in Azikiwe’s mind, meant being a great American.

But *contra* Parker’s analysis, black American higher education did not turn Azikiwe into a hardened radical; it turned him into a hardened pragmatist. No ideologue was he. His nationalism was not rooted in a reversion to a pre-colonial epoch, as Garvey’s was. Azikiwe knew what many modern classroom teachers of early 20<sup>th</sup>-century race do not: that neither black intellectuals like W. E. B. DuBois nor black industrialists like Booker T. Washington confined themselves to a particular set of socio-cultural approaches in challenging white supremacy.<sup>565</sup> Indeed, Azikiwe found inspiration in Booker T. Washington’s work with the Tuskegee Institute *and* in W. E. B.’s NAACP alike—and was not committed to either institution’s worldview.<sup>566</sup> His faith in European administrators was minimal, but his faith in radical measures was even less so. Azikiwe used Aggrey as a model: Aggrey needed affiliation with white-dominant institutions in order to gain recognition, and Azikiwe was willing to follow in his footsteps.<sup>567</sup>

The allure of American universities, American industry, and even American capitalism attracted him—but one more narrative that could be used at his disposal. Whatever moral deficits

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<sup>562</sup> Azikiwe, *My Odyssey*, 195.

<sup>563</sup> Azikiwe, *My Odyssey*, 196-197.

<sup>564</sup> Azikiwe, *My Odyssey*, 195.

<sup>565</sup> The best biography of Booker T. Washington—one that depicts him as complicated, black-affirmative entrepreneur—is Robert J. Norrell’s, *Up from History: The Life of Booker T. Washington* (Cambridge: Belknap Press, 2011). The best one-volume biography (condensed from two) of W.E.B. DuBois is David Levering Lewis, *W.E.B. DuBois: A Biography, 1868-1963* (New York: Holt Paperbacks, 2009).

<sup>566</sup> Azikiwe, *My Odyssey*, 162.

<sup>567</sup> Azikiwe, *My Odyssey*, 181.

American capitalism may have—and as a laborer, he experienced some first-hand—he considered America to be nothing less than the ultimate manifestation of human civilization.<sup>568</sup> While Azikiwe lived in the United States dominated by the resurgence of the Ku Klux Klan and the 1924 Immigration Act, he recollected his time not only favorably but hagiographically: America “impressed me as a haven of refuge,” he recalled, not as a manifestation of high modernist exploitation.<sup>569</sup> It offered immigration access and opportunities to “the oppressed sections of humanity” and made space for individuals to enjoy a “full scope to develop his personality to the full, in spite of the vagueries of human life.”<sup>570</sup> Americans “walked the honest road with me” and “lifted the heavy load off my shoulders.”<sup>571</sup> The Americans he knew “dwell in God’s country and till the holy land.” Of this, he was a “living witness.”<sup>572</sup> Azikiwe’s activism incorporated the full host of American black activism models: assimilation, accommodation, and activism/agitation.

Following completion of his university education in 1936, Azikiwe returned to Nigeria and commenced a 15-year campaign to launch a media empire throughout West Africa.<sup>573</sup> A host of investors turned him down, prompting Azikiwe to initiate his own newspaper line: Azikiwe’s Press.<sup>574</sup> When Azikiwe laid out the *raison d’être* for his enterprise, he did not see the targeting of colonial officials as the sole end game but rather, the collective transformation of Nigerians’ *weltanschauung*. “*Mental emancipation*,” he emphasized, “was necessary for the mis-educated African to be re-educated and be politically renascent.”<sup>575</sup> Once Africans had reached a certain

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<sup>568</sup> Azikiwe, *My Odyssey*, 196.

<sup>569</sup> Azikiwe, *My Odyssey*, 196.

<sup>570</sup> Azikiwe, *My Odyssey*, 196.

<sup>571</sup> Azikiwe, *My Odyssey*, 196.

<sup>572</sup> Azikiwe, *My Odyssey*, 197.

<sup>573</sup> Azikiwe, *My Odyssey*, 287.

<sup>574</sup> Azikiwe, *My Odyssey*, 287.

<sup>575</sup> Azikiwe, *My Odyssey*, 254.

level of *internal* development, then “there could be no doubt about the inevitability of the *political Risorgimento* of the African.”<sup>576</sup> This model of information-as-business became Azikiwe’s default as he embarked on a 15-year-long business enterprise committed to the expulsion of foreign rule—but never the eradication of white influence.<sup>577</sup> Thus, Azikiwe’s American *re-education* cultivated *pragmatism* in the formerly-colonized elite—the willingness and capacity to deploy mechanisms of a variety of kinds to effect political change. As a laborer, as a scholar, as a clerk, and as an athlete, he saw knowledge as worthy of little *per se*; its relevance rested in its political or commercial utility.

### *Conclusion*

This chapter illustrates the far-reaching influence that Azikiwe’s Americana experiences wielded in shaping his approach to activism. American education existed well outside the walls of HBCUs; American education, to Azikiwe, was no academic matter but a matter of the soul, body and mind. American education meant *possibilities* rather than *literacy*; it revealed how hierarchies could be dismantled, and above all, how any effort at a university education must draw on the full scope of human education—manual, literary, scientific, and philosophical. Azikiwe’s liberal arts worldview was too far-reaching to be confined in buildings. His notion of the *universal* implied not the *Mouseion* of ancient lore or the higher education of the Sankore in Timbuktu; his notion of universal *demand*ed manual education *and* literature alike. American universities represented a new, vibrant *mouseion* for Africa.

But as a subsequent chapter will show, with this untetheredness to ideology came a risk: that Azikiwe had little investment in the preservation of *any particular kind* of “indigenous knowledge”—that Nigerian-ness was as boundless and sprawling as any other kind of -ness.

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<sup>576</sup> Azikiwe, *My Odyssey*, 254.

<sup>577</sup> Oso, “The Commercialization of the Nigerian Press: Development and Implications,” 41-51.

Thus, his much-dreamed of University of Nigeria, Nsukka served not the role of providing distinctively *Nigerian-based* “indigenous knowledge” but rather, a host of knowledges, interpenetrated by sources from throughout Western education models but little from African institutions. Azikiwe’s liberality, as it happens, had a particularly American flair. As Azikiwe reflected, American institutions and experiences had “re-educate[d] me from my mis-education.”<sup>578</sup> As the next chapter will show, the institutions Azikiwe imagined aspired to establish to spread education throughout a newly-independent Nigeria—and it would come at a price.

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<sup>578</sup> K.A.B. Jones-Quartey, *A Life of Azikiwe* (New York: Penguin Books, 1965), 70.



### CHAPTER 3

Azikiwe's planned university had long been an abstraction, requiring resources from multiple sources to mobilize it. Its success, endorsed both by a major research university with global aspirations and the State Department, belies its origins: the metal-on-metal grinding inevitable from the appropriation of resources. Although UNN was both imagined as an international project and ultimately, became one, it needed to reckon with local forces, both elite and plebian, in reaching actualization. Azikiwe's rhetoric of a "renascent Africa" mattered more in the lecture halls of London and Lagos than in the villages and towns of the colony.<sup>579</sup>

As the Nigeria colony began the process of decolonization, it also became the subject of increasing state-sponsored programs, both from local polities as well as the British metropole. In this chapter, I will show how the project of University construction, an indigenously-conceived and funded enterprise, assumed the kind of state strength deployed by British colonizers—and was conceived as such by anti-NCNC Southern critics from within the Eastern Region. For the villages of Eastern Nigeria, the University represented the extension of a long line of colonial projects that neither represented their interests nor took into account their resources.

Azikiwe's university project came at a vulnerable time—it was a gamble that Azikiwe hoped would work. His palm oil acquisition had been costly; similar taxes had ignited a wave of violent protests throughout the Eastern Region, giving new birth to the women's resistance movements.<sup>580</sup> Non-Onitshans considered Azikiwe's "project" to be one more in a long line of inequities; while premier, in 1953, Azikiwe had arranged for the Onitsha Urban District Council to be staffed by 1/3 traditional rules while in Lagos, they advocated for a wholly elected council.

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<sup>579</sup> Nnamdi Azikiwe, *Renascent Africa*, *passim*.

<sup>580</sup> See Chpt. 4 of this dissertation.

Azikiwe and the Onitsha branch of the NCNC, it was alleged, was playing favorites to their own.<sup>581</sup> In southern Igboland, the Aba-Ngwa Urban Council complained that Eastern scholarships favored Onitshans. “This is not a matter for party politics,” one leader said at the meeting. “Justice is justice. This is not the proper place for me to be bitter.”<sup>582</sup> But the realization had “lent colour to the allegation that the Regional Government is concentrating everything it can afford” on Onitsha Division.<sup>583</sup> At another meeting, the Aba-Ngwa Council complained that “Aba township had no major development in the past and unlike Onitsha and Enugu, the township of Aba had not been greatly favoured by the Government.”<sup>584</sup> When Eastern House of Assembly member, and later premier, Michael Okpara, criticized the NCNC in 1957 and came under fire, Aba pols observed that Okpara’s “main crime” was that “he is not an Onitsha man.”<sup>585</sup> Take note, Adele Nwangwu in Aba said, that Onitsha had received lush revenue from palm produce.<sup>586</sup> Meanwhile, non-Igbo minority agitation for independent states pushed for a host of reforms leading up to the 1959 election: the implementation of Provisional Councils, a team of British observers, the Wilink, Commission coming to assess Nigeria’s—and particularly, the Eastern Region’s—treatment of minorities in areas such as Calabar, Ogota, and Rivers.<sup>587</sup>

This chapter documents how Azikiwe mechanized the NCNC-driven tax regime to benefit Igbo of Onitsha province while that same tax regime extracted resources from southern Igbo in Mbaise and Aba. For these groups, Azikiwe’s vision would not produce labor-intellectuals; it would reinforce internal colonial hierarchies and extract resources. For the

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<sup>581</sup> Sklar, *Nigerian Political Parties*, 156.

<sup>582</sup> “Aba Division Sees Award of Scholarships as Discriminatory,” *Eastern States Express*, April 27, 1957, 1

<sup>583</sup> “Aba Division Sees Award of Scholarships as Discriminatory,” *Eastern States Express*, April 27, 1957, 1

<sup>584</sup> “‘Aba Not favoured like Onitsha,’ says UDC Chairman,” *Eastern States Express*, April 4, 1957.

<sup>585</sup> “Okpara’s Crime is that he is a non-Onitsha,” *Eastern States Express*, October 11, 1957, 4

<sup>586</sup> “Okpara’s Crime is that he is a non-Onitsha,” *Eastern States Express*, October 11, 1957, 4

<sup>587</sup> See *Proceedings at the Sir Henry Willink’s Commission, Appointed to Enquire Into the Fears of Minorities and the Means of Allaying Them*, 2 vols. (Jos: League for Human Rights, 2003).

women of Ohaji, Mbaise, and Aba, the University was no “Temple of Knowledge,” as Azikiwe styled it; it was a bureaucratic apparatus out-of-touch with their needs, bent on imposing an external system.<sup>588</sup> This chapter shows that through proactive, extra-statal mechanisms of protest and influence, women publicly challenged the legitimacy of the NCNC taxes and by extension, the tax regime, revealing that the Eastern Region’s education scheme was not a product of consensus but a product of extraction. The women highlight that the NCNC was prepared to carry out a University-by-*fiat* to enforce its construction. *Igwe bu Ike*, the Igbo say: “The masses are strong.”

### *Making the Nigerian Intelligentsia*

In the Western tradition, universities avoided excessive entanglement with the nation-state. Medieval philosophers had little interest in conceptualizing the larger mass of the population, most of whom, they determined, had been consigned to illiteracy and poverty through the will of a sovereign Deity. Universities throughout the Western World—Sorbonne, Oxford, Cambridge, and Harvard—struggled to be independent from royal, Parliamentary, and Congressional influence and free from the machinations of the court politics.<sup>589</sup> Cambridge University and Oxford University, governed by a Chancellor and Vice-Chancellor, served largely self-governing entities—with certain royal privileges to boot.<sup>590</sup> Harvard College, the College of New Jersey, King’s College in New York, were established to train colonial Anglican reverends for ministering to British colonials in Massachusetts, committing to purifying the government.<sup>591</sup> By 1865, Harvard, now a University, separated itself entirely from the

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<sup>588</sup> Azikiwe, *Zik*, 292.

<sup>589</sup> Ina Baghdiantz McCabe, *Orientalism in Early Modern France: Eurasian Trade, Exoticism, and the Ancien Regime* (Oxford: Berg Publishers, 2008), 24.

<sup>590</sup> Trevor Henry Aston et al., *The History of the University of Oxford: The early Oxford schools* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984), 142-143.

<sup>591</sup> John R. Thelin, *A History of American Higher Education* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2019), 14.

Massachusetts state government.<sup>592</sup> Yet, no middle age or early modern era university existed as a feeder university for royal service.

The notion of a *national* university defied universities' historical *raison d'être*. The celebrated theorist of the university, Cardinal John Henry Newman, observed, that universities should not “promise a generation of Aristotles, of Newtons, of Napoleons or Washingtons, Raphaels or Shakespeares.”<sup>593</sup> Newman believed that the University should only seek the

raising the intellectual tone of society, at cultivating the public mind, at purifying the national taste, at supplying true principals to popular enthusiasm and fixed aims to popular aspiration, at giving enlargement and sobriety to the ideas of the age, at facilitating the exercise of political power, and refining the intercourse of private life.<sup>594</sup> Most universities emphasized the cultivation of intellectual sensibilities, moral

discernment, and higher judgment—not the building of the nation-state. Serve the nation, they must. But *build* the nation? They ought not.

Cardinal John Henry Newman similarly believed universities served for “training good members of society” and “teaches [them] to see things as they really are, to go right to the point, to disentangle a skein of thought to detect what is sophistical and to discard what is irrelevant.”<sup>595</sup> In 1894, T. H. Huxley observed that the university should pursue knowledge “independent of all application to practice.”<sup>596</sup>

In a similar vein, the University College of Fort Hare in South Africa, Fourah Bay College in Sierra Leone, Makerere University in Tanzania, and the University College, Ibadan in Nigeria serviced explicitly colonial or missionary ends: Fourah Bay College and the University College of Fort Hare had been founded by Methodist missionaries and by Scottish missionaries

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<sup>592</sup> Samuel Eliot Morrison, *Three Centuries of Harvard, 1636-1936* (2006), 309.

<sup>593</sup> Newman, *The Idea of a University*, 177.

<sup>594</sup> Newman, *The Idea of a University*, 177.

<sup>595</sup> Newman, *The Idea of a University*, 178.

<sup>596</sup> *Parliamentary Papers*, October 27, 1892, 553.

in Freetown and in the Eastern Cape Colony, respectively.<sup>597</sup> Makerere University and University College, Ibadan were backed by the British Colonial Office.<sup>598</sup> These universities were not designed for the purposes of fostering South African, Sierra Leonian, or Sudanese nationalism, nationalistic purposes but rather, for strengthening colonial and/or ecclesiastical institutions or, in the case of Fort Hare, to provide technical training after the manner of the Hampton Institute and Storer College.<sup>599</sup> When Zik dreamt of a university, his dream reflected the next wave of universities on the rise throughout colonial Africa. Intended neither as a clerical school, a technological training school, nor an adult literacy program, Azikiwe imagined a university capable of producing labor-intellectuals, emancipating both the mind from the bondage of colonial entrapment.<sup>600</sup>

#### *Building Nigerian Educational Systems in the Early Modern Era*

In 1472, Portuguese explorer Ruy de Sequeira named *Eko*, then a Yoruba port town and once, a Bini military base, after the port town from which he hailed in Portugal: Lagos [Lakes].<sup>601</sup> Well-read, educated abroad, and the children of *oba* [Yoruba royal] and *ogaranya* [wealthy Igbo men], the elites of Lagos lived in an ossified knowledge system. These Lagosian elites read Greek, spoke English, and had interacted with European traders since the late 15<sup>th</sup>-

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<sup>597</sup> See Donovan Williams, *A History of the University College of Fort Hare, South Africa, the 1950s: The Waiting Years* (Lewiston, NY: E. Mellen Press, 2001), 1-2; Daniel J. Paracka, Jr., *The Athens of West Africa: A History of International Education at Fourah Bay College, Freetown, Sierra Leone* (New York: Taylor and Francis, 2004).

<sup>598</sup> See David J. Mills, "Life on the Hill: Students and the Social History of Makerere," *Africa* 76, 2 (2006): 249-250.

<sup>599</sup> Hoda M. Zaki, *Civil Rights and Politics at Hampton Institute: The Legacy of Alonzo G. Moron* (Urbana: University of Illinois, 2007), 8.

<sup>600</sup> Parker, "Made-in-America Revolutions?" 732-733.

<sup>601</sup> Robin Law, "Trade and politics: The Lagoon Traffic and the Rise of Lagos, 1500-1800," *The Journal of African History* 24, 3 (1983): 328, 330. Although there is some debate over whether *Eko* belonged to Bini or Yoruba royals, and there is debate about the etymology of the name, *Eko*: "war-camp" (Bini, *eko*) or "farm" (Yoruba, *oko*). Before Benin conquered *Eko* in the late 16<sup>th</sup>-century, the area was settled by Awori Yoruba from Iseri. These settlers established farming of red peppers. Yoruba oral tradition highlights how these farming settlements presaged the formation of political authority. It is supposed here that the Yoruba name endured through the conquest. See Bashir Olalekan Animashaun, "Benin Imperialism and the Transformation of Idejo Chieftaincy Institution in Lagos, 1603-1850," *Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria* 25 (2016): 41-43.

century. Throughout the era of the Atlantic slave trade (15<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup>-centuries), slave wealth enabled *oba* and their families to receive European-style education from private tutors, to access European texts, and to purchase European fashion and décor.

Throughout the 19<sup>th</sup>-century, missionaries and colonial officials spread their influence throughout communities on both sides of the Niger River. In 1879, the Royal Niger Company, a government-privileged trading entity akin to the Dutch East India Company and the British East India Company, expanded throughout the territory in order to facilitate resource extraction. Company founder George Goldie expressed skepticism that Europeans could ever control areas like “Nigeria” in an ultimate sense; while “establish[ing] a European system of law and administration” was ideal, areas with a high population density and little room for a European presence demanded adaptation.<sup>602</sup> In such areas, “he can never hope to rule by force alone,” Goldie acknowledged.<sup>603</sup> The only viable course, then, would be “to adopt the local Native governments already existing, and to be content with controlling their excesses and with maintaining peace amongst themselves.”<sup>604</sup> No British administrators considered “Nigeria” to represent anything akin to an organic political expression; a back formation derived from a British reporter, Flora Shaw: “Niger Area.” The “Royal Niger Company’s Territories” was too clunky.<sup>605</sup>

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<sup>602</sup> Major Leonard Darwin, “Sir George Goldie on Government in Africa,” *Journal of the Royal African Society* 34, no. 135 (April 1935): 138.

<sup>603</sup> Major Leonard Darwin, “Sir George Goldie on Government in Africa,” *Journal of the Royal African Society* 34, no. 135 (April 1935): 138.

<sup>604</sup> Major Leonard Darwin, “Sir George Goldie on Government in Africa,” *Journal of the Royal African Society* 34, no. 135 (April 1935): 138.

<sup>605</sup> In the January 8, 1897 edition of the *Times*, Shaw explained her rationale: “The name, ‘Nigeria,’ applying to no other portion of Africa, may, without offense to any neighbors, be accepted as co-extensive with the territories over which the Royal Niger Company has extended British influence, and may serve to differentiate them equally from the British colonies of Lagos and the Niger Protectorate on the coast and from the French territories of the Upper Niger.” *Times*, January 8, 1897, 6.

In January 1914, Sir Frederick Lugard, Nigeria's first governor general and Shaw's romantic partner, engineered the amalgamation of "Nigeria" from its disparate parts.<sup>606</sup> Formerly designated as the Northern and Southern protectorates, the amalgamation compelled two religiously and more importantly, economically distinct regions to collaborate and cooperate while the Southern protectorate enjoyed access to several exportable crops—cocoa, palm oil, gold, and iron—the Northern protectorate enjoyed less, relying primarily on a groundnut trade which rarely made it to the ports at Calabar, Bonny, or Badgary.<sup>607</sup> Lugard insisted that "the economy can only be effected by the realization of. . . amalgamating Northern and Southern Nigeria and Lagos into one single administration."<sup>608</sup> Lugard held that Nigerian unity eased would streamline trade relations and enable the construction of trade-friendly infrastructure between groundnut growers in the Northern Region and palm producers in the Southern Region.<sup>609</sup> On this key point, Azikiwe shared a similar vision: only a unitary Nigeria, Lugard insisted, would provide the framework in which Nigeria could forge a path into independence.<sup>610</sup> As historian Berny Sebe, contemporary pundits have invoked Lugard in celebrations, as though the country was attempting "to exorcise its perennial political difficulties by betting back to its colonial sources."<sup>611</sup>

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<sup>606</sup> Frederick W. Lugard, "British Policy in Nigeria," *Africa: Journal of the International African Institute* 10, no. 4 (October 1937): 379-380.

<sup>607</sup> G. Ugo Nwokeji, *The Slave Trade and Culture in the Bight of Biafra*, Location 4261.

<sup>608</sup> N.U. Akpan, "Nigerian Federalism: Accidental Foundations by Lugard," *Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria* 9, no. 2 (June 1978): 3.

<sup>609</sup> A January 1, 1914 Proclamation promised that "the country from the sea to near the desert in the North and from the French country in the West to the German Kameroun in the East, *shall be one single country under the Governor-General*." See N.U. Akpan, "Nigerian Federalism: Accidental Foundations by Lugard," *Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria* 9, no. 2 (June 1978): 7.

<sup>610</sup> Berny Sebe, "From Post-Colonialism to Cosmopolitan Nation Building? British and French Imperial Heroes in Twenty-First-Century Africa," *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 42, no. 5 (2014): 951.

<sup>611</sup> Berny Sebe, "From Post-Colonialism to Cosmopolitan Nation Building? British and French Imperial Heroes in Twenty-First-Century Africa," *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 42, no. 5 (2014): 951.

British officers struggled to devise constitutional systems resonant with the local communities. Anthropologist M. G. Smith has described the system as intended to be “a contraposition of co-ordinate units.”<sup>612</sup> In Idoma territory, attempts to re-appropriate local institutions, such as the *ojira* (an Idoma public discussion venue) to be a governance institution in place of the *aiuta* (the actual seat of power, which consisted of age-groups, dance-groups, and secret society heads) failed to reach Idoma subjects.<sup>613</sup> With the outbreak of the 1929 *ogu umunwany* (women’s war), in which cadres of women mounted a sustained military action against the local chieftaincy and British officials for threatening to place a tax on women. British administrators established a benched system of government over Igbo-speaking territories, impaneling “massed benches” over which village inhabitants had control; these villagers could decide which candidates were and were not acceptable as well as how many would be needed.<sup>614</sup> Indirect rule proved difficult to root in the indigenous soil, rendering British administered institutions tenuous, at best—and more often, fundamentally illegitimate.<sup>615</sup>

Educational institutions, however, found a more viable constituency. Mission schools such as Lagos’ C. M. S. Grammar School, the Hope Waddell Training Institute, the Gold Coast’s Achimota School, and a host of other affiliated schools purveyed English texts, Anglican religion, and British culture.<sup>616</sup> In Igboland, many late-nineteenth century students hailed from

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<sup>612</sup> M.G. Smith, “On segmentary lineage systems,” *Journal of Religious Anthropol.* Inst. Gt. Br. Irel. LXXXVI, 63.

<sup>613</sup> Alvin Magid, “British Rule and Indigenous Organization in Nigeria: A Case-Study in Normative-Institutional Change,” *Journal of African History* 9, no. 2 (1968): 299-313.

<sup>614</sup> A robust literature exists on “indigenous institutions” and “indirect rule” in the Niger Delta protectorate. See A.E. Afigbo, *The Warrant Chiefs: Indirect Rule in South-Eastern Nigeria 1891-1929* (London: Longmans, 1972). See also Judith Van Allen, “Sitting on a Man”: Colonialism and the Lost Political Institutions of Igbo Women,” *Canadian Journal of African Studies* 6, no. 2 (1972): 165-181. On massed benches, see Van Allen, 177.

<sup>615</sup> J. C. Onwuteaka, “The Aba Riot of 1929 and Its Relation to the System of Indirect Rule,” *The Nigerian Journal of Economic and Social Studies* (November 1965): 273-282.

<sup>616</sup> For examples, see F.O. Ogunlade, “Education and Politics in Colonial Nigeria: The Case of King’s College, Lagos (1906-1911),” *Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria* 7, no. 2 (1974): 325-345; Esther Breitenbach, “The Making of a Missionary Icon: Mary Slessor as ‘Heroine of Empire,’” *Journal of Scottish Historical Studies* (November 2017): 177-184.



the *osu* class born as shrine devotees in their indigenous religion. A petition from freeborn men complained to the British government that *osu*, with apparent colonial support, “threaten and endanger progress” and “upset the customs of the town.”<sup>617</sup> But mission schools proliferated throughout the South, and medical workers established medical missions throughout the North. By the 1950s, colonial education was often administered at the hands of indigenous administrators who celebrated Empire Day and taught Shakespeare and English history to the colonial pupils; thus, while the curriculum remained alien, the teaching staff looked and spoke like the students they taught.<sup>618</sup>

*Ndi Ocha Abughi Ndi Ocha [The White Man Is not the White Man]: Nationalism and Colonial Education*

Between 1936 and 1944, several hundred Nigerians had attended graduate institutions either at Fourah Bay, or a British university.<sup>619</sup> Azikiwe’s proposition for a Nigerian university education did not mark a significant departure from Africa’s engagement with university education. Mission education had produced a generation of world-wise Nigerians with a taste for Western institutions and roots in the soil.<sup>620</sup>

The violence of the Second World War did not reach Nigeria’s, although the war disrupted various realms of Nigerian life.<sup>621</sup> The British government imposed laws controlling food supplies and spare parts dealing. Nigerians had their grievances with the colonial regime: bicycle parts were difficult to purchase and *gari* networks with the North were more

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<sup>617</sup> Geoffrey Nwaka, “Civil Rights Movement in Colonial Igboland,” *The International Journal of African Historical Studies* 18, no. 3 (1985): 479

<sup>618</sup> For a discussion of the prevalence of both Nigerian instructors as well as Western modalities of education, see Livsey, *Nigeria’s University Age*, Kindle Location 3039.

<sup>619</sup> Mazi Okoro Ojiaku and Gene Ulansky, “Early Nigerian Response to American Education,” *Phylon* 33, no. 4 (4<sup>th</sup> Qtr., 1972): 381.

<sup>620</sup> See J. F. Ade Ajayi, *Christian Missions in Nigeria, 1841-1891: The Making of a New Elite* (London, 1965).

<sup>621</sup> Judith A. Byfield, “Feeding the Troops: Abeokuta (Nigeria) and World War II,” *African Economic History* 35 (2007): 78-79.

inaccessible.<sup>622</sup> Although Nigerians were forced to ration food, the regulations were not fundamentally distinct those of past eras. The war violence itself remained remote. *Gari* and local trade mattered more—and the war produced a spike in *gari* needs with the influx of British naval officers stationed at Lagos.<sup>623</sup>

Indeed, for most Nigerians, these policies were “part of the larger framework of colonialism.”<sup>624</sup> Palm oil harvesting became a legal obligation rather than a business venture; palms left unharvested earned a 5 pound fine.<sup>625</sup> Women were encouraged to cultivate and crack groundnuts to sell in the market, with the proceeds slated to support the wartime effort.<sup>626</sup> Women spent hours of daily labor cracking groundnuts, and palm oil sales to the Northern Region were restricted from most dealers.<sup>627</sup> The labor force recruited for constructing wartime infrastructure also left farms decimated.<sup>628</sup> When the Mediterranean Sea was shut down to traffic, and the British lost access to the Southeast seas following the Battle of Singapore, Nigeria became a primary an avenue for Allied travel.<sup>629</sup> British officers considered requisitioning women’s rice harvests in Abeokuta by force in order to feed military troops.<sup>630</sup> Market women revolted.<sup>631</sup>

British educators had long considered their educational system to be the crown jewel in their imperial heritage. Wartime administrators recognized that the colony needed to be

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<sup>622</sup> Chima Korieh, *“Life Not Worth Living”: Nigerian Petitions Reflecting an African Society’s Experiences During World War II* (Durham, North Carolina: Carolina Academic Press, 2014).

<sup>623</sup> Chuku, *Igbo Women and Economic Transformation in Southeastern Nigeria, 1900-1960*, 99.

<sup>624</sup> Chima J. Korieh, “‘May It Please Your Honor’: Letters of Petition as Historical Evidence in an African Colonial Context,” *History in Africa* 37 (2010): 103.

<sup>625</sup> Chuku, *Igbo Women and Economic Transformation in Southeastern Nigeria, 1900-1960*, 100.

<sup>626</sup> Chuku, *Igbo Women and Economic Transformation in Southeastern Nigeria, 1900-1960*, 99.

<sup>627</sup> Chuku, *Igbo Women and Economic Transformation in Southeastern Nigeria, 1900-1960*, 99.

<sup>628</sup> Chuku, *Igbo Women and Economic Transformation in Southeastern Nigeria, 1900-1960*, 107.

<sup>629</sup> Chuku, *Igbo Women and Economic Transformation in Southeastern Nigeria, 1900-1960*, 107.

<sup>630</sup> Judith A. Byfield, “Taxation, Women and the Colonial State: Egba Women’s Tax Revolt,” *Meridians* 3, no. 2 (2003): 265.

<sup>631</sup> Judith A. Byfield, “Taxation, Women and the Colonial State: Egba Women’s Tax Revolt,” 265.

administered while handling the explosion of continent-wide war in Europe. The British warfare state had produced the conditions for the British *welfare* state—following the war, British politicians of all stripes supported the establishment of social programs for all British.<sup>632</sup> UNESCO director Julian Huxley, Maxwell Fry and others argued for the needs of students to achieve “standards . . . directly related to those of Great Britain.”<sup>633</sup> Standards needed to be uniform and more importantly, universally recognized throughout the Empire. In Nsukka, some *ndi okwa nchu-aja* [priests] saw educational expansion as a threat to *ani* and threatened to stop education projects, but several Nsukka locals rallied in support of the project.<sup>634</sup> Either vulnerable to the machinations of British industry or bound to the *omenala* [“culture” i.e. “that which the land does”], In Umuahia, the population was “largely illiterate”; when colonial officials executed an election in 1954, Senior Resident James H. Smith observed, he felt that they had “performed an extraordinary feat.”<sup>635</sup>

Some Nigerians seemed to sense a change of tone—a kind of humility brought on by the horrors of war. An *eze* in Ibagwu took note of it in wartime Nigeria: “White man is no longer white man.” The white man “nowadays is flexible in his speech. . . White man word was like thunder in olden days but I cannot know what to term it now.”<sup>636</sup> The *eze*’s perception speaks to what historian Timothy Livsey considers to be “the central paradox of decolonisation: that it saw British power simultaneously contract and expand.”<sup>637</sup>

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<sup>632</sup> Tony Judt, *Postwar: A History of Europe Since 1945* (New York: Penguin, 2006), 74-76.

<sup>633</sup> Timothy Livsey, *Nigeria’s University Age: Reframing Decolonisation and Development* (New York: Routledge, 2017), Kindle location 976.

<sup>634</sup> “Report on the General Progress of Development and Welfare Schemes—Nsukka Division, 1940/1947” ONDIST 12/1/1824, EFA

<sup>635</sup> James H. Smith, Letter to Jean [sister], November 16, 1954, Rhodes House.

<sup>636</sup> Mr. O.C. Manu, Native Authority Clerk, Nsukka Division, Personal Papers, ONDIST 12/1/1931.

<sup>637</sup> Livsey, *Nigeria’s University Age*, Kindle location, 1480.

Scholarship has focused on established institutions of higher education, such as Yaba Higher College and the University College, Ibadan; however, numerous institutions had long attempted to provide both literary and technical education to ordinary Nigerians. While past scholars have focused on high-level programs to promote literacy, localized programs enjoyed wider—and deeper—success, even if the results could not hope to produce a uniformity of learning outcomes. Igbo, in particular, did not need Western institutions to promote ideas of “liberal arts”; the very word for human, *mmadu* [“the good life” and/or “the spirit is embodied”] implied the full range of virtues and experiences.<sup>638</sup> For those privileged, a university presence enabled greater prestige and likely, greater access with Western elites like the Lagosian elites and Northern emirs had enjoyed; for Azikiwe, it would restore the lost sense of self stripped away from indigenous African lives. Historian Ogechi Anyanwu observed that in this context, “the fear of [regional] domination, stirred by regional educational disparity, manifested itself for the first time in Nigeria’s history”—with the North, now perceived to be demographically dominant, as the principal threat.<sup>639</sup> Meanwhile, Northern politicians feared that Southern Christian politicians, all more connected to Western educational institutions, would certainly overtake them.<sup>640</sup> In 1957, Sir Ahmadu Bello told one audience at Oxford University that it might surprise them to hear that Northern Nigerians were “not so advanced in modern education as in the other Regions of Nigeria and in other West African territories.”<sup>641</sup> Bello acknowledged that “we are now paying the penalty for the reluctance of our forbearers to accept modern

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<sup>638</sup> Andrew I. Isiguzo, George Ukagba and Nkeonye Otakpor, “The Igbo Concept of a Person,” *Africa: Rivista trimestrale di studi e documentazione dell'Istituto italiano per l'Africa e l'Oriente* 59, no. 2 (June 2004): 231-243.

<sup>639</sup> Ogechi Emmanuel Anyanwu, *The Politics of Access: University Education and Nation-Building in Nigeria, 1948–2000*, 40.

<sup>640</sup> Ogechi Emmanuel Anyanwu, *The Politics of Access: University Education and Nation-Building in Nigeria, 1948–2000*, 40.

<sup>641</sup> Ahmadu Bello, Speech, May 25, 1957, transcript, Rhodes House.

educational methods.”<sup>642</sup> A literate laborer would be better situated for commanding the masses, as he could, than an illiterate one.

How could it be done? Azikiwe had warned that solely technical programs, would demean Africans, perpetuating Africans’ in a state of servitude.<sup>643</sup> But his American education reflected the programs of the New Deal America he saw firsthand and celebrated in his memoir. Azikiwe’s imagining for a University, then, may be considered an importation of American federal policy toward black universities during the Hoover and Roosevelt administrations; Hoover’s Interior Department was proactive in providing Howard University annual federal funding starting in 1928, although the Roosevelt White House tapered off in their support, even at the height of New Deal-era public education programs. In front of American audiences, Azikiwe celebrated Americana, citing Claude McKay: “Although [the] United States fed him with [the] bread of bitterness and sank into his flesh its tiger’s tooth, yet he loved this ‘cultured hell.’”<sup>644</sup> American education would be his most powerful weapon of anti-coloniality.

#### *Challenges to the NCNC Taxation Regime*

Highlighting American influence on Azikiwe’s ideas of education establishes the *mentalité*, not the process of actualization. University-making is not rooted only in ideas and speech-making but through legal institutions, appropriations, and political transformations both national negotiations at London Hotels as well as Aba water wells. Three local developments produced the environment that not only shaped the making of Azikiwe’s university but also, at times, complicated it. Although the University would, ultimately, draw on international linkages, its form and character depended on Azikiwe’s capacity to navigate local forces. Its establishment

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<sup>642</sup> Ahmadu Bello, Speech, May 25, 1957, transcript, Rhodes House.

<sup>643</sup> Azikiwe, “How Do We Educate the African,” 147-148.

<sup>644</sup> Nnamdi Azikiwe, *Zik: Selected Speeches*, 14.

was no foregone conclusion, in spite of Azikiwe's robust access to Western wealth. While Azikiwe's university project existed in the abstract, he faced a cacophony of political battles, some potentially fatal—and all indicative of the significance of UNN for *regional* politics, rather than nationalist dreams.

The Nigerian nationalists had no voice of thunder, either. Historina, G. O. Olusanya, observes that “the nationalist movement was badly disorganised,” leaving room for more radical voices to challenge the now-weakened white men.<sup>645</sup> The Nigerian Youth Movement [NYM], founded in 1934 with Ibadan's American-trained Eyo Ita as its head, counted the full lineup of Nigeria's educated elites among its numbers, many of them fellow-American trained academics.<sup>646</sup> Like Azikiwe, Ita, too, had been a Hope Waddell graduate and had attended an American university.<sup>647</sup> NYM suffered an institutionally fatal blow in 1941, with the split between well-renowned journalist Ernest Ikoli and Samuel A. “Saaki” Akinsanya, an *oba* who had led chieftaincy battle against Cadbury cocoa manipulations; while the latter won the vote, the executive dismissed it, appointing Ikoli instead.<sup>648</sup> For the next decade, nationalist thought languished. In 1946, radicalized adherents styling themselves as “Zikists”—the name given by Nwafor Orizu—attempted an assassination of a British official—and called upon Azikiwe to assume control of the movement, much to his annoyance.<sup>649</sup> A self-proclaimed Zikist lamented

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<sup>645</sup> G.O. Olusanya, “The Zikist Movement: A Study in Political Radicalism,” *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 4, no. 3 (November 1966): 331.

<sup>646</sup> Omolewa, “The Impact of U.S.-Educated African Students on Educational Developments in Africa, 1898–1955,” 275.

<sup>647</sup> Sklar, *Nigerian Political Parties*, 121, note 74.

<sup>648</sup> Insa Nolte, *Obafemi Awolowo and the Making of Remo* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2009), 124–127.

<sup>649</sup> G.O. Olusanya, “The Zikist Movement: A Study in Political Radicalism,” *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 4, no. 3 (November 1966): 331.

his denunciation: “After preaching a revolution for a decade, he, a successful businessman and a man of pleasure, was terrified when he saw one.”<sup>650</sup>

While nationalism languished, party democracy flourished. In 1944, Herbert Macaulay, a Royal Institute architect, and Columbia-educated Mbonu Ojike and Kingsley O. Mbadiwe, assisted in the formation of the National Council of Nigeria and the Cameroons, with Azikiwe as its head.<sup>651</sup> The NCNC had, in some ways, been defined by American institutions; as Coleman observes, Nigerian students in the immediate pre-WWII years assumed a particular brand of Nigerian nationalism; both Ojike Mbadiwe adopted militant “Zikism,” arguing for systemic boycotts, promoting America-Nigeria interchange, and establishing indigenous business (which, notably, invited several Western investments).<sup>652</sup>

While Azikiwe’s university dream long predated the rise of party democracy in Nigeria, the speed of its development and its organizational contours could be attributed to domestic influences more than foreign linkages. Political parties in Nigeria were something of late-colonial artifice, an external structure overlaid existing, indigenous societies such as Idoma Dance Clubs and Igbo *oha* and *umuada* (council of elders and council of daughters, respectively). By 1950, three major parties had risen to prominence: the National Council of Nigeria and the Cameroons in the East, the Action Group in the West, and the Northern People’s Congress in the North. It would be difficult,” Richard Sklar observes, “to overstate the value of Western education” to these political parties’ rise.<sup>653</sup>

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<sup>650</sup> G.O. Olusanya, “The Zikist Movement: A Study in Political Radicalism, 1946-1950,” *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 4, no. 3 (November 1966): 332.

<sup>651</sup> For the classic work on the intellectuals’ nationalism in Nigeria, see James S. Coleman, *Nigeria: Background to Nationalism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1958).

<sup>652</sup> Sklar, *Nigerian Political Parties*, 113.

<sup>653</sup> Sklar, *Nigerian Political Parties*, 90.

Each party, particularly the Action Group and the NCNC, had been seeking to undermine the other in their respective regional bases. Forged in 1945, the Action Group had been designed as political vehicle for the Egbe Omo Oduduwa: a “non-partisan” society for the promotion of Yoruba cultural identity and, to a lesser extent, limited constitutional reform.<sup>654</sup> In March 1950, Obafemi Awolowo, an attorney and long-time Nigerian nationalist, established an independent “action group” to function as the Egbe’s explicitly political partner.<sup>655</sup> The following year, the newly-formed Action Group party had become the Egbe’s formal “political wing.”<sup>656</sup> With an army of Lagosian monied elites, the Action Group left Azikiwe’s stronghold in Lagos.<sup>657</sup> When the Review of the Richards Constitution considered incorporation of Lagos into the Western Region, Azikiwe—and to a lesser extent, at first, Action Group—attempted to prevent it.<sup>658</sup> Lagos symbolized Nigerian identity, and for many, should remain independent of the partisan interests of a particular geographic region.<sup>659</sup> But the Action Group had no aspirations to “one Nigeria”; if implemented, the Action Group would have, quite transparently, advocated for the division of Nigeria into a host of small ethno-states. Awolowo argued that “every ethnic group in Nigeria. . . should in the long run be constituted into a separate State.”<sup>660</sup> The Northern People’s Congress [NPC] grew from a narrative similar to the Action Group. In its inception, the Northern People’s Congress had no interest in incorporating Southern influence; when self-governance came to Nigeria, they hoped only to dismantle “ignorance, idleness, and injustice”; they had little interest in the radical social transformations that either the Action Group or the NCNC

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<sup>654</sup> Sklar, *Nigerian Political Parties*, 465.

<sup>655</sup> Sklar, *Nigerian Political Parties*, 103.

<sup>656</sup> Sklar, *Nigerian Political Parties*, 104.

<sup>657</sup> Sklar, *Nigerian Political Parties*, 110.

<sup>658</sup> Sklar, *Nigerian Political Parties*, 111-112.

<sup>659</sup> Sklar, *Nigerian Political Parties*, 111.

<sup>660</sup> Sklar, *Nigerian Political Parties*, 266.



advocated.<sup>661</sup> In 1951, members of the more radical Northern Elements Progressive Union (NEPU) challenged the Northern Nigerian Congress to adopt a firmer line; in response, the NPC was formed to promote conservative progress to self-governance.<sup>662</sup>

In 1953, the NCNC won the majority in the Eastern House of Assembly handily, with Azikiwe as the Eastern Premier; a colonial officer in the Northern Region, Senior Resident James H. Smith dismissed them as a “terrible collection of blackguards” that used “grossly corrupt” methods.<sup>663</sup> Azikiwe, committed to expanding credit access for West Africans, had a plan. Within two years, Azikiwe established the legal scaffolding for a university in the Eastern region, appropriating some 5 million pounds. The product of a colonial funding structures, the funding for the University reflects its deeply colonial roots and its enmeshment in the extension of, rather than the departure from, British colonial institutions. Barclay’s Bank had held a firm grip on West African financing—and resisted the extension of loans to Africans, with few exceptions. Using his considerable charisma and connections, in 1947, Azikiwe transformed the Tinubu Bank into the African Continental Bank, owning just under \$250,000 of the Bank’s capital by 1949.<sup>664</sup> Azikiwe actively solicited external investors. When Pfizer, a pharmaceutical company, established a factory in Aba in 1962, a local official acknowledged that “our economy, at the initial stages, must depend to an extent on external capital, know-how and skill.”<sup>665</sup>

The Tribunal found that in November 1954, Azikiwe had convinced Effiong Okon Eyo of the Eastern Region Production Development Board to deposit 30,000 pounds into the as-of-yet unlicensed ACB.<sup>666</sup> Azikiwe then suggested to British investor, C. J. Mayne, without grounds,

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<sup>661</sup> Sklar, *Nigerian Political Parties*, 92.

<sup>662</sup> Sklar, *Nigerian Political Parties*, 96.

<sup>663</sup> James H. Smith, Letter to Sister, May 10, 1953, Rhodes House.

<sup>664</sup> Sklar, *Nigerian Political Parties*, 165.

<sup>665</sup> “Unemployment NO 1 Problem of Nigeria,” *Eastern Nigeria Guardian*, April 30, 1962, 1.

<sup>666</sup> *Foster-Sutton Tribunal*, 1002, National Archives-Ibadan.

that a British investment banker had also expressed interest in the bank. McKenna faulted Azikiwe for urging public funds to be placed in a bank that “has practically no liquid resources”—Azikiwe was “do[ing] less than one’s duty as a Premier.”<sup>667</sup> The *Express* took the opportunity. Azikiwe “is shouting anti-imperialism,” columnist Arthur Zink-Dia warned, “to draw the people’s attention from the failures of his regime and tide over the crisis in his system of maladministration.”<sup>668</sup> Deliberately or otherwise, the NCNC “represented the alliance of decadent imperialism with local corruption.”<sup>669</sup>

By late 1956, Azikiwe was compelled to answer for his bank dealings. It became clear that Azikiwe intended the Bank to be a mechanism for building up regional infrastructure—and primarily, for Igbo residents. In testimony: the United National Independence Party looked upon Azikiwe’s activities as funding diversion: “whether or not foreign capital should be invited into Nigeria or any Region thereof. . . is a national and not a Regional subject.”<sup>670</sup> More, MI6 implicated that the bank had been complicit in graft and the facilitation of an illegal arms trading network throughout West Africa.<sup>671</sup> As Azikiwe approached his university-building project, he found himself in the midst of a region-wide challenge of his leadership and capacity to preserve the N. C. N. C.’s governance in the Region. And there were more challenges to come.

#### *Taxation and the N. C. N. C. Control of the Eastern Region*

Azikiwe’s university project drew on taxation structures established through colonial institutions. Staffed primarily by structures established through the Eastern Region Local Government Ordinance, 1950, local governance institutions assumed the power of taxation

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<sup>667</sup> *Foster-Sutton Tribunal*, 1002, National Archives-Ibadan.

<sup>668</sup> “NCNC Attitude to Tribunal’s Report,” *Eastern States Express*, February 23, 1957, 2.

<sup>669</sup> “NCNC Attitude to Tribunal’s Report,” *Eastern States Express*, February 23, 1957, 2.

<sup>670</sup> *Foster-Sutton Tribunal*, 544, National Archives-Ibadan.

<sup>671</sup> “Extract from S.B. Report re: Adphy C. ment Azikiwe,” Special Branch Report, August 12, 1950, KV-2, National Archives-Kew, London, United Kingdom.

without the full consent of the taxed.<sup>672</sup> The Colonial Office had appointed the representatives that passed the Ordinance, and while voters could remove them from office, the structures themselves were the product of colonial contrivance. District Councils wielded the power of taxation and appropriation, able to “spend money on any project which is within the powers of Local Government Councils as set out in the Ordinance or any other written law,” or, just as importantly, that “which is approved by the Resident in charge.”<sup>673</sup> Smith bemoaned the situation to his sister: “They can raise any levies they like, and neither the D.O. nor I can intervene.”<sup>674</sup> In 1955, Azikiwe acknowledged that the law was a “great advance,” but Azikiwe saw some dangers in it: government councils were often “very immature and inexperienced,” while the control from the Ministry is “too remote to be effective.”<sup>675</sup>

For years, the NCNC had announced major initiatives in education; in fall 1954, the Eastern Regional Government informed the County Councils that it would introduce Universal Free Primary Education by 1956—and would offer grants to all the local government councils and voluntary associations to subsidize it: 55% and 45%, respectively—a toll too heavy for local governments to bear, according to E. E. Esua.<sup>676</sup> In Umuahia, Smith witnessed a series of meetings convene to challenge the education program: “the speakers were vigorous and clear. . . the meetings were orderly, and unmistakably friendly toward ourselves.”<sup>677</sup> The current taxes—all in the name of “free education”—were onerous.<sup>678</sup> “We do not want free education,” many

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<sup>672</sup> The Eastern Region Local Government Ordinance, 1950, ONDIST 20/1/1339.

<sup>673</sup> The Eastern Region Local Government Ordinance, 1950, ONDIST 20/1/1339.

<sup>674</sup> James H. Smith, Letter to Jean, January 16, 1955, Rhodes House.

<sup>675</sup> Azikiwe, *Zik*, 263.

<sup>676</sup> Nsukka County Council Meeting Minutes, August 26, 1954, File No. 1194/1, Enugu Federal Archives; E.E. Esua, “Views on the Proposed University of Nigeria,” Radio Broadcast, July 30, 1955, IUC/C44/55, Rhodes House.

<sup>677</sup> James H. Smith, Letter to Jean, January 16, 1955, Rhodes House.

<sup>678</sup> James H. Smith, Letter to Jean, January 16, 1955, Rhodes House.

villagers complained; “We want to run our village schools our own way, not through the County Council.”<sup>679</sup>

Councils needed to begin to establish their own technical schools for teachers, mechanics, and the like; if counties could provide the human resources in preparation for universal primary education, the Regional Government would “help those who help themselves.”<sup>680</sup> A conference of Provincial Education Officers at Enugu established that “Local Councils should be encouraged to take as large a share as possible” in administering new schools.<sup>681</sup> They established further that local councils should “own, as Proprietor, all new schools needed under the Government Universal Primary Education plan” and further, that councils would “take over the management of as many of these schools as possible.”<sup>682</sup> Education Minister I. U. Akpabio called the plan “most momentous ever undertaken by any government of this country past or present.”<sup>683</sup> Talk had long circulated about expanding a University College, Ibadan into Eastern Region. In an August 1954 meeting with the Nsukka County Council, Akpabio promised the establishment of an additional *University College* in the East.<sup>684</sup> He acknowledged that some doubted its financial viability, but he assured the council that the institution would skimp it: with “the best professors and a good library,” the University would serve the purpose.<sup>685</sup> In 1955, the Eastern Regional Government passed a law for the “Establishment of a university in Eastern Nigeria.” Azikiwe billed the law as a mechanism for enabling youth to have the resources for “life’s battle, so that lack of money will not deter them from obtaining higher vocational

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<sup>679</sup> James H. Smith, Letter to Jean, January 16, 1955, Rhodes House.

<sup>680</sup> Nsukka County Council Meeting Minutes, August 26, 1954, File No. 1194/1, Enugu Federal Archives.

<sup>681</sup> “Notes on the Conference of Provincial Education Officers at Enugu, on August 11,” ONED 5/1/554, Enugu Federal Archives.

<sup>682</sup> “Statement of Policy and Procedure for the Guidance of Education Officers, Local Government Councils & Voluntary Agencies,” ONED 5/1/554, Enugu Federal Archives.

<sup>683</sup> UI Nwaobiala, “East Primary Education Scheme,” *Eastern States Express*, January 14, 1957, 3.

<sup>684</sup> Nsukka County Council Meeting Minutes, August 26, 1954, File No. 1194/1, Enugu Federal Archives.

<sup>685</sup> Nsukka County Council Meeting Minutes, August 26, 1954, File No. 1194/1, Enugu Federal Archives.

education.”<sup>686</sup> The university “should be vocational in its objective and Nigerian in its content.”<sup>687</sup> Azikiwe was fixated on it: nothing less than a university could make Nigerian nationhood.

The law elicited resistance immediately. E. E. Esua, of the Nigerian Union of Teachers broadcast over the Nigerian radios that “no other piece of legislation, federal or regional, has evoked so much surprise in responsible educational circles.”<sup>688</sup> Even at the early stages, parties both British and Nigeria, spoke of Azikiwe’s “University” scheme in ways that foreign powers would write of “Biafra” years later: as hopefully naïve, at best and more often, as a punchline—the latest spectacle orchestrated by that master showman named Zik.<sup>689</sup> Esua felt “surprised” for a host of reasons: University College, Ibadan, was under-enrolled and under-funded—and heavily reliant upon external sources.<sup>690</sup> Moreover, Esua challenged how this “University of Nigeria” could be constitutive of myriad colleges, as the British University of Malaya and the University of London were?<sup>691</sup> Finally, Esua concluded, Azikiwe was breaching Constitutional limitations: Regional government alone did not have the authority to create universities. Higher education required consultation with the federal government—and better still, with the British. Azikiwe had conspicuously left them out of discussions.<sup>692</sup>

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<sup>686</sup> Azikiwe, *Zik: A Selection of Speeches*, 285.

<sup>687</sup> *Eastern Region of Nigeria, University of Nigeria Progress Report* (Enugu: Eastern Regional Government, 1960), 3.

<sup>688</sup> E.E. Esua, “Views on the Proposed University of Nigeria,” Radio Broadcast, July 29-30, 1955, IUC/C44/55, Rhodes House.

<sup>689</sup> E.E. Esua, “Views on the Proposed University of Nigeria,” Radio Broadcast, July 29-30, 1955, IUC/C44/55, Rhodes House.

<sup>690</sup> E.E. Esua, “Views on the Proposed University of Nigeria,” Radio Broadcast, July 30, 1955, IUC/C44/55, Rhodes House.

<sup>691</sup> E.E. Esua, “Views on the Proposed University of Nigeria,” Radio Broadcast, July 29-30, 1955, IUC/C44/55, Rhodes House.

<sup>692</sup> E.E. Esua, “Views on the Proposed University of Nigeria,” Radio Broadcast, July 29-30, 1955, IUC/C44/55, Rhodes House.

The Eastern Minister of Education offered a rejoinder echoing Azikiwe: that the University College, Ibadan's low enrollment numbers were rooted in a "dangerous" elitism through entrance examinations, while the Eastern Region rejected "any system of assessment"—cognizant as they were of the "desperate need of men and women with university training."<sup>693</sup> Their choice of names—"the University of Nigeria"—revealed the NCNC's partisan sensibilities. NCNC "believes in one Nigeria" and that the University will "serve the whole of Nigeria," a departure from the Action Group and the Northern People's Congress who supported increased regional balkanization.<sup>694</sup> Therefore, "why should it not be called the University of Nigeria?"<sup>695</sup> The Minister took particular umbrage that Esua held the University of London as the standard: "Does he mean to imply that there are no other good universities?"<sup>696</sup> Or worse, perhaps Esua hoped to "prejudice London University" against their University project in order to secure of a "complete monopoly of higher education" for his own institution, the University College, Ibadan. Eyo Ita, the Minister's political adversary, concurred: "foreign universities make us look outward," and he knew that the "day is dawning" when each state would have its own university.<sup>697</sup>

The Eastern Region's expansive education plans, particularly regarding Universal Primary Education, came under sustained attack. A columnist at the *Express* fumed that the NCNC was "bringing fascism and dictatorship in its train."<sup>698</sup> Taking a jab at Azikiwe's Messianic self-allusions invocations, he hoped that the "Nigeria we envisage not be a home for fake "Christs," fortune-hunters and bogus saviours."<sup>699</sup> Azikiwe was one among many "fake

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<sup>693</sup> Minister of Education, Radio Broadcast, July 29-30, 1955, IUC/C44/55, Rhodes House.

<sup>694</sup> Minister of Education, Radio Broadcast, July 29-30, 1955, IUC/C44/55, Rhodes House.

<sup>695</sup> Minister of Education, Radio Broadcast, July 29-30, 1955, IUC/C44/55, Rhodes House.

<sup>696</sup> Minister of Education, Radio Broadcast, July 29-30, 1955, IUC/C44/55, Rhodes House.

<sup>697</sup> Minister of Education, Radio Broadcast, July 29-30, 1955, IUC/C44/55, Rhodes House.

<sup>698</sup> "Nigeria of Our Heart," *Eastern States Express*, January 7, 1957, 2.

<sup>699</sup> "Nigeria of Our Heart," *Eastern States Express*, January 7, 1957, 2.

pretenders to leadership with the feet of clay, bent on milking the ignorance and gullibility of the masses in order to build and fence around themselves a family financial empire.”<sup>700</sup>

By March 1957, Azikiwe was still secretive about its location which gave the southern polities a mechanism for exploitation. A cohort of southern county councils from Uyo, Ikot Ekpene, attempted to leverage their influence with the NCNC by compelling them to establish Azikiwe’s university in Aba.<sup>701</sup> If the NCNC did not accept the Aba Urban District Council’s proposal, they would withhold all votes from the NCNC anyway. They thought themselves reasonable, offering a number of options: the Nwigwe Police Post on the Aba-Ikot-Ekpene Road or near Ariam (between Umuahia and Ikot Ekpene) would do. The University did not need raw materials, and the area “has got enough land,” and a “good water supply.”<sup>702</sup> The Aba-Uyo-Ikot Ekpene proposal was rooted in entrenched sectional conflict from a past generation’s colonial machinations.

For Azikiwe, the University functioned as a mechanism not only for nation-building but also, as a tool for the cultivation of infrastructure in the northern region of Igboland. While courting the Americans and the British, he concealed developments from onlookers; funding the University would require the implementation of a tax regime. By 1958, the University was common knowledge—and reflective of an ongoing perception that the NCNC was not the party of the Eastern Region but the party of Northern Igbo.

### *Most Obedient Women*

Tax collection carried with a disreputable colonial legacy. Reliant on public funds, the University was a project that benefited one area of the Eastern Region over the rest—a public

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<sup>700</sup> “Saviours with Stained Hands,” *Eastern States Express*, January 25, 1957, 2.

<sup>701</sup> “3 Councils Pin Down Zik to Name University site or lose votes,” *Eastern States Express*, March 13, 1957, 1.

<sup>702</sup> “3 Councils Pin Down Zik to Name University Site or Lose Votes,” *Eastern States Express*, March 13, 1957, 1

initiative that did not feel especially public; many did not connect with the “Nigerian” component of the “University of Nigeria.” Women’s resistance to such taxation regimes throughout the Niger Region drew on a storied history. In Abeokuta, the Egba United Government had imposed a regime of forced labor for villages throughout Abeokuta, then an independent sovereignty within the British protectorate, to facilitate infrastructure building.<sup>703</sup> Market girls were sometimes stripped naked by tax collectors to see if they were sufficiently old to pay taxes.<sup>704</sup> In 1914, Lugard and later, Sir Hugh Clifford, imposed sanitation fines on market women and farm women living in the rurality; the taxes became so severe that the Itori market closed down.<sup>705</sup> The sanitation taxes raised 752 pounds in 1917 alone, with approximately 35% of all offenses deriving from sanitation.<sup>706</sup> Court employees wandered from hut to hut to determine who, “in their opinion, did not keep their compounds sufficiently clean.”<sup>707</sup> Madam Jojolola, the *Iyalade* of the Egba, expressed the women’s grievances to a Commission of Inquiry: “The women all complained that they derived no benefit from the government. We make no profit on the goods we sell, and yet we have been called upon to pay taxes.”<sup>708</sup> A generation later, during the war, when Abeokuta farmers “refused to make any effort to feed the Army,” Captain Pullen of the Lagos Market responded that the Army “is in a position to fetch its own food out of the hands of those who are holding it up.”<sup>709</sup> Four years later, in 1947-1948, the rice regime was still in-place. Led by Funmilayo Ransome-Kuti, women from the Egba Market

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<sup>703</sup> Judith A. Byfield, “Taxation, Women and the Colonial State: Egba Women’s Tax Revolt,” *Meridians* 3, no. 2 (2003): 252.

<sup>704</sup> Judith A. Byfield, “Taxation, Women and the Colonial State: Egba Women’s Tax Revolt,” *Meridians* 3, no. 2 (2003): 269.

<sup>705</sup> Judith A. Byfield, “Taxation, Women and the Colonial State: Egba Women’s Tax Revolt,” *Meridians* 3, no. 2 (2003): 255.

<sup>706</sup> Judith A. Byfield, “Taxation, Women and the Colonial State: Egba Women’s Tax Revolt,” *Meridians* 3, no. 2 (2003): 255.

<sup>707</sup> Judith A. Byfield, “Taxation, Women and the Colonial State: Egba Women’s Tax Revolt,” 255.

<sup>708</sup> Judith A. Byfield, “Taxation, Women and the Colonial State: Egba Women’s Tax Revolt,” 260.

<sup>709</sup> Judith A. Byfield, “Taxation, Women and the Colonial State: Egba Women’s Tax Revolt,” 265.



mounted a months-long protest against the tax regime. They enjoyed local sovereignty, they argued—and could claim no political representation.<sup>710</sup>

Igbo women, too, engaged in perennial, targeted action against the colonial regime. In 1929, women throughout the Eastern Region, but particularly in Aba, mounted resistance against the local chieftaincies, empowered by the British, for considering a household tax on owned goods. When a warrant chief, Okugo, approached a married woman, Nwanyerruwa, she shot back: “Was your mother counted?” and according to the inquiry, they, “seized each other by the throat.” Aba women advocated for Okugo’s arrest and for assurances that they would not be taxed.<sup>711</sup> The violence spread throughout the Eastern Region. Caroline Ifeka-Moller observes that inter-community actions such as these were a rupture from the norm of intra-community protests—and represented an action targeted at a wide-scale problem beyond the scope of typical women’s grievances.<sup>712</sup> Not an extension of “sitting on a man,” as Igbo parlance called it, but rather, an orchestration of violence unprecedented in the region.<sup>713</sup> In 1947, under the leadership of Western Region politician, Funmilayo Ransome-Kuti (noted musician, Fela Kuti’s, aunt), women mounted a year-long protest against the enduring rice regime.<sup>714</sup>

In November 1954, a band of women mobilized in Aba and, in Colonial District Officer, James Smith’s, words “infected” the regions near Bende “over the payment of rates.”<sup>715</sup> Smith laughed off the incident: some male leaders had tried “the old trick of getting the women to turn

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<sup>710</sup> Judith A. Byfield, “Taxation, Women and the Colonial State: Egba Women’s Tax Revolt,” 269.

<sup>711</sup> Van Allen, “Sitting on a Man,” 173.

<sup>712</sup> Caroline Ifeka-Moller, “Sitting on a Man: Colonialism and the Lost Political Institutions of Igbo Women”: A Reply to Judith Van Allen,” *Canadian Journal of African Studies* 7, no. 2 (1973): 318.

<sup>713</sup> Caroline Ifeka-Moller, ““Sitting on a Man” Colonialism and the Lost Political Institutions of Igbo Women”: A Reply to Judith Van Allen,” *Canadian Journal of African Studies* 7, no. 2 (1973): 318.

<sup>714</sup> Judith A. Byfield, “Taxation, Women and the Colonial State: Egba Women’s Tax Revolt,” *Meridians* 3, no. 2 (2003): 269.

<sup>715</sup> James H. Smith, Letter to Jean, December 5, 1954, Rhodes House.

out, the silly geese.”<sup>716</sup> Someone tipped them off that “hordes of women” would occupy Mbiakpom, a nearby village. Better prepared than his forebearers, Smith “arranged to have 100 police ready for them ...and we rounded up the male ringleaders.”<sup>717</sup> Smith left the following year; meanwhile, the women’s anger rose—they could not be as Smith had styled it during an earlier encounter, “good-humour[edly] . . . chivvied away.”<sup>718</sup> Meanwhile, at a local government-run hospital, “fights among expectant mothers were frequent,” the *Express* noted; the urinary testing bowls were few in number, and daily, a scramble ensued to acquire one.<sup>719</sup> At the Aba Maternity ward, a mother expressing verbal exasperation behind a midwife’s back; when the midwife could not identify the woman, she threatened to have all ten women in the waiting room incarcerated.<sup>720</sup> The midwife conveyed the women “into a room apart where they remained in detention till 3 pm before they received any attention.”<sup>721</sup> Three women, reportedly well-educated, gave the midwife “the rough sides of their tongues.”<sup>722</sup>

On January 8, 1958, N. C. N. C. leadership announced that the funding for the Primary Education had fallen through—they would need to “reintroduce the Assumed Local Contribution” amounting to 6 pounds multiplied by 30 for each class teacher for Standard V an eight pounds, for Standard VI.<sup>723</sup> Eastern Regional Finance Minister, S. E. Imoke, his voice trembling took the responsibility; he had not exerted proper oversight over his then permanent secretary who had made the “miscalculation.”<sup>724</sup> Imoke had expected 5,000,000 pounds, but

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<sup>716</sup> James H. Smith, Letter to Jean, December 5, 1954, Rhodes House.

<sup>717</sup> James H. Smith, Letter to Jean, December 5, 1954, Rhodes House.

<sup>718</sup> James H. Smith, Letter to Jean, December 5, 1954, Rhodes House.

<sup>719</sup> “Two pregnant women fight at hospital,” *Eastern States Express*, July 18, 1957, 1.

<sup>720</sup> “A sigh earns ten women confinement,” *Eastern States Express*, July 17, 1957, 1.

<sup>721</sup> “A sigh earns ten women confinement,” *Eastern States Express*, July 17, 1957, 1.

<sup>722</sup> “A sigh earns ten women confinement,” *Eastern States Express*, July 17, 1957, 1.

<sup>723</sup> Permanent Secretary, Letter to Secretary Treasurer, January 8, 1958, OWDIT, 2/1/123, Enugu Federal Archives.

<sup>724</sup> “NCNC Minister says he is willing to resign,” February 18, 1958, 1.

“people would not pay their taxes.”<sup>725</sup> Compelled now to comply with a program that had little appeal to them from the outset, a wave of resistance—some of it violent—spread throughout Igboland. Zik was aware of the Eastern Region’s financial straits. They had “spent heavily on salaries, teachers, nurses, midwives and arrears of pay to Local Government employees and on lump sum compensation to retiring expatriate civil servants.”<sup>726</sup> They hired Professor Hicks, a finance lecturer at Nuffield College, to advise them. Hicks’ counsel was firm: the regional government needed to reduce all grants to both district and county councils.<sup>727</sup>

Rumors about government schemes to increase taxes were standard currency. When colonial officials introduced the 1952/53 census to Igbo in northern Igbo areas, rumors circulated about the intent: that “it was a plot to increase taxation, or to increase the water rate,” to expand “conscription for the Korean war,” or for “forced labor.”<sup>728</sup> A District Head regularly assured inquirers that the census was not connected to a tax plan: “it is the first question everyone asks.”<sup>729</sup> In Kano, Eastern Unions told a Regional Census Officer that “if you don’t mention tax, people think there is something behind.”<sup>730</sup> One man from Katsina asked if the census was intended to identify dancing girls on a “nominal roll of dancing girls for Europeans.”<sup>731</sup> Ground-level suspicion rendered any sustained government interaction suspect.

In 1957, Azikiwe took a tour in the United States, and visited New York City where he sought benefactors for the University: the American International Cooperation Administration as

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<sup>725</sup> “NCNC Minister says he is willing to resign,” *Eastern States Express*, February 18, 1958, 1.

<sup>726</sup> “Zik Talks on East Money,” *Eastern States Express*, February 20, 1958, 1.

<sup>727</sup> “English Woman to appear for NCN Govt in East,” *Eastern States Express*, January 3, 1958, 1.

<sup>728</sup> “Notes on a Visit to the Northern and Western Regions,” August 15, 1952, ONDIST 20/1/207, Enugu Federal Archives.

<sup>729</sup> “Notes on a Visit to the Northern and Western Regions,” August 15, 1952, ONDIST 20/1/207, Enugu Federal Archives.

<sup>730</sup> “Notes on a Visit to the Northern and Western Regions,” August 15, 1952, ONDIST 20/1/207, Enugu Federal Archives.

<sup>731</sup> “Notes on a Visit to the Northern and Western Regions,” August 15, 1952, ONDIST 20/1/207, Enugu Federal Archives.

well as the Kellogg, Ford, or the Carnegie Foundations, all of whom had investment in Nigerian philanthropy.<sup>732</sup> Azikiwe told Oleka Udeala, later a Vice Chancellor for the University, that Kellogg could only “do something” if they could “go and think [of] what they can do something” of their own first.<sup>733</sup> Azikiwe’s plans to establish the university came amidst a wave of Western educational models sweeping throughout Nigeria—even to the point that family institutions were losing their influence of youth. “The family system [in Egba] is breaking down,” a colonial observer noted with some satisfaction, “owing to the influx of civilisation.”<sup>734</sup>

While Azikiwe’s university project was “indigenous,” in this sense, Azikiwe was seeking to import an institution that drew on the West for its inspiration—and using women’s funds to do it. By February 1958, J. Russell Andrus of the ICA expressed doubt that Azikiwe’s regional university “would have sufficient funds in the near future.”<sup>735</sup> Dejected, he wandered the streets of New York, until, as he relayed it, he saw a Lever Brothers skyscraper with cobs of corn engraved on the outside. “I knew in an instant,” he told one American investor, “that if you can build a skyscraper in New York with maize, you can build a university in Nigeria with palm oil.”<sup>736</sup> He returned to New York with the equivalent of 61 million dollars in-hand, accrued from the palm oil tax the legislature imposed in 1955.<sup>737</sup>

Those from the southern Igbo villages did not agree—nor fully recognize the purpose for the taxes.<sup>738</sup> In Mbaitoli, a rural area, 2000 people “of all classes” attended a village meeting.

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<sup>732</sup> Edward H. Berman, *The Ideology of Philanthropy: The Influence of the Carnegie, Ford, and Rockefeller Foundations on American Foreign Policy* (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 1983), 74-75.

<sup>733</sup> Oleka Udeala, Interview with author, October 5, 2019.

<sup>734</sup> Judith A. Byfield, “Taxation, Women and the Colonial State: Egba Women’s Tax Revolt,” *Meridians* 3, no. 2 (2003): 253.

<sup>735</sup> J. Russell Andrus, Letter to John A. Hannah, February 28, 1958, John A. Hannah Papers, Box 49, Folder 13.

<sup>736</sup> “Feature: MSU and Africa[:] An Extraordinary Connection,” <https://givingto.msu.edu/stories/story.cfm?id=2127> <accessed September 1, 2020>.

<sup>737</sup> “Feature: MSU and Africa[:] An Extraordinary Connection,” <https://givingto.msu.edu/stories/story.cfm?id=2127> <accessed September 1, 2020>.

<sup>738</sup> Mbaitoli Rural District Meeting Minutes, January 25, 1958, OWDIT, 2/1/123.

The politicians' calls for calm fell on "deaf ears"; the crowd shouted that "if he had anything to say, he should say without wasting time"—then they could move on to the business of sharing "the public's opinion of them."<sup>739</sup> Chairman F.I. Okoronkwo assured them that rumors of "no more free education" were false; rather, "the Government has found it necessary to introduce secondary subjects in standards five and six" which required additional fees.<sup>740</sup> As far as the Council knew, the Government had "no intention" to impose additional fees for standards 1-4. The fees were not the Councils' doing, he assured them, but came from the House of Assembly at Enugu. Could not parents "try to pay the necessary fees to help the Government"?<sup>741</sup>

On January 25, a spokesman for the Mbieri area, Richard Anyanwu, called deceit: "You have denied the order to introduce higher school fees rate indirectly."<sup>742</sup> The very council standing in front of him had asked them *already* to pay "the much vexed increased tax not minding the District General rate we also pay"; these taxes would be enough to offer free education.<sup>743</sup> "The so called free education has only lasted one year and Govt has again introduced payment of school fees on a higher rate than before with a pretense that it is 'Admission fees.'"<sup>744</sup> Anyanwu concluded that no school fees would be paid until the tax rate is reduced. The hall shouted: "WE ARE ALL OF THE SAME OPINION."<sup>745</sup> The Regional government's offer of a two-week grace period for payment proved unsatisfactory.<sup>746</sup>

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<sup>739</sup> Mbatioli Rural District Meeting Minutes, January 25, 1958, OWDIT, 2/1/123.

<sup>740</sup> Mbatioli Rural District Meeting Minutes, January 25, 1958, OWDIT, 2/1/123.

<sup>741</sup> Mbatioli Rural District Meeting Minutes, January 25, 1958, OWDIT, 2/1/123.

<sup>742</sup> Mbatioli Rural District Meeting Minutes, January 25, 1958, OWDIT, 2/1/123.

<sup>743</sup> Mbatioli Rural District Meeting Minutes, January 25, 1958, OWDIT, 2/1/123.

<sup>744</sup> Mbatioli Rural District Meeting Minutes, January 25, 1958, OWDIT, 2/1/123.

<sup>745</sup> Mbatioli Rural District Meeting Minutes, January 25, 1958, OWDIT, 2/1/123.

<sup>746</sup> Telegram, February 11, 1958, 4:18 PM, OWDIT, 2/1/123.

Armed action broke out in Azikiwe's home division of Onitsha.<sup>747</sup> At Osu, 2000 women sent a petition calling for the lifting of the fees.<sup>748</sup> They "chased the children out of the schools" and "obstructed court proceedings."<sup>749</sup> In Nnewi, 6,000 demonstrators hurled a tirade of anger at a District Officer's attempts to subdue them.<sup>750</sup> Police retreated when they found that tear gas failed to disperse a crowd of angry women protestors.<sup>751</sup> The government increased their arms, handing out 1,000 guns to police units throughout the region.<sup>752</sup>

Women congregated at the Owerri District Office over the course of three days: one militant group and the other "more orderly and cheerful." Honorable A. N. Obonna asked for a "group of policemen" to meet the "thousands of women with sticks"; another report estimated the women to be 10,000.<sup>753</sup> They congregated at the Council Hall and surrounded the Council Chairman. No public institution—neither school nor court nor "any office"—would open "until they settle their matter with the authorities."<sup>754</sup> On January 30, the Njor-Okpala Secretary/Treasurer S.A. Ihejinika reported that 4,000 women had "blockaded the Council Offices and the dispensary with sticks, palm fronds and leaves"; no staff member would work, they warned, or there would be looting.<sup>755</sup> The Secretary reported that "the worst will happen" if he "let the workers in."<sup>756</sup> An Okwe court met a similar fate.<sup>757</sup> By January 31, matters had calmed in most locales—except Mbaise. There, "the markets have virtually ceased to function

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<sup>747</sup> "Crowd Reolt in Onitsa Division Against Zik's Govt," *Eastern States Express*, February 14, 1958, 1.

<sup>748</sup> "Crowd Reolt in Onitsa Division Against Zik's Govt," *Eastern States Express*, February 14, 1958, 1.

<sup>749</sup> "Crowd Reolt in Onitsa Division Against Zik's Govt," *Eastern States Express*, February 14, 1958, 1.

<sup>750</sup> "Police Open fire on Owerri crowd," *Eastern States Express*, February 19, 1958, 1.

<sup>751</sup> "Police Open fire on Owerri crowd," *Eastern States Express*, February 19, 1958, 1.

<sup>752</sup> "More Guns for Police," *Eastern States Express*, February 21, 1958, 1.

<sup>753</sup> "Women Riot in Mbaise," January 30, 1958, OWDIT, 2/1/123.

<sup>754</sup> "Women Riot in Mbaise," January 30, 1958, OWDIT, 2/1/123.

<sup>755</sup> S.A. Ihejinika, Letter to Administrative Officer, January 30, 1958, OWDIST, 2/1/123.

<sup>756</sup> S.A. Ihejinika, Letter to Administrative Officer, January 30, 1958, OWDIST, 2/1/123.

<sup>757</sup> N.L. Nbuwazue, Letter to Administrative Officer, January 30, 1958, OWDIST, 2/1/123.

and women are in [an] excitable mood.”<sup>758</sup> When school administrator Opara Igbokwe discouraged the women from demonstrating, they threatened to loot his home: “I am therefore asking for immediate police protection.”<sup>759</sup>

At 11 P.M. on January 31, over a thousand invaded protestors the Okpala Native Court and forced its closure.<sup>760</sup> The Ikeduru Rural District Council Treasurer warned that the “women no longer mean peace but have decided to take the law into their own hands . . . my life as a head of a unit of government here, is at stake.”<sup>761</sup> The Chief Administrative Officer (CAO), a Mr. A. Urquhart, dismissed the Treasurer’s call for more police: “This is not your concern,” he wrote in the margin—and the CAO deferred to the police judgment.<sup>762</sup> Telegraphs from the District Office were certain that reports about women’s violence were largely exaggerated—“except repeat except in respect of Mbaise”; the Assistant Superintendent of Police sent 25 men and an Inspector to a site only to find it “all quiet.”<sup>763</sup> Urquhart couldn’t be bothered with sending police officers in “penny pockets” all around the territory.<sup>764</sup> Key male politicians inflamed matters by spreading rumors about a forthcoming military operation; some of them actively encouraged the women’s militance; the Ikeduru officer conveyed that “some wild men” and Mbaise women are “influencing the women here to loot the property of council employees.”<sup>765</sup> Non-compliance with their demands would mean immediate withdrawal of children from all schools.

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<sup>758</sup> District Office Telegram to Deputy Enugu, January 31, 1958, OWDIT, 2/1/123.

<sup>759</sup> Opara Igbokwe, Letter to Chief Administrative Officer, February 2, 1958, OWDIT, 2/1/123.

<sup>760</sup> CNC, Letter to Administrative Officer, January 31, 1958, OWDIT, 2/1/123.

<sup>761</sup> District Office Telegram to Deputy Enugu, January 31, 1958, OWDIT, 2/1/123.

<sup>762</sup> A. Urquhart, Memo to Asst. Supt. Of Police, Owerri, January 31, 1958, OWDIT, 2/1/123.

<sup>763</sup> District Office Telegram to Deputy Enugu, January 31, 1958, OWDIT, 2/1/123; A. Urquhart, Memo to Asst. Supt. Of Police, Owerri, January 31, 1958, OWDIT, 2/1/123.

<sup>764</sup> A. Urquhart, Memo to Asst. Supt. Of Police, Owerri, January 31, 1958, OWDIT, 2/1/123.

<sup>765</sup> District Office Telegram to Deputy Enugu, January 31, 1958, OWDIT, 2/1/123; Secretary/Treasurer, Ikeduru Rural District Council, January 31, 1958, OWDIT, 2/1/123.

The movement appeared to be expanding. On February 1, the once-dismissive Urquhart, beleaguered at the explosion of violence, warned that Owerri women would likely start for Enugu; could they not put a stop to it?<sup>766</sup> “We cannot do the impossible,” he advised the Owerri Senior Police Sup’t, an “stop[ping] lorries taking women to Enugu are very slim.”<sup>767</sup> An officer named Njoku sent a telegram commending an officer for his tact in meeting with some women demonstrators on January 30; he was convinced that if a man named “Bernard or some other responsible men had not kept near them and accompany them to Enugu they would have resorted to violence.”<sup>768</sup>

Violence spread through Oguta, where 1,000 women broke a window and littered the premises with tree branches and junk.”<sup>769</sup> Eight officers broke up the gathering with a “baton charge.”<sup>770</sup> At the Owerri demonstration, the police attempted to stop the procession, but they were unsuccessful.<sup>771</sup> Gathering on their rear flank, a battalion of armed men and women assaulted from their rear flank, holding guns, sticks, rocks—whatever they could grab—while they blocked the road. Release them, the group demanded. The officers allowed the ten under arrest to be freed—only to receive, in turn, a round of bullets from the battalion. The officers threw tear gas at the gathering and retreated.<sup>772</sup> Using a loudspeaker, the Chief Administrative Officer urged another group of women to use “constitutional means” of protest.<sup>773</sup> They

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<sup>766</sup> A. Urquhart, Letter to Seniot Supt. Of Police, February 1, 1958, OWDIT, 2/1/123; see also telegram to “Priority Executive Owerri,” 11:38 AM, OWDIST, 2/1/123 for the women’s plans to travel to Enugu.

<sup>767</sup> A. Urquhart, Letter to Seniot Supt. Of Police, February 1, 1958, OWDIT, 2/1/123; see also telegram to “Priority Executive Owerri,” 11:38 AM, OWDIST, 2/1/123 for the women’s plans to travel to Enugu.

<sup>768</sup> Telegram, Njoku, OWDIT, 2/1/123.

<sup>769</sup> Supol Onyjekwe, Telegram, February 2, 1958, OWDIT, 2/1/123.

<sup>770</sup> Supol Onyjekwe, Telegram, February 2, 1958, OWDIT, 2/1/123.

<sup>771</sup> A.N. Obonna, Note to S.D.O., Jan. 27, 1958, OWDIT, 2/1/123; Supol Ukpong, Telegram, January 28, 1958, OWDIT, 2/1/123.

<sup>772</sup> A.N. Obonna, Note to S.D.O., Jan. 27, 1958, OWDIT, 2/1/123; Supol Ukpong, Telegram, January 28, 1958, OWDIT, 2/1/123.

<sup>773</sup> Chief Administrative Officer, Telegram to Deputies: Enugu, Umuahia, and Owerri, January 29, 1958, OWDIT, 2/1/123.



responded with “uncomplimentary statements about regional government”; the Officer refused to pass them along.<sup>774</sup>

Governor General Robert Stabledon issued a state of emergency, a curfew, and a general prohibition on all public gatherings. Reports flooded the Owerri Police Office. 2000 women demonstrated at the Holy Rosary Catholic School, 500 women at the Golf Court, and 400 at the Baby Clinic.<sup>775</sup> The processions were reportedly peaceful.<sup>776</sup> 5,000 interrogated a government executive, and women at Isu destroyed tax registers.<sup>777</sup> Officers held back 6,000 more in Owerri from invading the District Office; women invaded schools, sending children away from St. Peter’s CMS school as well as St. Peter’s in Ahiara.<sup>778</sup>

Women’s petitions illustrate their grievances. Missionary education had been far more affordable over government education: 6 pounds *per annum*.<sup>779</sup> A group of non-Igbo women from Owerri expressed their grievances: 1) “Heavy Tax”; 2) school fees; and 3) bicycle plate fees. The women had paid their taxes since 1955, but free education program only came into effect in 1957. The women celebrated education as necessary for “quick development of the country.”<sup>780</sup> God had made their families, and deity mattered more than acquiescence to governmental authority: “can we blame our God who gives us children because of Government?”<sup>781</sup> A band of Mbaise women joined the Ohandom: when evil rulings came from

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<sup>774</sup> Chief Administrative Officer, Telegram to Deputies: Enugu, Umuahia, and Owerri, January 29, 1958, OWDIT, 2/1/123.

<sup>775</sup> Supol Onyejekwe, February 3, 1958, 9:00 AM., OWDIT, 2/1/123.

<sup>776</sup> Supol Onyejekwe, February 3, 1958, 9:00 AM., OWDIT, 2/1/123.

<sup>777</sup> Supol Onyejekwe, February 3, 1958, 12:35 P.M., OWDIT, 2/1/123; Supol Onyejekwe, February 3, 1958, 1730 PM, OWDIT, 2/1/123.

<sup>778</sup> Supol Onyejekwe, February 3, 1958, 12:35 P.M., OWDIT, 2/1/123; Supol Onyejekwe, February 3, 1958, 1730 PM, OWDIT, 2/1/123.

<sup>779</sup> Ohandom Mbaise Owerri, Letter to His Worship, February 6, 1958, OWDIT, 2/1/123.

<sup>780</sup> Ohandom Mbaise Owerri, Letter to His Worship, February 6, 1958, OWDIT, 2/1/123.

<sup>781</sup> Ohandom Owerri, Letter to District Officer, February 3, 1958, OWDIT, 2/1/123.

down from the government, “justice at the same time should take its course.”<sup>782</sup> Echoing the same charges as the Ohandom, the Mbaïse women concluded that the NCNC “would like to overlook and let us down by way of not changing its wrong law.”<sup>783</sup> They appealed to British sensibilities: “We declare from [this] date not to be under black rule but British rule which is full of sympathy to the common man and woman.”<sup>784</sup> A group of Ohaji women resented that the “Ohaji councilors” had sent a letter to the Owerri District officer without their approval. The Council was fundamentally illegitimate: “We beg to be under the white men,” they told the NCNC officials; “so you have to settle well for us.”<sup>785</sup> They would pay seven shillings for taxes and five shillings for school fees—no more, no less.<sup>786</sup>

But the violence was ethnically tinged, too: the women continued. Minority activist groups throughout the Delta claimed Igbo dominance sought their obliteration; the conflict blurred lines between ethnic and gendered movements in the Delta region. Queen’s Crown Counsel Christopher Shawcross, a kind of specialty barrister in protectorate matters, warned in court that the Region was careening “rapidly to totalitarianism and dictatorship.”<sup>787</sup> Shawcross invoked Hitler; allowing continued NCNC dominance (and by implication, Igbo dominance) would lead to “the establishment of a concentration camp and detentions of those whom a would-be dictator describe as ‘undesirable people’ and most probably their imprisonment without trial.”<sup>788</sup> Some fumed that it “was a government for Ibos and by Ibos.”<sup>789</sup> The Ohandom

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<sup>782</sup> “Your Obedient Mbaïse Women,” Letter to District Officer, February 3, 1958, OWDIT, 2/1/123.

<sup>783</sup> “Your Obedient Mbaïse Women,” Letter to District Officer, February 3, 1958, OWDIT, 2/1/123.

<sup>784</sup> “Your Obedient Mbaïse Women,” Letter to District Officer, February 3, 1958, OWDIT, 2/1/123.

<sup>785</sup> Ohaji Women, Letter to District Officer, February 11, 1958, OWDIT, 2/1/123.

<sup>786</sup> Ohaji Women, Letter to District Officer, February 11, 1958, OWDIT, 2/1/123.

<sup>787</sup> “Dictatorship in Eastern Nigeria Directed against Minorities,” *Eastern States Express*, Jan. 10, 1958, 1.

<sup>788</sup> “No Safeguards can allay fears of the people of COR State Area; State Creation is the only solution,” *Eastern States Express*, Jan. 9, 1958, 1.

<sup>789</sup> “No Safeguards can allay fears of the people of COR State Area; State Creation is the only solution,” *Eastern States Express*, Jan. 9, 1958, 1.

Owerri concluded: “We want Europeans to rule us. We do not want Ibos to rule us any longer because they want to kill us by telling us to pay h[e]avy amount, and after paying this amount they eat it.”<sup>790</sup>

An Aba County Council member, Ekota Henry Ekong, a Tutor at St. Paul’s Commercial College and a colleague of J. W. Nwachukwu (AUDC signatory to the Aba university proposal), provides a compelling example of how the women’s movement and the minorities movement converged. Ekong lived on Ikot Ekpene road, not far from the site of the proposed Aba university scheme. Some of the women “carried him shoulder high and assaulted him” while others looted his home. The female defendants responded that as an Assemblyman, he is “responsible for the introduction of enrolment fees and reintroduction of high school fees.”<sup>791</sup> Ekong denied it: they should take up the matter with the Regional Government. After all, they were the ones who had cut resources to the local councils.<sup>792</sup>

On February 9, Azikiwe denounced the demonstrations as a “rising tempo of disorder.”<sup>793</sup> The NCNC had “shown great patience”; they were reasonable, thoughtful, and willing to “listen to representations made in a constitutional manner.”<sup>794</sup> He threatened that the government would use “all necessary force to restore law and order . . . “There will be no surrender to mob violence.”<sup>795</sup> All public gatherings were banned, while Catholic missions urged congregants to “understand the difficulties of the Regional Government” and to “resist every temptation to take part in acts of lawlessness and violence.”<sup>796</sup>

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<sup>790</sup> Ohandom Owerri, Letter to District Officer, February 3, 1958, OWDIT, 2/1/123.

<sup>791</sup> “Police Arrest Many More Women: Court sits until Nightfall,” *Eastern States Express*, February 6, 1958, 1.

<sup>792</sup> “Police Arrest Many More Women: Court sits until Nightfall,” *Eastern States Express*, February 6, 1958, 1

<sup>793</sup> “Premier’s Broadcast,” February 10, 1958, Transcript from A. Urquhart, OWDIT, 2/1/123.

<sup>794</sup> “Premier’s Broadcast,” February 10, 1958, Transcript from A. Urquhart, OWDIT, 2/1/123.

<sup>795</sup> “Premier’s Broadcast,” February 10, 1958, Transcript from A. Urquhart, OWDIT, 2/1/123.

<sup>796</sup> “Catholics to Pray for End of Crisis,” *Eastern States Express*, February 10, 1958, 1.

Governor Robert Stapledon issued state of emergency in Owerri, Onitsha, Awka, and Brass on February 10, but threats of violence continued for the next week.<sup>797</sup> On February 12, A. Onyenze complained, an army of women, headed by 44 ring leaders “besieged my house” and dismantled his walls; he estimated the total damage to total 207 pounds. “I am now destitute . . . with 2 wives and 8 children,” four of whom attend school. “How would I live?”<sup>798</sup> The Government needed to intervene to “stay out this practice,” lest the “whole town and villages” be “doomed.”<sup>799</sup>

By February 17, the Eastern House of Assembly had succumbed to the demands, “in view of the difficulties created by the increasing cost of education.”<sup>800</sup> The registration fees for standards 1-4 would be rescinded with “assumed local contributions” at 10 shillings per quarter in standards 1-2 and 20 shillings in standards 3-4.<sup>801</sup> For standard 5, the rate of 30 shillings per quarter would continue but standard 6 would drop by 10 shillings per quarter: 40 shillings to 30 shillings.<sup>802</sup> The “assumed local contribution,” the Regional Government emphasized, “does not necessarily imply the reintroduction of fees” but could be raised through rating, village contributions, fees, or private donations.<sup>803</sup>

On February 18, a crowd in Owerri gathered, facing off against a police battalion.<sup>804</sup> The officers charged the crowd, arresting ten. But another cadre approached the police’s rear flank, wielding “guns, matchets and sticks.”<sup>805</sup> With the police encircled, the crowd demanded the release of the detained. Once the detained were released, the group “opened fire” on the police,

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<sup>797</sup> Telegram, February 12, 1958, pg. 135, OWDIT, 2/1/123.

<sup>798</sup> Letter to Administrative Officer, February 18, 1958, WDIT, 2/1/123.

<sup>799</sup> Letter to Administrative Officer, February 18, 1958, WDIT, 2/1/123.

<sup>800</sup> “Announcement,” February 19, 1958, OWDIT, 2/1/123.

<sup>801</sup> “Announcement,” February 19, 1958, OWDIT, 2/1/123.

<sup>802</sup> “Announcement,” February 19, 1958, OWDIT, 2/1/123.

<sup>803</sup> “Announcement,” February 19, 1958, OWDIT, 2/1/123.

<sup>804</sup> “Police Open fire on Owerri crowd,” *Eastern States Express*, February 19, 1958, 1

<sup>805</sup> “Police Open fire on Owerri crowd,” *Eastern States Express*, February 19, 1958, 1

damaging the police car. The officers exchanged fire, unleashed tear gas, and then withdrew.

Only a few days earlier, a similar encounter had left a protestor dead in Brass. “All they wanted to hear was the abolition of the school fees,” the *Express* reported.<sup>806</sup>

Rumors circulated about the reasons for the violence. Louis Ejekwu Nwosu from Uhuala Udo heard from a friend, John Emeaka Nwachukwu—an “eye-witness of the events”—that the “rising” was “not due to any personal or community detest of any Govt. policy” but rather, “wrong information” from a local chief who caused a “false alarm.”<sup>807</sup> Nwosu attributed the violence to a land dispute between a chief, Godwin Esonu and a local named Kotina “over which the Chief has ever desired to cut a personal road.”<sup>808</sup> The chief’s relatives destroyed the crops and attributed it to the women’s violence; when Kotina informed some of the women of the act, they confronted the chief alongside Kotina “against the destruction of the crops.”<sup>809</sup> Angered, the chief waved a gun at them and the women left. But among “certain women,” Nwosu noted, a “standing enmity” allegedly inspired them to steal six pounds from the chief during the demonstrations.<sup>810</sup> Nwosu denied that the women had destroyed any buildings, “public or private.”<sup>811</sup> Reports of further violence swept in from Emerianwe, but Urquhart begged off from dispatching more troops, “in view of the tough time the police have had in the last 24 hours.”<sup>812</sup>

In spite of the Governor-General’s order and Azikiwe’s warning, traditional rulers supported and perpetuated the threats of violence. On February 16, court clerk C. A Ekeanyanwu sent to Urquhart warning that women would gather in the court the next day to “destroy

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<sup>806</sup> “Police Open fire on Owerri crowd,” *Eastern States Express*, February 19, 1958, 1

<sup>807</sup> Affidavit, Louis Nwosu, February 18, 1958, OWDIT, 2/1/123.

<sup>808</sup> Affidavit, Louis Nwosu, February 18, 1958, OWDIT, 2/1/123.

<sup>809</sup> Affidavit, Louis Nwosu, February 18, 1958, OWDIT, 2/1/123.

<sup>810</sup> Affidavit, Louis Nwosu, February 18, 1958, OWDIT, 2/1/123.

<sup>811</sup> Affidavit, Louis Nwosu, February 18, 1958, OWDIT, 2/1/123.

<sup>812</sup> A. Urquhart, Letter to Senior Supt. Of Police at Owerri, February 18, 1958, OWDIT, 2/1/123.

buildings and loot property.”<sup>813</sup> Chiefs were “not giving the co-operation expected of them at this time,” the clerk explained; “otherwise, things would have returned to normal.”<sup>814</sup> For the administrators, the explosion of violence caused more eye-rolling than head-wringing; when one officer was tasked to send out copies of the emergency order, he complained to his subordinate about the annoyance of it. Be sure to send them out, he advised him, “But I don’t want to hear or see any more about it!”<sup>815</sup>

The *Express* watched with morbid self-validation as the NCNC’s regime seemed to be falling apart—even in regions identified as “NCNC strongholds.”<sup>816</sup> “Truth Comes to NCNC,” an editorial declared with solemn triumph.<sup>817</sup> Seeing the cost of the host of government programs, “they parted company with their oracle and came down to earth.”<sup>818</sup> Of the 26 Aba women arrested and ordered to pay a fine or go to prison, the *Express* observed that perhaps “historians will see them as true patriots or martyrs.”<sup>819</sup> The *Express* “pray[ed] that those whose promises formed the remote cause of these women’s present misfortune, may realize what moral victory the women have scored over them.”<sup>820</sup>

The 1958 Owerri women’s war on the NCNC reveals the extent to which late-colonial state-building projects, such as “free education” and “indigenous universities” resonated poorly with the local population. Judith Van Allen’s seminal article has highlighted a long tradition of women’s resistance to taxation in Eastern Nigeria. The famed 1929 *ogu umuwanyi* [women’s war] commenced in the Oloko Native Court Area of Owerri Province, not far from the

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<sup>813</sup> C.A. Ekeanywu, Letter to Chief Administrative Officer [Urquhart], February 16, 1958, OWDIT, 2/1/123.

<sup>814</sup> C.A. Ekeanywu, Letter to Chief Administrative Officer [Urquhart], February 16, 1958, OWDIT, 2/1/123.

<sup>815</sup> Note, February 14, 1958, 1:40, OWDIT, 2/1/123.

<sup>816</sup> “NCNC Legislators May Not Keep Faith With Voters,” *Eastern States Express*, February 10, 1958, 2.

<sup>817</sup> “When Women Elect to Go to Prison,” *Eastern States Express*, February 7, 1958, 2.

<sup>818</sup> “When Women Elect to Go to Prison,” *Eastern States Express*, February 7, 1958, 2.

<sup>819</sup> “When Women Elect to Go to Prison,” *Eastern States Express*, February 7, 1958, 2.

<sup>820</sup> “When Women Elect to Go to Prison,” *Eastern States Express*, February 7, 1958, 2.

movement of the 1958 revolt. The women's mothers, aunts, and grandmothers had freed prisoners, burned courts in sites throughout Igboland, ranging from the city of Aba to the outlying village of Nkwoegwu; in the aftermath of the *ogu umuwanyi*, the court at Nkwoegwu was moved to Enyiogugu.<sup>821</sup> Women's resistance to taxation was a family matter, passed from mother to daughter and shared between sisters.

The Owerri Women's war on the NCNC further reveals the failure of the post-1929 reforms and the resilience of the notion of women's resilience against an oppressive regime. The *ogu umuwanyi* prompted the implementation of a massive judicial bureaucracy, through an expansion of the court system and the hiring of a large number of bureaucrats. While all paralegal institutions, such as the Arochukwu shrine and the *mikiri* market network had been decreed illegal following the Arochukwu raid in 1901, the expansion of the bureaucracy, Judith Van Allen argues, made this decree viable—but acknowledges that “what has happened to them since has not been reported in detail.”<sup>822</sup> Van Allen has suggested that women's institutions and authority had been “effectively eliminated.”<sup>823</sup> The Owerri women's war reveals the resilience and the endurance of women's networks in challenging male-driven institutions, be they British or indigenous.

#### *You Have Your Say, We Have Our Way*

As Michael C. Echeruo has argued, Azikiwe was willing to be a constitutionalist as much as a populist, when the occasion required it: “since our contact with the British,” he told an

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<sup>821</sup> Chief Dulu Chukwuegbu, Interview with John Uzoma Nwachukwu, September 1, 1982, in “Nguru-Mbaise Under the British 1902-1929: A Study in the Political, Social, and Economic Changes,” B.A. project, University of Nigeria, Nsukka, 63; Nneji Nwachukwu, Interview with John Uzoma Nwachukwu, October 4, 1982, B.A. project, University of Nigeria, Nsukka, 95.

<sup>822</sup> Judith Van Allen, “Sitting on a Man”: Colonialism and the Lost Political Institutions of Igbo Women,” *Canadian Journal of African Studies* 6, no. 2 (1972): 178.

<sup>823</sup> Judith Van Allen, “Sitting on a Man”: Colonialism and the Lost Political Institutions of Igbo Women,” *Canadian Journal of African Studies* 6, no. 2 (1972): 178.

American audience: “we have passed through the crucible of tutelage in the art and practice of democracy.”<sup>824</sup> But Azikiwe had little patience for such challengers. He had devised the University to help both men and women without resources to become competent members of Nigeria’s working class—and under a distinctively *Nigerian* degree. Opposition to the University, he said two months after the *ogu umunwanyi* ended, “could only come from people who, being fully aware of the value of a University and its influence in improving the general standards of any nation” wanted Nigeria “to remain under-developed.”<sup>825</sup>

Meanwhile, word spread, as they often had, that Azikiwe would retire from the NCNC permanently.<sup>826</sup> On April 19, Ralph H. Hunt, citing four sources, reported that Azikiwe showed increased mental instability, “bewilder[ment],” and reclusivity.<sup>827</sup> The University became his obsession, the offering upon which he would hope to place his legacy. “He is anxious to get on with plans for the early establishment of his projected ‘University of Nigeria.’”<sup>828</sup> In April, an influential NCNC opposition leader in the Western House of Assembly, Al Hadji Degoke Adelabu was killed in an automobile crash on the Lagos-Ibadan highway, prompting a series of riots in Ibadan—according the American consular reporting officer, “the most serious [in] region’s recent history.”<sup>829</sup> Adelabu’s death eliminated any immediate relevance the NCNC hoped to enjoy in the Western Region. Azikiwe had bigger plans for navigating his University through the wilderness—and bigger plans than money.

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<sup>824</sup> *Zik: A Selection of Speeches*, 292.

<sup>825</sup> Azikiwe, *Zik: A Selection of Speeches*, 286.

<sup>826</sup> Ralph H. Hunt, “Developments in the Eastern Region,” Box 3238, Folder 2257, National Archives-College Park, Maryland.

<sup>827</sup> Ralph H. Hunt, “Developments in the Eastern Region,” Box 3238, Folder 2257, National Archives-College Park, Maryland.

<sup>828</sup> Ralph H. Hunt, “Developments in the Eastern Region,” Box 3238, Folder 2257, National Archives-College Park, Maryland.

<sup>829</sup> Adams, Telegram to Secretary of State, April 2, 1958, Box 3238, Folder 2257, College Park.



The University had already been a target for opposition from within the East—and now, it was entering the national debate: who was paying for it? When would it be completed? Whom would it benefit? In May, the NCNC lost a by-election in Eket and Calabar to the Action Group in a by-election over allegations of voter fraud in the March 1957 election.<sup>830</sup> The *West African Pilot*, unpredictably, chastised the NCNC for “steadily but gradually abdicating its hold on the masses” and “its old fire which gave it national billing.”<sup>831</sup>

The Eket loss prompted K.O. Mbadiwe, Kolawole Balogun, and Azikiwe’s old childhood chum, H. O. Davies, to call for Azikiwe’s resignation as NCNC president.<sup>832</sup> The trio formed the “NCNC Reform Committee,” who dismissed Azikiwe from the NCNC presidency.<sup>833</sup> The “Reform Committee” accused Azikiwe of, among other thing, “attempt[ing] to rush building university before successful operation of universal primary education, whose failure recently brought far-reaching repercussions.”<sup>834</sup> The rifts were also sectional in nature, reiterating the same, longstanding complaints of the year previous about patronage afforded to northern Igboland that Southern Igbo never had received. Azikiwe’s University project prompted an internal rift within the NCNC leadership between the radical “Zikist” and the reformists led by K. O. Mbadiwe.<sup>835</sup> A cohort of Owerri Igbo organized themselves into a political action group called “The Strangers Element” that had managed to win the Enugu mayoral race.<sup>836</sup> Azikiwe dismissed out of hand the possibility of the Strangers Element breaking off from the NCNC;

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<sup>830</sup> Ralph H. Hunt, “NCNC Loses By-Election in Eastern Region,” May 14, 1958, Box 3238, Folder 2257.

<sup>831</sup> Ralph H. Hunt, “NCNC Loses By-Election in Eastern Region,” May 14, 1958, Box 3238, Folder 2257.

<sup>832</sup> Ralph H. Hunt, Telegram to Secretary of State, June 16, 1958, 4:43 P.M., Box 3238, Folder 2257.

<sup>833</sup> Ralph H. Hunt, Telegram to Secretary of State, June 16, 1958, 4:43 P.M., Box 3238, Folder 2257.

<sup>834</sup> Ralph H. Hunt, Telegram to Secretary of State, June 16, 1958, 5:08 P.M., Box 3238, Folder 2257.

<sup>835</sup> Jack H. Berryhill, Letter to Glen L. Taggart, July 28, 1958, John Hannah Papers, Box 49, Folder 13.

<sup>836</sup> Ralph H. Hunt, “Developments in the Eastern Region,” April 19, 1958, Box 3238, Folder 2257.

Hunt reported that Azikiwe believed the Owerri Igbo, in Hunt's telling, "are first of all Ibos and they realize that their strength, both nationally and regionally, lies in Ibo tribal solidarity."<sup>837</sup>

By May 1958, the grievances against NCNC education tax policy had made their way into the Eastern House of Assembly.<sup>838</sup> Action Group Opposition Leader S. G. Ikoku, leader of the Action Group opposition, wanted it "abundantly clear that we are not going to give our support to this University project until a clear programme embodying the whole thing has been got up and made available to the public."<sup>839</sup> He and his cohorts were frustrated with government "conducting its affairs like a secret society."<sup>840</sup> He wanted a white paper making the full financial scheme transparent. Frustrated, E. O. Eyo of Uyo, said the university felt imposed, decreed by *fiat*: "the Ministers . . . are telling us: 'You are not entitled to know any more about it; it is not your business to know.'"<sup>841</sup> But the "trend of opinion" in the East, Eyo concluded, is that "the people do not think that the Government should embark on this project."<sup>842</sup> Using Nsukka—as far-removed and alienated as it was—was ill-conceived, Eyo warned. "So many people in the Region do not approve the establishment of a University at Nsukka."<sup>843</sup> And if the Government continued to be secretive, it appears that "this University project," repeating for emphasis, "*this University project* is going to be handled as the affairs of the African Continental Bank."<sup>844</sup> [emphasis added]<sup>844</sup>

The law did not allow for Marketing Board funds to be utilized for university and research purposes, and now, Azikiwe—as he had with the ACB—was diverting funds from the

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<sup>837</sup> Ralph H. Hunt, "Developments in the Eastern Region," April 19, 1958, Box 3238, Folder 2257.

<sup>838</sup> *Eastern House of Assembly Debates*, May 22, 1958, 73.

<sup>839</sup> *Eastern House of Assembly Debates*, May 22, 1958, 73.

<sup>840</sup> *Eastern House of Assembly Debates*, May 22, 1958, 73.

<sup>841</sup> *Eastern House of Assembly Debates*, May 22, 1958, 73.

<sup>842</sup> *Eastern House of Assembly Debates*, May 22, 1958, 72-73.

<sup>843</sup> *Eastern House of Assembly Debates*, May 22, 1958, 73.

<sup>844</sup> *Eastern House of Assembly Debates*, May 22, 1958, 73.

public trust for a pet project to benefit his home community in Onitsha Province, of which Nsukka was a part. The Government “should drop this project at least for the time being and then be honest enough about it.”<sup>845</sup> Eyo’s language was deliberate; “projects” carried implications of externally-funded institutions and infrastructure, born of minds well-removed from the realities of daily Niger regional life.

Representative M. E. Ogon dismissed the concerns: “this Government has taken us into confidence even more than any other Government has done . . . show[ing] what the Government intends to do. Government want[s] to set up a Provisional Council. What else do you want them to do?”<sup>846</sup> And Ogon responded to Eyo’s ACB jab with jingoism: “This Bank is better than the Bank of England in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. To say otherwise would be a conspiracy against African nationalism.”<sup>847</sup> Ogon had little regard for “cries” from the Opposition: the “University is going to be built and we are not going to accept your suggestion of taking a free vote on Government Policy.”<sup>848</sup> Azikiwe’s University was grander, better-funded, better-planned, and more aspirational than this so-called “project” that Eyo had dismissed so readily. Azikiwe considered Ogon’s concerns an “absolute lie” and then offered a summary of actions taken: the placement of a model exhibiting the University was put in the House corridor and a bill passed giving the Provisional Council *carte blanche* to do all things “requisite and necessary for the establishment of the University.”<sup>849</sup> The House had presented four bills addressing “every aspect of the University.” Azikiwe had been *incredibly* transparent, he assured them. A White Paper was coming off the printers “as we speak,” he promised them—and a white paper was, in fact,

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<sup>845</sup> *Eastern House of Assembly Debates*, May 22, 1958, 73.

<sup>846</sup> *Eastern House of Assembly Debates*, May 22, 1958, 75.

<sup>847</sup> *Eastern House of Assembly Debates*, May 22, 1958, 75.

<sup>848</sup> *Eastern House of Assembly Debates*, May 22, 1958, 75.

<sup>849</sup> *Eastern House of Assembly Debates*, May 22, 1958, 78.

released days later.<sup>850</sup> Azikiwe retorted with the polysyllabic jabs he enjoyed refining in his younger days. Ikoku is “an inconsistent politician and one who can say anything he likes and get away with it because of parliamentary privilege.”<sup>851</sup> Azikiwe would “not allow him to get away with this,” for the “falsehood is too obvious.”<sup>852</sup> The Action Group were simple losers; Azikiwe quipped: “as a minority, you have your say, and as a majority, we have our way,” to cheers of “Hear, hear!” throughout the chamber.<sup>853</sup> The vote was clear: 55 ayes versus 13 nays.<sup>854</sup>

While Ikoku and Eyo complained about Azikiwe’s secretiveness, Azikiwe had engineered a plan to collaborate with an American patron, entirely beyond the knowledge of the Eastern House: Michigan State University, now becoming a global leader in transitioning former colonial holdings to nationhood—the subject of chapter 4. The politics of MSU involvement were, as MSU International Programs Dean Glen L. Taggart, called them, “sensitive.”<sup>855</sup> As of June 1959, Taggart advised USAID to stay mum about the project: “Very few Nigerians, other than Dr. Azikiwe himself, are in a position to talk” about the university; Azikiwe “guarded the planning and development pretty closely.”<sup>856</sup> By December 9, rumors were swirling that Azikiwe had “abandoned” the university project entirely.<sup>857</sup> The financing and support for Azikiwe’s University program had entered into the realm of open state secrets—to be spun and papered over when exposed.

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<sup>850</sup> “Telegrams in Brief,” *The Times* [London], May 29, 1958, 9.

<sup>851</sup> *Eastern House of Assembly Debates*, May 22, 1958, 79.

<sup>852</sup> *Eastern House of Assembly Debates*, May 22, 1958, 79.

<sup>853</sup> *Eastern House of Assembly Debates*, May 22, 1958, 80.

<sup>854</sup> *Eastern House of Assembly Debates*, May 22, 1958, 80.

<sup>855</sup> Glen L. Taggart, Letter to Leo Beldock, June 19, 1959, John A. Hannah Papers, Box 49, fd. 12, Michigan State University Archive.

<sup>856</sup> Glen L. Taggart, Letter to Leo Beldock, June 19, 1959, John A. Hannah Papers, Box 49, fd. 12, Michigan State University Archive.

<sup>857</sup> “University of Nigeria to Commence First Session Sept. 1960,” *Eastern Sentinel* December 9, 1959, 1.

### *Funding the University*

The funding of the University spoke to concerns prevailing throughout the East, either by Ikoku and Eyo or the bands of women roaming Mbaise: an Igbo-dominant institution intended, primarily, for Igbo students; covert redirection of public funds; and increased tax burdens. In March 1956, Eastern Regional Governor Sir Clement Pleass announced that the Eastern Region Marketing Board—the same board that handled Azikiwe’s ACB transfer—would be contributing 5 million pounds over 10 years toward the newly-authorized University of Nigeria.<sup>858</sup>

From before 1947 to 1949, the West African Produce Control Board, which oversaw all of Anglophone West Africa, accrued approximately 21,000,000 pounds in palm oil net trading surplus.<sup>859</sup> When the Nigerian Oil Palm Produce Marketing Board was established in 1949, the West African Produce Control Board turned over to the Nigerian Oil Palm Produce Marketing Board (NOPPMB) an existing reserve of 11,457,000 pounds.<sup>860</sup> In total, the NOPPMB had 119,914 million pounds by 1954, one year before the passage of the Eastern Regional University Law.<sup>861</sup>

The Eastern Region’s gross domestic product faltered in comparison to the Action Group. The Eastern government was not especially well-equipped to fund development projects using palm oil. Between 1953 and 1954, palm oil producers received 6,900,000 in government subsidies, due to what historian, Gerald Helleiner, considers “substantial trading losses.”<sup>862</sup>

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<sup>858</sup> “University of Nigeria,” *The Times* [London], March 12, 1956, 8; Gerald K. Helleiner, “The Fiscal Role of Marketing Boards,” *The Economic Journal* 74 no. 295 (September 1964): 592.

<sup>859</sup> Gerald K. Helleiner, “The Fiscal Role of the Marketing Boards in Nigerian Economic Development, 1947-61,” 584.

<sup>860</sup> Gerald K. Helleiner, “The Fiscal Role of the Marketing Boards in Nigerian Economic Development, 1947-61,” 584.

<sup>861</sup> Gerald K. Helleiner, “The Fiscal Role of the Marketing Boards in Nigerian Economic Development, 1947-61,” 584.

<sup>862</sup> Gerald K. Helleiner, “The Fiscal Role of the Marketing Boards in Nigerian Economic Development, 1947-61,” 585.

Azikiwe insisted that the Eastern Region had “kept a remarkably fine record of making profits every year.”<sup>863</sup> Azikiwe’s claim to Eastern profitability was not entirely wrong; between 1954 and 1961, the East net trading surplus amounted 10,736,000 pounds as opposed to the North’s net loss of 3,202,000 pounds.<sup>864</sup> But Azikiwe’s focus *solely* on net trading surplus concealed another figure: how the East compared to both the West and the North in overall assets, including the leftovers from the Central Board transfer as well as the excess of income in other arenas. The East accrued 23,919, the North, 31,900, and the West, a robust 62,550.<sup>865</sup> Azikiwe also took credit for “jam[ming up] 2 million from the reserves of the Marketing Board” in 1958, a part of the 11,464,000 transferred between 1954-1961.<sup>866</sup> Helleiner notes that such transfers “were not all made at the same time” and would “not [be] resolved for several years.”<sup>867</sup>

But profitability notwithstanding, between 1955 and 1961, the government withheld nearly 4,600,000 pounds in palm oil purchase tax, and over 9,600,000 pounds in export duties.<sup>868</sup> When the central Nigerian marketing board transferred assets over to regional entities in 1955, the Eastern Region fared the worst in the transfer, receiving 11,464,000 pounds as opposed to the West’s 42,897,000 and the North’s 32,651,000 pounds.<sup>869</sup> And while funding withheld from cotton, groundnuts, and cocoa decreased in proportionality to what Helleiner categorizes “potential producer income” from 1947-1954 to 1955-1961, it held steady in the palm sector or increased.<sup>870</sup> For export duties, the government withheld 11,872,000 in 1947-1954 v. 15,125,000 for 1955-1961 for palm kernels and 7,356,000 in 1947-1954 v. 9,646,000 in 1955-1961 for palm

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<sup>863</sup> *Eastern House of Assembly Debates*, May 22, 1958, 80.

<sup>864</sup> Helleiner, “The Fiscal Role of the Marketing Boards in Nigerian Economic Development, 1947-61,” 588.

<sup>865</sup> Helleiner, “The Fiscal Role of the Marketing Boards in Nigerian Economic Development, 1947-61,” 588.

<sup>866</sup> *Eastern House of Assembly Debates*, May 22, 1958, 80; Gerald K. Helleiner, “The Fiscal Role of the Marketing Boards in Nigerian Economic Development, 1947-61,” 586.

<sup>867</sup> Helleiner, “The Fiscal Role of the Marketing Boards in Nigerian Economic Development, 1947-61,” 586.

<sup>868</sup> Helleiner, “The Fiscal Role of the Marketing Boards in Nigerian Economic Development, 1947-61,” 584, 586.

<sup>869</sup> Helleiner, “The Fiscal Role of the Marketing Boards in Nigerian Economic Development, 1947-61,” 586.

<sup>870</sup> Helleiner, “The Fiscal Role of the Marketing Boards in Nigerian Economic Development, 1947-61,” 584.

oil.<sup>871</sup> For purchase taxes, the amount withheld was 4,327,000 for both time periods.<sup>872</sup> For palm oil, this amount also held: 4,592,000.<sup>873</sup> When the marketing boards were established, its funds were intended for the “development of the producing industries and . . . the economic benefit and prosperity of the producers and the areas of production: marketing, cotton, and palm.”<sup>874</sup>

The Marketing Board had been designed to regulate sellers attempting to manipulate market prices, serving as the equivalent of a commodity-focused Securities and Exchange Commission; it was not intended to be—but served as—a mechanism for generating state revenue.<sup>875</sup> And now, funds needed to be seized. In 1955, he claimed, both the Action Group and the NCNC supported a bill “enabling this Government to make use of the reserves of the Marketing Board for University purposes.”<sup>876</sup> After Azikiwe approached Michigan State University for funding, one figure celebrated that “the funds did in fact come from the people of the country.”<sup>877</sup> In 1962, Michigan State University administrator George Axinn warned of the University’s financial insolubility; now established, he warned that it “will not be able to finish the present fiscal year unless a substantial grant is received from the National Universities Commission in Nigeria.”<sup>878</sup> Deficit spending, Axinn noted, with tones ominous from the 1958 riots and debate, would “expose Azikiwe to his enemies,” enemies that were both in the streets and in the House.<sup>879</sup> Keenly aware of the asymmetric trade output between East and West,

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<sup>871</sup> Helleiner, “The Fiscal Role of the Marketing Boards in Nigerian Economic Development, 1947-61,” 586.

<sup>872</sup> Helleiner, “The Fiscal Role of the Marketing Boards in Nigerian Economic Development, 1947-61,” 586.

<sup>873</sup> Helleiner, “The Fiscal Role of the Marketing Boards in Nigerian Economic Development, 1947-61,” 586.

<sup>874</sup> Helleiner, “The Fiscal Role of the Marketing Boards in Nigerian Economic Development, 1947-61,” 589-590.

<sup>875</sup> Helleiner, “The Fiscal Role of the Marketing Boards in Nigerian Economic Development, 1947-61,” 583.

<sup>876</sup> *Eastern House of Assembly Debates*, May 22, 1958, 79.

<sup>877</sup> George Axinn, Interview with Peter Ezeocha, in Peter A. Ezeocha, “The General Impact of Michigan State University/University of Nigeria Program on Higher Education in Nigeria with Special Emphasis on Eastern Nigeria: A General Review of the Innovative Program,” Ph.D. dissertation, University of Missouri-Kansas City, 1976, 148.

<sup>878</sup> George Axinn, Letter to John W. Hannah, November 30, 1962, John Hannah Papers, MSU Archives.

<sup>879</sup> George Axinn, Letter to John W. Hannah, November 30, 1962, John Hannah Papers, MSU Archives.

NCNC leadership attempted to keep pace with Western expansion by raising taxes on the East's most lucrative avenue of commerce: palm oil; even some British firms acquired profits, in spite of the high shipping costs.<sup>880</sup> For local entities, oil provided a viable avenue for profit accrual; the Second World War, in particular, spurred oil production.<sup>881</sup> Owerri locals had a sense that the gross output of the Nigerian economy was expanding, even as they paid higher export and purchase taxes. But "free education" administered by distant hands in Enugu, most of them educated in British and American universities, meant a kind of social order unlike their own.



Figure 7: Site for the Construction of the University of Nigeria, Nsukka.  
Courtesy of Merrill-Cazier Library, Utah State University.  
Utah State University.

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<sup>880</sup> Martin Lynn has made a compelling case, over and against John Latham, that the palm oil was immensely profitable for a handful of firms in the nineteenth-century. Latham, too, acknowledged that it became profitable in the latter half of the nineteenth-century. See Martin Lynn, "The Profitability of the Early Nineteenth-Century Palm Oil Trade," *African Economic History* 20 (1992): 97.

<sup>881</sup> O.N. Njoku, "Export Production Drive in Nigeria During the Second World War," *Transafrican Journal of History* 10, nos. 1-2 (1981): 12.



Educated in mission schools established in the villages and townships, often by missionaries who learned the local language and integrated themselves into the community, these women had little flavor for expensive “projects” built far in Northern Igboland that would offer them marginal benefit.<sup>882</sup>

The Aba press had taken note of the disproportionate access they perceived Onitsha as enjoying.<sup>883</sup> A cohort of urban councils from Uyo, Ikot Ekpene, and Aba had long complained that their areas had been “grossly neglected . . . in the distribution of amenities and other establishments.”<sup>884</sup> Relatively few towns in the Eastern Region enjoyed access to pipe-carried water or even proper wells; in former days, a handful of water projects in Udi and Aba were considered but never implemented. Until 1957, Calabar alone had wells or pipes.<sup>885</sup> As one Aba journalist observed, the “immediate outcome” of NCNC rule would be that Ogidi and Nsukka will receive piped water.<sup>886</sup> Similarly, while an aerodome was planned for Uyo, an NCNC victory meant that an aerodome, planned for construction in Uyo, would be sited in Onitsha: “Uyo is the home of Eyo, and Onitsha is the home of Zik,” he groaned, “and this is politics.”<sup>887</sup> In Aba, they had “received no blessings,” so the best thing Aba could do is “vote for that party that will help by using our high tax to develop our towns.”<sup>888</sup> Similar complaints circulated about government scholarships, with the “bulk of scholarships” for Onitsha.<sup>889</sup> The discrimination, an Aba lawyer alleged, “lent colour to the allegation that the Regional Government is concentrating everything it can afford on one Division”: Onitsha.<sup>890</sup> The Aba Urban District Council Chair C.

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<sup>882</sup> James H. Smith, Letter to Jean, January 16, 1955, Rhodes House.

<sup>883</sup> “3 Councils Pin Down Zik to Name University site or lose votes,” *Eastern States Express*, March 13, 1957, 1.

<sup>884</sup> “3 Councils Pin Down Zik to Name University site or lose votes,” *Eastern States Express*, March 13, 1957, 1.

<sup>885</sup> “3 Councils Pin Down Zik to Name University site or lose votes,” *Eastern States Express*, March 13, 1957, 1.

<sup>886</sup> James Udofia, “Count Your Woes Under NCNC Rule,” *Eastern States Express*, February 11, 1957, 2.

<sup>887</sup> James Udofia, “Count Your Woes Under NCNC Rule,” *Eastern States Express*, February 11, 1957, 2.

<sup>888</sup> James Udofia, “Count Your Woes Under NCNC Rule,” *Eastern States Express*, February 11, 1957, 2.

<sup>889</sup> “Aba Division Sees Award of Scholarships as Discriminatory,” *Eastern States Express*, April 27, 1957, 1.

<sup>890</sup> “Aba Division Sees Award of Scholarships as Discriminatory,” *Eastern States Express*, April 27, 1957, 1.

N. Obioha complained that Aba township “had no major development in the past” and while Onitsha and Enugu had received patronage, “the township of Aba had not been greatly favoured by the Government.”<sup>891</sup> With marginalized southern Igbo and non-Igbo minorities, a robust majority in the House, and a tax burden widely acknowledged to be unviable, Azikiwe’s quip “as a minority, you have a say and as a majority, we have our way” took on an ominous tone.<sup>892</sup>

### *Conclusion*

The roots of Nnamdi Azikiwe’s university project reveal a complicated, tense relationship with village life in rural Nigeria. Committed to the cultivation of labor-intellectuals, Azikiwe considered the University project to be worth the financial costs for enforcement. Laboring under NCNC rule, the University project became less a communal aspiration for learning and more, a representation of a long history of projects and taxes Nigerians had been compelled to pay. The uncertainty around the university’s funding, its patrons, and its general schema continued for the next several years.

Azikiwe envisioned a Nigeria with an army of laborer-intellectuals, capable of wielding the words needed to challenge colonial authority *and* carry out the agro-industrial work of a new nation-state. His vision, however, relied on existing colonial structures of tax extraction and project-building that defined the post-war colonial era. In the battle over the late-colonial project of state-building, women served as vanguard troops challenging the legitimacy of both NCNC rule, taxation, and the myriad fees imposed in establishing apparatuses intended for “development.” The famed “palm oil” tax was planted against a rocky soil of rural resistance about high state planning concerning their daily. But Azikiwe’s networking carried the day; authenticated with an American education and well-attuned to American donors, Azikiwe could

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<sup>891</sup> “‘Aba Not Favoured like Onitsha,’ says UDC Chairman,” *Eastern States Express*, April 4, 1957, 1.

<sup>892</sup> *Eastern House of Assembly Debates*, May 22, 1958, 79-80.

plan out large-scale projects with the full conviction of his capacity to attract benefactors. While the women of Owerri were attacking courthouses, Azikiwe was engaging in intricate grand strategy that involved using one superpower to undermine the other. In this, he found allies in an American land grant institution committed to cultivating de-colonizing nations: Michigan State University.

In the next chapter, this dissertation will analyze how Nnamdi Azikiwe used Michigan State University to undermine what I call “British educational sovereignty” in Nigeria, one of the British imperial officials’ most prized legacies. American education posed a threat to the British perception of their legacy in Africa. The introduction of American educational modalities seemed to present an existential threat to British claims of educational superiority—particularly so when done by the likes of Nnamdi Azikiwe. Michigan State University found itself navigating the demands of both imperialists and anti-imperialists—which demanded tenuous collaboration in order to keep the project intact.

## CHAPTER 4

E. P. Miller was livid. A long-standing resident of Kano, Miller “knew Africa”—and she knew that she knew it, unlike those “exalted” crowds at the cocktail parties in Oxford.<sup>893</sup> A Church Missionary Society missionary, Miller’s brother was a friend and colleague of Lugard—and she did not mind reminding people of it when useful.<sup>894</sup> Miller had read an op-ed by the

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<sup>893</sup> E.P. Miller, Letter to Margery Perham, May 1, 1959, Perham Papers, Rhodes House, Oxford University.

<sup>894</sup> Margery Perham, Letter to E.P. Miller, May 6, 1959, Perham Papers.

famed Lugard biographer and colonial commentator, Margery Perham, which earned her a tongue lashing from Lord Salisbury.<sup>895</sup> Perham's op-ed made a simple argument: that the British granted protectorate status "for so long as their respective peoples so desire."<sup>896</sup> As Africans recognized "their own poverty and political immaturity," the British should spend 10-20 years of "whole-hearted and overt measures to hasten their advance towards a proclaimed goal of political equality."<sup>897</sup>

Miller would not have it: "You MUST back up the British wherever he is, whatever he does, for, vis a vis the black man, he is right & is doing right."<sup>898</sup> Nigeria was racked with "political factions warring (yes warring) against each other."<sup>899</sup> Africans "will never be able to rule without a white man at his elbow."<sup>900</sup> Nigeria was a "white man's country," and Africans, she seethed, "however highly educated must be ruled."<sup>901</sup> With deference and collegiality, Margery Perham "naturally bow[ed] to [her] judgment about African character."<sup>902</sup> But the "whole world" opposed British protectorate status in perpetuity, Perham responded; "if we are going to give way, it is better to do so when there is good will, rather than after a year or two of ineffective resistance."<sup>903</sup> Miller was unaware that one of the looming threats to British dominance in the region was as much a thin-haired, bespectacled lanky man in East Lansing named Glen as much as any Africans in Kano.

This chapter will illustrate how Michigan State University, the British Inter-University Council, and Azikiwe engaged in a triangular competition for influence of the University of

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<sup>895</sup> Marjorie Perham, "Central Africa," *The Times* [London], April 25, 1959, 7.

<sup>896</sup> Marjorie Perham, "Central Africa," *The Times* [London], April 25, 1959, 7.

<sup>897</sup> Marjorie Perham, "Central Africa," *The Times* [London], April 25, 1959, 7.

<sup>898</sup> E.P. Miller, Letter to Margery Perham, May 1, 1959, Perham Papers, Rhodes House, Oxford University.

<sup>899</sup> E.P. Miller, Letter to Margery Perham, May 1, 1959, Perham Papers, Rhodes House, Oxford University.

<sup>900</sup> E.P. Miller, Letter to Margery Perham, May 1, 1959, Perham Papers, Rhodes House, Oxford University.

<sup>901</sup> E.P. Miller, Letter to Margery Perham, May 1, 1959, Perham Papers, Rhodes House, Oxford University.

<sup>902</sup> Margery Perham, Letter to E.P. Miller, May 6, 1959, Perham Papers, Rhodes House, Oxford University.

<sup>903</sup> Margery Perham, Letter to E.P. Miller, May 6, 1959, Perham Papers.

Nigeria project. While the British Council attempted to stonewall its advancement, the Americans attempted to produce a multi-party coalition to produce a viable university emblematic of the Nigerian nation-state. Azikiwe paid little heed to either the Americans or the British; as he frequently said: “We want to govern ourselves in 1960, even if we govern badly.”<sup>904</sup>

#### *Michigan State University’s Significance as a Land Grant Institution*

Founded in 1855, Michigan State Agricultural College was the first beneficiary of the 1862 Morrill Land-Grant College Act, an act initiated by Senator Justin Morrill which designated federal land for the establishment of local educational institutions for educating skilled laborers and scientists.<sup>905</sup> But no egalitarian was Morrill; his Act intended only to replicate the “institutions [that] had already been established in other countries supported by their government.”<sup>906</sup> His aim was not to expand access to education as a public right or even as an inherent good for the *demos*; rather, he believed that this model would curate a thriftier, more productive working class.

Land grant institutions have played a foundational role in producing many modern practices: prepared food at University of California-Berkeley, the Reserve Officer Training

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<sup>904</sup> Ralph H. Hunt, “Interview with Governor-General (Sir James Robertson),” May 1, 1958, Box 3238, Folder 2257, College Park, Maryland.

<sup>905</sup> Although Morrill was not the first to conceptualize the land-grant model of education, his political backing The literature on land-grant colleges and universities in American history is massive. See Marcus Atkins’ two-volume set, *Science and Service* and *Service as Mandate: How American Land-Grant Shaped the Modern World, 1920-2015* (Tuscaloosa, AL: University of Alabama Press, 2015) for a full treatment of the origins and impact of American land grant institutions worldwide. See also, Coy F. Cross, *Justin Smith Morrill: Father of the Land-Grant Colleges* (East Lansing, MI: Michigan State University Press, 1999), chpt. 5. Additionally, see Aaron Van Wright, Jr. “The Negro Land-Grant Institutions,” *Improving College and University Teaching* 15, no. 4 (Autumn 1967): 254-259; Carolyn B. Brooks, “The Morrill Mandate and a New Moral Mandate,” *Agricultural History* 89, no. 2 (Spring 2015): 247-262.

<sup>906</sup> Nathan M. Sorber, *Land-Grant Colleges and Popular Revolt: The Origins of the Morrill Act and the Reform of Higher Education* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2018), 50.

Corps, and formal agricultural education.<sup>907</sup> In 1877, MSAC agronomist William J. Beal cross-fertilized corn to increase yield, producing the “20<sup>th</sup>-century miracle” of hybridized corn.<sup>908</sup> Over the 20<sup>th</sup>-century, “the flow of scientific findings,” historian Douglas A. Noverr has observed, sought to “[increase] efficiency, productivity, management, sanitation, and hygiene of Michigan farms.”<sup>909</sup> In 1969, MSU agronomist Jordan H. Levin celebrated how “scientific research has made American agriculture the envy of the world”: new plant varieties were increasing, insect-based disease had been decreasing, and mechanization was mitigating the toil of manual labor.<sup>910</sup> As both Nick Cullather has shown, the industrial-agricultural alliance of the late-19<sup>th</sup>-century produced an industrial infrastructure for food dissemination that rivaled few other countries.<sup>911</sup>

Dr. Troy L. Stearns, an MSU professor of rural education, is indicative. For much of the Depression-era, he taught in rural schools throughout the Midwest. Once at MSU, he oversaw a program called a “Marshall Plan,” a teacher education program in Marshall, Michigan with cohorts of 20-some “comely” female education students who traveled to Marshall, Michigan to immerse themselves wholly in “the unacademic wilderness beyond the [Michigan State College].”<sup>912</sup> The plan was intended to be a play on the more prominent, internationally-focused Marshall Plan, under the leadership of General George C. Marshall, devised for international humanitarian work in post-war Europe.<sup>913</sup> The *Detroit Free Press* reports that his “Marshall

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<sup>907</sup> Alan I. Marcus, ed., *Service as Mandate: How American Land-Grant Universities Shaped the Modern World*, chpts by Stephanie Statz (8), Donald Downs (6), and Melissa Walker (10).

<sup>908</sup> *A Century of Research: 1974-1975 Annual Report* (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1975), 53.

<sup>909</sup> Douglas A. Noverr, *Michigan State University: The Rise of a Research University and the New Millennium, 1970-2005* (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 2015), 9.

<sup>910</sup> Jordan H. Levin, “Mechanical Harvesting of Food,” *Science* 166, no. 3908 (Nov. 21, 1969): 968.

<sup>911</sup> Nick Cullather, *The Hungry World: America’s Cold War Battle Against Poverty in Asia* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2010), chpt. 6.

<sup>912</sup> “Education Conducts Its Own Marshall Plan,” *Detroit Free Press*, February 1, 1948, 6.

<sup>913</sup> For a survey of George C. Marshall’s Marshall Plan, see Benn Steil, *The Marshall Plan: Dawn of the Cold War* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2018).

Plan” was, “at first, about as popular as a side trip to Siberia in an open jeep.”<sup>914</sup> But it soon grew in popularity, The *Free Press* offered a five page of photographic reporting on the women traversing throughout “the sticks,” including visits to the jail, the hospital, and the local elementary school.<sup>915</sup> Later that year, Stearns assisted Southern, Western allied Koreans with their schools and a decade later, did the same for the University of Malaya in Singapore.<sup>916</sup>

John A. Hannah may have been Michigan State University empire’s standing royalty, but Taggart was Hannah’s international vizier.<sup>917</sup> Taggart did not want to shape the next year but the next generation. Born in Cache Valley, Utah, surrounded by dairy farms and beef cattle ranches, Taggart was on familiar ground at Michigan State University. Taggart had “a different dimension to him,” his colleague, Ralph Smuckler, recalled. He did not “want to know what’s going to happen next year . . . He wants to know what's going to be there ten years from now, twenty years from now.”<sup>918</sup> When he became the President of Utah State University in 1968, a friend at Pennsylvania State University joked: “I wonder if Utah State realizes it is about to be internationalized!”<sup>919</sup> Taggart embodied an agrarian approach to globalism and international cross-pollination.

#### *UNN and University Training in Agriculture in the West*

UNN was conceptualized to address Nigeria’s wide-reaching labor needs, particularly in the agricultural sector; until its formation, no major educational institution in Nigeria existed for

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<sup>914</sup> “Education Conducts Its Own Marshall Plan,” *Detroit Free Press*, February 1, 1948, 61.

<sup>915</sup> “Education Conducts Its Own Marshall Plan,” *Detroit Free Press*, February 1, 1948, 61.

<sup>916</sup> Troy L. Stearns, “Discussion: Postgraduate Instruction for Foreign Students,” *Journal of Farm Economics* 41, no. 5 (December 1959): 1392.

<sup>917</sup> Glen L. Taggart Heads MSU Foreign Program,” *Foreign Agriculture* (December 1956): 21

<sup>918</sup> Ralph Smucker, Interview with Jeff Charnley, September 26, 2000, <http://onthebanks.msu.edu/sohp/Object/2-D-A0/transcript-with-ralph-smuckler-on-september-26-2000/> <accessed October 26, 2019>.

<sup>919</sup> Stanley P. Townsend, Letter to Glen Taggart, September 9, 1968, Merrill Cazier Special Collections, Utah State University.

agricultural training.<sup>920</sup> Early 20<sup>th</sup>-century British farmers noticed as mass-produced American products drove their wheat, poultry, beef, and dairy prices down by a third.<sup>921</sup> Between 1890 and 1894, agriculture departments had proliferated in Aberystwyth, Bangor, Cambridge, Leeds, Newcastle, Nottingham, and Reading.<sup>922</sup> The University College of North Wales at Bangor received a 200 pound grant to, as Stewart Richards notes, “integrat[e] agriculture within the existing framework of university education.”<sup>923</sup> As envisioned by agricultural educator, Hugh Macan, the move to make agriculture a respectable university subject rather than outsourcing it to the free agent lecturers: it would render the program eligible for grants from the Treasury as well as the Board of Agriculture.<sup>924</sup> Chemist Sir Henry Roscoe, who later became the Vice-Chancellor of the University of London, served on the South-Eastern Agricultural College’s original board of governors and had advocated for popularized technical education.<sup>925</sup> Until 1899, the University of Cambridge resisted agriculture programs, on the premise that “technical” education was an ill-fit for academe.<sup>926</sup> Knowledge should not be pursued because of its practicality, most universities held; it transformed the learning process into something crude and commodified. Only with direct state subsidies did Cambridge administrators grudgingly accept an endowed chair in agriculture.<sup>927</sup>

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<sup>920</sup> Axinn interview.

<sup>921</sup> Stewart Richards, “The South-Eastern Agricultural College and Public Support for Technical Education, 1894-1914,” *Agricultural History Review* 36, no. 2 (1988): 172.

<sup>922</sup> Stewart Richards, “The South-Eastern Agricultural College,” 176.

<sup>923</sup> Stewart Richards, “The South-Eastern Agricultural College,” 175.

<sup>924</sup> Stewart Richards, “The South-Eastern Agricultural College,” 178.

<sup>925</sup> Stewart Richards, “The South-Eastern Agricultural College,” 178.

<sup>926</sup> Paolo Palladino, “Between Craft and Science: Plant Breeding, Mendelian Genetics, and British Universities, 1900-1920,” *Technology and Culture* 34, No. 2 (April 1993): 308.

<sup>927</sup> Paolo Palladino, “Between Craft and Science: Plant Breeding, Mendelian Genetics, and British Universities, 1900-1920,” 308.



Jonathan Harwood has shown how European agricultural institutions “bifurcated” in funding “practical” and “scientific” agricultural research.<sup>928</sup> Whereas the Development Commission in Great Britain supported “scientific” research, the National Institute of Dairy Research and the Ministry of Agriculture prioritized the needs of farmers. In the Netherlands, the Wagenigen Agricultural College similarly reveals tensions between the two approaches. Late 19<sup>th</sup>- and early-20<sup>th</sup>-century European observers took note of the American orientation towards on-the-ground applicability of agricultural methods.<sup>929</sup> Whereas European agriculturalists enjoyed freedom to pursue their research according to their own preference, American agriculturalists—much to the annoyance of major philanthropists such as Rockefeller and Carnegie—cultivated a close relationship with local farmers, played a key role in driving on-the-ground agricultural change, and maintained an ongoing relationship with Agricultural Extension Offices and Experiment Stations.<sup>930</sup>

Installed as President of Michigan State Agricultural College in 1941, President John W. Hannah approved purchases for computer systems such as MISTIC, the establishment of an Extension Division, and the recruitment of leading chemists and technicians to identify methods for increasing productivity and improving crop health.<sup>931</sup> World War II had expanded industrial production several times over, and by 1947, Congress passed the National Security Act establishing the Central Intelligence Agency as well as the independence of each branch of the military: Air Force, Navy, Army, and Marine Corps.<sup>932</sup> Attuned to the post-war clime, Hannah

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<sup>928</sup> Jonathan Harwood, *Technology's Dilemma: Agricultural Colleges Between Science and Practice in Germany, 1860-1934* (Bern: Peter Lang, 2005), 225-226.

<sup>929</sup> Jonathan Harwood, *Technology's Dilemma*, 226-231.

<sup>930</sup> Jonathan Harwood, *Technology's Dilemma*, 226-231.

<sup>931</sup> Noverr, *Michigan State University*, 9, 16, 20.

<sup>932</sup> James T. Sparrow, *Warfare State: World War II Americans and the Age of Big Government* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 115, 242. For a survey of the establishment of national security during the Truman era, see Melvyn Leffler, *National Security, the Truman Administration, and the Cold War* (Palo Alto: Stanford University Press, 1992).

also recognized that eligibility for federal funding relied upon Michigan State University tailoring its programs to the interests of the expanding federal security apparatus.<sup>933</sup> Following World War II, Hannah commissioned educators to staff the University of the Ryūkyūs in Japan with English, science, mathematics, and “domestic science” educators; staffed with women committed to home economics as a multidisciplinary subject—involving chemistry, physics, anthropology, psychology, and economics.<sup>934</sup> It was a kind of high modernity of the soil—a belief in a lush possibilities, in the rich heritage rural American institutions and productivity.<sup>935</sup> Even Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev romanticized American corn production.<sup>936</sup> “The world is our campus,” Hannah declared exuberantly.<sup>937</sup>

Between 1946 and 1950, with expansion of Cold War conflicts as the Berlin blockade, the development of the Soviet hydrogen bomb, and the takeover of the Chinese Communist Party in China, the federal government became increasingly interested in shoring up its interests in *every* region of the world. By 1950, the State Department was advocating a more expansive engagement, in which American efforts would push back against *any* manifestation of Communism, anywhere in the world. As noted historian of American foreign relations, John Lewis Gaddis observed, policymakers came to see “all parts of the world as equally important because all threats were equally dangerous.”<sup>938</sup> The signing of the Sino-Soviet treaty of friendship in 1950 signaled to many foreign policymakers that the Chinese Communist Party and

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<sup>933</sup> Noverr, *Michigan State University*, 9.

<sup>934</sup> Mire Koikari, “‘The World is Our Campus’: Michigan State University and Cold-War Home Economics in US-occupied Okinawa, 1945–1972,” *Gender and History* 24, 1 (March 2012): 74–92.

<sup>935</sup> Eric Ramirez-Ferrero, *Troubled Fields: Men, Emotions, and the Crisis in American Farming* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005), 200–201.

<sup>936</sup> Shane Hamilton, *Supermarket USA: Food and Power in the Cold War Farms Race* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2018), 120–123.

<sup>937</sup> Mire Koikari, “‘The World is Our Campus’: Michigan State University and Cold-War Home Economics in US-occupied Okinawa, 1945–1972,” *Gender and History* 24, 1 (March 2012): 74.

<sup>938</sup> Gaddis, *George F. Kennan*, 391.

the Soviet Politburo functioned as a single unit.<sup>939</sup> Fears of Communist exploitation of “undeveloped” conditions, whether they be in the American inner city or in underfed Albania, prompted the federal regime to elicit support for institution-building initiatives and “area studies” scholars to buttress American interests and surveil conditions in every region of the world.<sup>940</sup> The threat of Communism was knowingly exaggerated: Secretary of State Dean Acheson acknowledged that they hoped to “bludgeon the mass mind of ‘top government’ that not only could the President make the decision but the decision could be carried out. . . if we made our points clearer than truth, we did not differ from most other educators and could hardly do otherwise.”<sup>941</sup>

Simultaneously, in 1949, Harry S Truman established a host of federal programs to “mak[e] the benefits of our scientific advances and industrial programs available for the improvement and growth of underdeveloped nations.”<sup>942</sup> Called the “Point Four” program, these programs situated the *colonial* nations as *undeveloped*—fixed in time, blinkered by colonialism, only in need of access to proper world market flows. The argument, in a sort of way, reflected Walter Rodney’s: that African countries’ lack of prosperity could be traced to colonial impositions.<sup>943</sup> The difference was that the Americans’ tended to support institution-building in collaboration with capitalist enterprise, not radical revolution. Utah schools such as Taggart’s alma mater, Utah State Agricultural College, enjoyed privileged access to this program, and

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<sup>939</sup> Gaddis, *George F. Kennan*, 398.

<sup>940</sup> See Nicholas Thompson, *The Hawk and the Dove: Paul Nitze, George Kennan, and the History of the Cold War* (New York: Henry Holt and Co., 2009) for a discussion of expanding interests in the global Cold War. For a treatment of “area studies” as a Cold War phenomenon, see David C. Engermann, “Social Science in the Cold War,” *Isis* 101, no. 2 (June 2010): 397-400.

<sup>941</sup> Dean Acheson, *Present at the Creation: My Years at the State Department* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1969), 375.

<sup>942</sup> Harry S. Truman, Inaugural Address, January 20, 1949, in *Public Papers of the Presidents: Harry S. Truman*, vol. 5, 114.

<sup>943</sup> Walter Rodney, *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa* (Washington, D.C.: Howard University Press, 1981),

Taggart helped to implement it.<sup>944</sup> Historians Nick Cullather and Matthew Connelly have argued, food and population control were seen as a key foreign policy goal of mid-20<sup>th</sup>-century American foreign policymakers vis-à-vis African and Asian regimes.<sup>945</sup> As a major client for research in bureaucratic administration, nuclear technology, and “area studies,” Michigan State University could become an army of scholar-farmers and scholar-bureaucrats capable of upholding the federal government’s projects the world over.<sup>946</sup>

#### *American University Schemes for Nigeria*

Simultaneously, American educators were eying Nigeria from the mid-1950s; in a May 1956 commencement address at Baylor University, Eisenhower urged Baylor University to promote American university-building abroad: “The whole free world,” Eisenhower enjoined Baylor, “would be stronger if there existed adequate institutions of modern techniques and sciences in areas of the world where the hunger for knowledge and the ability to use knowledge are unsatisfied because educational facilities are often not equal to the need.”<sup>947</sup> Baylor took Eisenhower’s words as a commission: “Go and teach all ye nations.”<sup>948</sup> Baylor Baptists had a rich tradition of evangelizing in Nigeria; Southern Baptists funded the Nigerian Baptist Theological Seminary in Ogbomosho (near Ibadan) for the two decades.<sup>949</sup>

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<sup>944</sup> Richard Garlitz, *A Mission for Development: Utah Universities and the Point Four Program in Iran* (Logan: Utah State University Press, 2018), chpt. 4.

<sup>945</sup> Nick Cullather, *The Hungry World: America’s Cold War Battle Against Poverty in Asia* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2010); and Matthew Connelly, *Fatal Misconception: The Struggle to Control World Population* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2008).

<sup>946</sup> James Carter, *Inventing Vietnam: The United States and State-Building, 1954-1968* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 56-57. See also, Bruce Cumings, “Boundary Displacement: Area Studies and International Studies during and after the Cold War,” in Christopher Simpson, *Universities and Empire: Money and Politics in the Social Science During the Cold War* (New York: New Press, 1999): 159–88.

<sup>947</sup> Paul Geren, *Conference on Implementation of the Baylor Proposal*, 1, MinEd (Fed) 2<sup>nd</sup> 1/10, NAI.

<sup>948</sup> Paul Geren, *Conference on Implementation of the Baylor Proposal*, 2, MinEd (Fed) 2<sup>nd</sup> 1/10, NAI.

<sup>949</sup> “Missionaries Spending Year Here After 20 in West Africa,” *Waco Tribune-Herald*, October 17, 1954, 6.

The point of conception for a Baptist university in Nigeria resided not in Baylor’s Waco but in Lagos: “the community of Baptist Christians in Nigeria,” a Baylor pamphlet reported, and the Foreign Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention had decided to establish a four-year degree-granting institution.<sup>950</sup> Surely, this Nigerian university would be happy to enjoy an “affiliation with an American university to parallel” the London-U. C. I. affiliation.<sup>951</sup> And “if the Nigerians wished it so,” the Baptist Mission’s secretary observed, “a new college could launch out on a philosophy and program different from that embodied in Ibadan University College.”<sup>952</sup>

Why Nigeria? The American Baptist Mission’s Africa secretary, I.N. Patterson recommended Nigeria—specifically, the Western Region—as the ‘most strategic place’ for establishing a Baptist University.<sup>953</sup> Baylor’s Executive Vice-President Paul Geren listed several reasons:

- A. The Baptists took their cues from the Muslims—and were “impressed” by how “Islam is awake” to educational opportunities among African “paganism.”<sup>954</sup>
- B. Second, Nigerians held an “almost idolatrous regard for education”<sup>955</sup>
- C. Third, the sheer willingness of Africans to tender “any educational offer.”<sup>956</sup>
- D. Fourth, Africa’s place in the “coming field of contest between Communism and the Free World.”<sup>957</sup>
- E. Fifth—as well as most dramatically—the “tide in the affairs of men might never again be in its flood . . . if it were missed in this present.”<sup>958</sup>

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<sup>950</sup> Paul Geren, *Conference on Implementation of the Baylor Proposal*, 5, MinEd (Fed) 2<sup>nd</sup> 1/10, NAI.

<sup>951</sup> Paul Geren, *Conference on Implementation of the Baylor Proposal*, 5, MinEd (Fed) 2<sup>nd</sup> 1/10, NAI.

<sup>952</sup> Paul Geren, *Conference on Implementation of the Baylor Proposal*, 6, MinEd (Fed) 2<sup>nd</sup> 1/10, NAI.

<sup>953</sup> I.N. Patterson, Letter to A.A. Shillingford, February 2, 1957, MinEd (Fed) 2<sup>nd</sup> 1/10, NAI.

<sup>954</sup> Paul Geren, *Conference on Implementation of the Baylor Proposal*, 6, MinEd (Fed) 2<sup>nd</sup> 1/10, NAI.

<sup>955</sup> Paul Geren, *Conference on Implementation of the Baylor Proposal*, 6, MinEd (Fed) 2<sup>nd</sup> 1/10, NAI.

<sup>956</sup> Paul Geren, *Conference on Implementation of the Baylor Proposal*, 6, MinEd (Fed) 2<sup>nd</sup> 1/10, NAI.

<sup>957</sup> Paul Geren, *Conference on Implementation of the Baylor Proposal*, 6, MinEd (Fed) 2<sup>nd</sup> 1/10, NAI.

<sup>958</sup> Paul Geren, *Conference on Implementation of the Baylor Proposal*, 6, MinEd (Fed) 2<sup>nd</sup> 1/10, NAI.

Patterson imagined a “fairly close tie” with Baylor University, including professorial and student exchange relationships.<sup>959</sup> Regardless of its geographic location, Patterson wanted the University to “serve the whole country of Nigeria, if brought into being.”<sup>960</sup>

In March 1957, a Baylor team convened in Ibadan with a “hastily summoned ad hoc” meeting in Ibadan with federal education officials.<sup>961</sup> They planned the University for Lagos, the center for Baptist activity in Nigeria. But the project was costly; Baylor University had \$100,000 dollars earmarked for it, but they, like Azikiwe, would need to approach the Ford and Rockefeller Foundations in order to reach solubility.<sup>962</sup> As a private institution, the Baylor Project continued in the long tradition of mission education, even as it aspired to be a “college of liberal arts,” incorporative of the full array of general studies curricula.<sup>963</sup> With a program for theology as well as secondary schools, their university would make no aspirations to being an education for the “public” of Nigeria but rather, for its whole—including people of the Baptist faith persuasion in all regions.<sup>964</sup> But it was also well-understood that it would be “of use to Protestant Missions generally.”<sup>965</sup> The University was set to start construction in 1962, with classes to begin in 1964.<sup>966</sup>

British officer A. A. Shillingford inquired of the Nigerian Students liaison about the project: he did not want this “so-called University” (an adjective that British educators were keen to use with American projects) to “sag.”<sup>967</sup> The Education Ministry urged caution. J. R. Bunting

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<sup>959</sup> I.N. Patterson, Letter to A.A. Shillingford, February 2, 1957, MinEd (Fed) 2<sup>nd</sup> 1/10, NAI.

<sup>960</sup> I.N. Patterson, Letter to A.A. Shillingford, February 2, 1957, MinEd (Fed) 2<sup>nd</sup> 1/10, NAI.

<sup>961</sup> Meeting Minutes, March 5, 1957, MinEd (Fed) 2<sup>nd</sup> 1/10, NAI.

<sup>962</sup> Meeting Minutes, March 5, 1957, MinEd (Fed) 2<sup>nd</sup> 1/10, NAI.

<sup>963</sup> Meeting Minutes, March 5, 1957, MinEd (Fed) 2<sup>nd</sup> 1/10, NAI; Paul Geren, *Conference on Implementation of the Baylor Proposal*, 9-10, MinEd (Fed) 2<sup>nd</sup> 1/10, NAI

<sup>964</sup> Meeting Minutes, March 5, 1957, MinEd (Fed) 2<sup>nd</sup> 1/10, NAI.

<sup>965</sup> Meeting Minutes, March 5, 1957, MinEd (Fed) 2<sup>nd</sup> 1/10, NAI.

<sup>966</sup> L. Raymond Brothers, Letter to Chief Federal Advisor on Education, June 27, 1959, MinEd (Fed) 2<sup>nd</sup> 1/10, NAI.

<sup>967</sup> A.A. Shillingford, Letter to R. Barrett, March 16, 1957, MinEd (Fed) 2<sup>nd</sup> 1/10, NAI.

told the planners to anticipate and resolve every potential problem before proceeding: “The bulldozer is not a useful diplomatic or educational implement.”<sup>968</sup> As much as the Ministry applauded “well-meaning, pioneering enthusiasm,” too many problems existed for them to proceed without resolution. They lacked funding (their existing funds could “build one new quarter for a Federal minister”), the Northern region may resent having an additional Western university in the country, and Baylor had low standards compared to standard British education.<sup>969</sup> Without discretion, the Baylor project could be the “not-so-thin end of a very awkward academic wedge” raising questions about the federal government’s commitment to education.<sup>970</sup> American education was considered low-brow, the stuff designed for ordinary men and women, for less-than-aspirational minds—often middling and, even on the best of days, not “capable of making a real contribution.”<sup>971</sup>

Baylor eventually backed out of the proposal due to “political complications,” leaving the project 141,000 dollars as a token of its support “to see this thing through.”<sup>972</sup> Baylor’s withdrawal and the apparent lack of local funding illustrated to Geren that he should be more cognizant of Nigeria’s needs than adamant on Baylor’s zeal. Barrett hoped that Geren’s new-found wisdom would “eventually put the proposal in permanent abeyance.”<sup>973</sup> It soon appeared that the American Baptist Mission was ready to carry out the project on their own.<sup>974</sup> Reginald Barrett, of the Nigeria Liaison Office in Washington, shook his head at the Baptists proceeding with “undue haste.”<sup>975</sup> With Baylor out, the American Baptist Mission might solicit the

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<sup>968</sup> J.R. Bunting, Letter to Sir Ralph Grey, April 18, 1957, MinE (Fed) 2<sup>nd</sup> 1/10, NAI.

<sup>969</sup> J.R. Bunting, Letter to Sir Ralph Grey, April 18, 1957, MinE (Fed) 2<sup>nd</sup> 1/10, NAI.

<sup>970</sup> J.R. Bunting, Letter to Sir Ralph Grey, April 18, 1957, MinE (Fed) 2<sup>nd</sup> 1/10, NAI.

<sup>971</sup> J.R. Bunting, Letter to Sir Ralph Grey, April 18, 1957, MinE (Fed) 2<sup>nd</sup> 1/10, NAI.

<sup>972</sup> Acg. Chief Federal Advisor on Education, Letter to Reginald Barrett, May 30, 1957, MinEd (Fed) 2<sup>nd</sup> 1/10, NAI.

<sup>973</sup> Reginald Barrett, Letter to Ralph Grey, May 22, 1957, MinEd (Fed) 2<sup>nd</sup> 1/10, NAI.

<sup>974</sup> Reginald Barrett, Letter to A.G.H. Gardner-Brown, July 3, 1957, MinEd (Fed) 2<sup>nd</sup> 1/10, NAI.

<sup>975</sup> Reginald Barrett, Letter to A.G.H. Gardner-Brown, July 3, 1957, MinEd (Fed) 2<sup>nd</sup> 1/10, NAI.

partnership of another Baptist institution in the States, which, outside of Baylor, would be “somewhat mediocre.”<sup>976</sup> Little is known of what became from the proposal, but it likely was scuttled by British officials.

### *The Institute for International Affairs*

In August 1959, Justice L. N. Mbafero and then U. C. I. Vice Principal Kenneth O. Dike urged the establishment of an Institute of International Affairs—akin to the American Council on Foreign Relations to inspire thought on how an independent Nigeria could navigate international difficulties as a sovereign nation.<sup>977</sup> American Consul General John K. Emerson emphasized that both Mbafero and Dike believed the public would view their institute “would be suspect” if funded and organized by external agents.<sup>978</sup> That same month, H. O. Abaagu of the United Middle Belt Congress accused the Action Group of drawing on American funds and hiring American-British public relations personnel in promoting their election campaign: “A party that goes to America to borrow money and uses a substantial part of that money for unproductive purposes cannot govern this country.”<sup>979</sup> Crafting a new foreign policy—one based on the needs of a nation-state rather than the needs of Whitehall—meant establishing liaisons with a variety of potential stakeholders. The elites who made the Nigerian nation-state knew their sources of patronage: Azikiwe had American friends and Ahmadu Bello enjoyed his cadre of British advisors.<sup>980</sup> Shaping an independent Nigeria, then, became a competition over post-independence patronage.

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<sup>976</sup> Reginald Barrett, Letter to A.G.H. Gardner-Brown, July 3, 1957, MinEd (Fed) 2<sup>nd</sup> 1/10, NAI.

<sup>977</sup> John K. Emerson, “Project for an Institute of International Affairs in Nigeria,” August 14, 1959, Box 3238, Folder 459, Central Decimal File, National Archives II, College Park, Maryland.

<sup>978</sup> John K. Emerson, “Project for an Institute of International Affairs in Nigeria,” August 14, 1959, Box 3238, Folder 459, Central Decimal File, National Archives II, College Park, Maryland.

<sup>979</sup> Leon G. Dorros, “Action Group Charged with Obtaining American Funds,” Dispatch, August 19, 1959, Box 3238, Folder 459, Central Decimal File, National Archives II, College Park, Maryland.

<sup>980</sup> John K. Emerson, “Interview with Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe, President of the Senate,” January 15, 1960, Box 1698, Folder 560, Central Decimal File, National Archives II, College Park, Maryland.



British education officials discouraged education outside the standard channels—channels which were expensive and difficult-to-reach. As Mazi Okoro Ojiaku and Gene Ulansky observe, these officials “had little understanding of the university’s role in the modern world” and “had little in common with the Nigerian intellectual elite.”<sup>981</sup> Until 1937, access to higher education outside of Nigeria was severely restricted; in that year, the British government began to support a slow trickle of Nigerian students to study at British universities.<sup>982</sup> In 1920, Sir Frederick Lugard observed that it is

a cardinal principle of British colonial policy that the interests of a large native population shall not be subject to the will of a small class of educated and Europeanized natives who have nothing in common with them and whose interests are often opposed to theirs.<sup>983</sup>

In 1937, policies began to liberalize. Through the Earl De La Warr Commission, in 1937, the British supported the first British African institution: Makerere University in Uganda.<sup>984</sup> The De La Warr Commission provided the political grounding, as Apollos Nwauwa observes, “to centralize and control colonial policies hitherto left to the discretion of the men on the spot.”<sup>985</sup>

By 1960, Nigerian intelligentsia pressed more firmly for more educational opportunities, leading among them was Azikiwe. Having fully embraced the romance of Americana, Azikiwe adopted its mythos, its discourse, and its symbolism multiple times throughout his public life. After the death of striking coal miners in Enugu, he declared, channeling Abraham Lincoln, that “we owe it to our conscience as a people not to allow their sacrifice to be in vain.” Azikiwe’s fellow nationalist, Mbonu Ojike, who had studied at Lincoln University, University of Illinois-

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<sup>981</sup> Mazi Okoro Ojiaku and Gene Ulansky, “Early Nigerian Response to American Education,” *Phylon* 33, no. 4 (4<sup>th</sup> Qtr. 1972): 381.

<sup>982</sup> Mazi Okoro Ojiaku and Gene Ulansky, “Early Nigerian Response to American Education,” *Phylon* 33, no. 4 (4<sup>th</sup> Qtr. 1972): 381.

<sup>983</sup> Mazi Okoro Ojiaku and Gene Ulansky, “Early Nigerian Response to American Education,” *Phylon* 33, no. 4 (4<sup>th</sup> Qtr. 1972): 381, note 10.

<sup>984</sup> Nwauwa, *Imperialism, Academe and Nationalism*, 91.

<sup>985</sup> Nwauwa, *Imperialism, Academe and Nationalism*, 92.

Champaign, and Ohio State University, considered American education too reflective of a “revolt from the spirit of Old England.”<sup>986</sup> Education served as an important tool in the nationalist struggle. Okechukwu Ikejiani, who would later serve on UNN’s University Council, declared that: “when we have a nucleus of highly-trained technicians in every branch of government and administration, and when the masses of our people are freed from ill- literacy and disease, Nigeria will belong to us.”<sup>987</sup> Ojike encouraged all Africans “in dozens and hundreds” to receive degrees in the United States, for “only an idiot could study in America without being positively inspired.”<sup>988</sup>

Simultaneously, Sir Eric Ashby, Vice Chancellor of Queen’s University, Belfast, chaired a commission tasked with assessing higher education in post-independence Nigeria.: to “forecast Nigeria’s educational needs.”<sup>989</sup> While lacking a direct relationship with the University project, the Ashby commission, following in the spirit of the Elliott’s commission acknowledged deficiency in “mass education,” advocated for increasing the accessibility of higher education institutions throughout the country. “Nothing less” than their proposals, Ashby’s team wrote, will “suffice for Nigeria’s development.”<sup>990</sup> Ashby’s team also urged for Nigeria to have a “National Universities Commission,” one that could ensure a university would remain its sovereignty from the “hot and cold winds” of politics.<sup>991</sup> Ashby warned against the “uncontrolled proliferation” of universities, but for now, a greater number of universities –situated in regionally

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<sup>986</sup> Mazi Okoro Ojiaku and Gene Ulansky, “Early Nigerian Response to American Education,” *Phylon* 33, no. 4 (4<sup>th</sup> Qtr. 1972): 385.

<sup>987</sup> Mazi Okoro Ojiaku and Gene Ulansky, “Early Nigerian Response to American Education,” *Phylon* 33, no. 4 (4<sup>th</sup> Qtr. 1972): 386.

<sup>988</sup> Mazi Okoro Ojiaku and Gene Ulansky, “Early Nigerian Response to American Education,” *Phylon* 33, no. 4 (4<sup>th</sup> Qtr. 1972): 386.

<sup>989</sup> Eric Ashby, et. al., *Investment in Education*, 3.

<sup>990</sup> Eric Ashby, et. al., *Investment in Education*, 3.

<sup>991</sup> Eric Ashby, et. al., *Investment in Education*, 31.

diverse locales—were needed rather than fewer.<sup>992</sup> Ashby’s report laid the groundwork for the next stage in University expansion in Nigeria.

*MSU, Kennedy, and the New Nsukka Frontier*

It was not until the Kennedy administration that efforts to incorporate West Africa into American foreign policy began in earnest; in President John F. Kennedy’s inaugural, he enjoined Americans to a firmer conviction to support institution-building throughout the world: to “support any friend, to oppose any foe.”<sup>993</sup> More visionary American developmentalists, such as University of Michigan economist Wolfgang Stolper or Kennedy Assistant Secretary Charles Rivkin, considered, as Rostow did, that Nigeria could, for the moment, only hope to produce a robust agricultural sector—industrialization would need to wait for the next generation.<sup>994</sup> But all concurred: Nigeria had the potential to lead the continent.

*MSU and the Project of International Development*

And Michigan State stood at the forefront of the effort to transition Africa into the Americans’ modernizing narrative. To uproarious applause, Senator John F. Kennedy applauded Michigan State University for its “consistent interest” in “the subject of economic breakthrough of the underdeveloped countries”—even while their advisors felt that they were “absolute amateurs in terms of anything international.”<sup>995</sup> Kennedy bemoaned the lack of American presence in Africa, chiding the State Department for having more Foreign Service staff and

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<sup>992</sup> Eric Ashby et al., *Investment in Education*, 33.

<sup>993</sup> John F. Kennedy, inaugural address, January 20, 1961, [https://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th\\_century/kennedy.asp](https://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th_century/kennedy.asp) (accessed May 14, 2020).

<sup>994</sup> Larry Grubbs, *Secular Missionaries: Americans and African Development in the 1960s* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2009), chpt. 5, *passim*.

<sup>995</sup> George Axinn Interview with David Wiley; John F. Kennedy, Speech, October 14, 1960, <https://www.jfklibrary.org/archives/other-resources/john-f-kennedy-speeches/michigan-state-university-19601014> <accessed October 25, 2019>.

officers in West Germany “than in all of Africa”; in all three regions, the total number of American advisors consisted of about 75.<sup>996</sup>



While Kennedy spoke, a cohort of white American, black American, and Nigerian advisors opened the University of Nigeria under the leadership of Azikiwe, who would have been one of Miller’s most vociferous opponents, all while British advisors remained conspicuously absent. The UNN project, George Axinn recalled, was perceived as nothing more than “a bunch of rebels who were gonna weaken higher education.”<sup>997</sup> When Hannah was presented with the UNN project, while insisting that MSU would be “duplicated” in Nigeria, he

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<sup>996</sup> John F. Kennedy, Speech, October 14, 1960, <https://www.jfklibrary.org/archives/other-resources/john-f-kennedy-speeches/michigan-state-university-19601014> <accessed October 25, 2019>; “Brief History of USAID/Nigeria,” UNN Papers.

<sup>997</sup> Axinn Interview.

held that its intellectual core—the “University Doctrine” of “land-grant”-ism—would endure: that “a combination of cultural and vocational pursuits do not demean a university.”<sup>998</sup> He wanted a plan that was “uniquely appropriate” to Nigeria.<sup>999</sup>

Nsukka invited MSU to distance itself from the universalism of modernizing projects like Rostow’s and instead, to adopt a *collaborative* approach that does not suppose a developmental metanarrative is applicable in every context.<sup>1000</sup> American developmental models drew on a sense of high modernist universalism: mass production, uniformity, widespread industrialization—that more of Americana would equate to global prosperity. But modernity was fraught. Axinn observed that over time, it became apparent that “the Americans don’t have all the answers because the Americans don’t know what the questions are.”<sup>1001</sup> Moving from “modernization” to “collaborative” approaches, Axinn was a product of the early “trial and error” stage of UNN “in which it was mostly error.”<sup>1002</sup>

The thought of importing a liberal arts curriculum into Nigeria would have struck hard-numbered technocrats like Wolfgang Stolper as laughably optimistic. UNN attempted to rectify the narrowness of education through curricular bloating. MSU economics professor Edward Carlin complained the Nsukka faculty had “commit[ted] almost every error in the proliferation of courses and programs that it has taken most American institutions over 100 years to accomplish.”<sup>1003</sup> The General Studies program struck British educators as dilettantism.<sup>1004</sup> I. C.

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<sup>998</sup> John A. Hannah, speech draft, n.d. (ca. February 1963), Box 50, Folder 2, Hannah Papers. See also George Axinn, Letter to John A. Hannah, April 17, 1963, UNN Papers, Box 173, Folder 3.

<sup>999</sup> John A. Hannah, speech draft, n.d. (ca. February 1963), Box 50, Folder 2, Hannah Papers. See also George Axinn, Letter to John A. Hannah, April 17, 1963, UNN Papers, Box 173, Folder 3.

<sup>1000</sup> For a survey of the inter-relationship between development metanarratives and African studies, see Deborah Fahy Bryceson, “Discovery and Denial: Social Science Theory and Interdisciplinarity in African Studies,” *African Affairs* 111, no. 443 (April 2012): 281-302.

<sup>1001</sup> Axinn interview.

<sup>1002</sup> Axinn interview.

<sup>1003</sup> Edward Carlin, Letter to George Axinn, January 14, 1963, UNN Papers, Box 177A, Folder 44.

<sup>1004</sup> I. C. M. Maxwell, Letter, August 28, 1961, BW 90/608, National Archives-Kew.

M. Maxwell acknowledged that the proper British response to the American innovations “does seem rather tricky.”<sup>1005</sup> British lecturers simply could not—or would not—“give as much time or drive to General Studies as they would like.”<sup>1006</sup> Edward Weidner, an early administrator of MSU’s overseas programs, observed that the post-war American moment must be seen not only as military expansion but also, academic expansion: “Expanding American participation in world affairs since World War II has been accompanied by the increasing involvement of American universities internationally.”<sup>1007</sup> Developmental theorist, and formal national security aide in the Kennedy and Johnson White Houses, Walt Rostow had argued that Africans were only at the agricultural stage of modernization, and Stolper regularly told Nigerians that proper industrialization was a “long way off.”<sup>1008</sup>

But prospects enthralled them, even if present realities did not. Nigeria excited Kennedy-era American developmentalists. After a trip to Nigeria in 1962-63, Assistant Secretary of State for Economic and Business Affairs Charles H. Rivkin “Nigeria, perhaps more than any of the new independent African states. . . meets the new aid criteria of the President” to facilitate “economic development in a democratic framework.”<sup>1009</sup> With a large population, extensive natural resources and a democratic form of government amenable to the United States, Nigeria seemed, to one United States Agency for International Development official (USAID) that it offered the Americans “an excellent opportunity. . . to demonstrate to the newly independent African nations that the best way to achieve their economic and political aspirations lies in developing institutions and cooperating with the Free World.”<sup>1010</sup> Rivkin argued that in Nigeria,

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<sup>1005</sup> I. C. M. Maxwell, Letter to John W. Blake, September 12, 1961, BW 90/608 National Archives-Kew.

<sup>1006</sup> I. C. M. Maxwell, Letter, August 28, 1961, BW 90/608, National Archives-Kew.

<sup>1007</sup> Edward Weidner, *The World Role of Universities* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1962), UNN Papers, MSU Archives.

<sup>1008</sup> Larry Grubbs, *Secular Missionaries*, 108.

<sup>1009</sup> Larry Grubbs, *Secular Missionaries*, 106.

<sup>1010</sup> Larry Grubbs, *Secular Missionaries*, 106.

“much is at stake. . . For the country itself, in its growth and development; for Africa, in producing a vivid example of development and democracy existing together. . .and for the free world.”<sup>1011</sup> Nigeria seemed to promise a laboratory for American democratizing experiments.<sup>1012</sup>

But what MSU offered in commitment, it more than compensated for it in ignorance—akin to most of the existing foreign policy establishment. George Axinn, named a key agricultural extension officer some years prior, was tasked with overseeing the Nsukka project. “To be honest,” he admitted, “I wasn’t sure where Nigeria was.” He was “like the rest of [his] colleagues.”<sup>1013</sup> He and his wife, Nancy, went home and took out the map of Africa; Nancy placed her finger on Ethiopia, “followed the coast all the way around and up the other side,” and they “found Nigeria.”<sup>1014</sup> When he approached the Nigeria desk at the State Department, he met two “elderly gentleman” who informed him that they acquired most of their information for Nigeria from the *New York Times* (“that’s the best that we can get”)—a clear understatement, given the copious amounts of reports available through the American consulate in Lagos.<sup>1015</sup> Azikiwe had effected a coup: convincing a wealthy American institution to support a localized government project with limited geographical, all in the name of Nigerian “nationalism.” The struggle for control over the University—and the imperial heritage *writ large*—highlights an element of the University’s institutional history that is frequently overlooked: that the University of Nigeria, Nsukka was neither an “indigenous” nor a “land grant” university. It was Zik’s University, with all the contradictions and possibilities that entailed.

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<sup>1011</sup> Larry Grubbs, *Secular Missionaries*, 110.

<sup>1012</sup> Robert Rakove, *Kennedy, Johnson, and the Non-Aligned World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 139-142.

<sup>1013</sup> George Axinn interview.

<sup>1014</sup> George Axinn interview.

<sup>1015</sup> George Axinn interview.

In his younger days, Taggart had served a Mormon mission, walking the streets of Prague and the Sudetanland, preaching of young rural visionaries, angels, devils, Jesus, and redemption for one's kindred dead—no trite message in a country bearing the scars of the Great War still visible on the landscape.<sup>1016</sup> After his missionary labors, he took a job for the Foreign Agricultural Research Office in 1944. In 1948, he received a Ph.D. in rural sociology from the University of Wisconsin; from 1948 to 1953, Taggart continued to work for the F. A. R. O. until his MSU appointment.<sup>1017</sup> Taggart's work for F. A. R. O. came amid increased American aid programs to address hunger abroad and provide military support for countries. In 1947, famed diplomat George F. Kennan, argued that the United States government needed to support “a long-term, patient but firm and vigilant containment” against the Soviet “centers of gravity”—industrialized, population centers—to compel the Soviets to protract themselves into an unwinnable conflict.<sup>1018</sup>

As a member of the F. A. R. O. , Taggart oversaw the establishment of programs such as chicken-dissemination initiatives and free market training in rural Iran and wheat improvement in Latin America.<sup>1019</sup> Taggart drew on his old Utah State Agricultural College (USAC) network, calling on USAC President Franklin S. Harris, who then recruited men such as Bertis L. Embry and Boyd McAfee to assist.<sup>1020</sup> Embry complained that the American approach, which Taggart had helped to design, “seem[ed] to want to turn over all they can to the foreigners who neither know how to operate or in many cases want to know.”<sup>1021</sup> Taggart had been among the vanguard

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<sup>1016</sup> For a survey of Prague in the interwar period, see Chad Bryant, *Prague in Black: Nazi Rule and Czech Nationalism* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2009), chpt. 1.

<sup>1017</sup> Cole S. Brembeck, Letter to Glen Taggart, October 24, 1956, Glen Taggart Papers, Merrill Cazier Library.

<sup>1018</sup> George F. Kennan, “The Sources of Soviet Conduct,” *Foreign Affairs*, 861. See also Gaddis, *George F. Kennan*, 235.

<sup>1019</sup> Jessie Embry, “Point Four, Utah State University Technicians, and Rural Development in Iran, 1950-64,” *Rural History* 14, no. 1 (April 2003): 100.

<sup>1020</sup> Embry, “Point Four, Utah State University Technicians, and Rural Development in Iran, 1950-64,” 100.

<sup>1021</sup> Embry, “Point Four, Utah State University Technicians, and Rural Development in Iran, 1950-64,” 106.



to conceptualize “institution-to-institution” models of “development,” a model he would promote again at Michigan State University.<sup>1022</sup> In 1953, Taggart left the Office of Foreign Agricultural Research to become a sociology professor at Michigan State Agricultural College, Taggart acknowledged “some difficulties in adjusting from government to academic life.”<sup>1023</sup> But he felt “there is a possibility that we may make the adjustment somewhat successfully.”<sup>1024</sup> Perhaps, the challenges of academia would be “less frustrating” than the challenges of Washington: “at least I hope so,” he wrote an agriculturalist friend in Costa Rica.<sup>1025</sup> Taggart enjoyed the work: “intellectually stimulating and personally satisfying,” he told a friend; “I have found nothing yet as a “way of life” that beats a professor.”<sup>1026</sup> Undeveloped countries, he wrote, need to be discussed more, not less: not only for “military and political strategy but for trade as well.”<sup>1027</sup>

Years later, in 1955, MSAC became a University.<sup>1028</sup> Hannah designated Taggart to be the director of the University’s International Programs Office—an indicator of the institution’s intentions to expand.<sup>1029</sup> Previously-existing programs, mostly under the Governmental Research Bureau, were subsumed under Taggart’s control.<sup>1030</sup> Taggart “had real misgivings” about his new role, he told a friend, “as I had become so completely immersed in my specialized field that I hated to leave it.”<sup>1031</sup> But he had been issued a commission, and he felt obliged to “rise to the challenge of at least attempting to do the job President Hannah asked me to undertake in the

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<sup>1022</sup> Glen L. Taggart, Letter to Kenneth W. Ingwalson, December 1, 1954, Taggart Papers, Merrill Cazier, Utah State University [hereafter Merrill Cazier].

<sup>1023</sup> Glen L. Taggart, Letter to Kenneth Ingwalson, May 6, 1954, Taggart Papers, Merrill Cazier Library.

<sup>1024</sup> Glen L. Taggart, Letter to Kenneth Ingwalson, May 6, 1954, Taggart Papers, Merrill Cazier Library.

<sup>1025</sup> Glen L. Taggart, Letter to Ralph Allee, November 6, 1953, Taggart Papers, Merrill Cazier.

<sup>1026</sup> Glen L. Taggart, Letter to W.E. Harvey, December 6, 1956, Taggart Papers, Merrill Cazier.

<sup>1027</sup> Glen L. Taggart, Letter to Mary Discoupoulos, December 14, 1953, Taggart Papers, Merrill Cazier.

<sup>1028</sup> David Thomas, *Michigan State College: John Hannah and the Making of a World University* (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 2008), 255-256.

<sup>1029</sup> Lewis K. and Margaret Zerby, *If I Should Die Before I Wake*, 24.

<sup>1030</sup> . Ralph Smuckler, interview with Jeff Charnley, September 26, 2000, <http://onthebanks.msu.edu/sohp/Object/2-D-A0/transcript-with-ralph-smuckler-on-september-26-2000/> <accessed October 26, 2019>.

<sup>1031</sup> Glen L. Taggart, Letter to L.E. Call, January 28, 1957, Merrill Cazier.

international field.”<sup>1032</sup> The more he embraced his new position, the more he found it “exhilarating and challenging.”<sup>1033</sup> Change, he told a friend, was not possible “without suffering some difficulties and losses.”<sup>1034</sup>



Figure 9: President John A. Hannah, with President Nnamdi Azikiwe and University Principal George M. Johnson, circa 1960. Courtesy of Michigan State University Archives.

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larger in MSU’s memory—but because of his *relevance to the UNN project*. While working under Hannah and, occasionally, receiving his directives, Taggart not only traveled to Nigeria more frequently but also, shaped the course of UNN to a greater degree as Vice-Chancellor of

<sup>1032</sup> Glen L. Taggart, Letter to L.E. Call, January 28, 1957, Merrill Cazier.

<sup>1033</sup> Glen L. Taggart, Letter to Floyd E. Davis, April 1, 1957, Merrill Cazier.

<sup>1034</sup> Glen L. Taggart, Letter to Dennett Guthrie, May 10, 1954, Merrill Cazier.

the University.<sup>1035</sup> Smuckler attributed the University's international expansion directly to Taggart's innovation: "Taggart is the one who conceptualized it in that way, and Hannah grabbed it, but Taggart had to bring it to him."<sup>1036</sup> Taggart oversaw agricultural and governance projects in rural development in sites such as post-partition Pakistan, refugee resettlement in post-Geneva Vietnam, and agriculture post-independence Colombia.<sup>1037</sup> "I am still in good physical condition," he wrote a friend at the American Embassy in Iran, but "if they keep working me as hard as they are, your home may be the point of collapse for me."<sup>1038</sup> Taggart's close colleague, Ralph Smuckler observed, that the International Program was "the apple of his [Hannah's] eye."<sup>1039</sup> As International Programs Dean, Taggart did not allow himself to be stationery; notes from his office not infrequently began with "Dr. Taggart is now in the midst of his tour of . . ."<sup>1040</sup>

Taggart envisioned himself as an enlightened bureaucrat, celebratory of the role of paperwork. Taggart had a knack for grants; when appointed as professor of rural sociology in 1953, he engineered a 150,000 dollar grant from the Carnegie Foundation for borderlands research between Mexico and the United States.<sup>1041</sup> While Igboland reeled from the *ogu umunwayi* and Ikoku and Eyo challenged Azikiwe for his secrecy, Taggart had been extolling the virtues of bureaucracy in Saigon.<sup>1042</sup> The bureaucrat was "inevitable," he advised them—but

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<sup>1035</sup> "Profile of UNN Vice-Chancellors," photocopy, Ndili Papers, copy in author's possession.

<sup>1036</sup> Ralph Smucker, Interview with Jeff Charnley, September 26, 2000, <http://onthebanks.msu.edu/sohp/Object/2-D-A0/transcript-with-ralph-smuckler-on-september-26-2000/> <accessed October 26, 2019>.

<sup>1037</sup> "Glen L. Taggart Heads MSU Foreign Program," *Foreign Agriculture* (December 1956): 21.

<sup>1038</sup> Glen L. Taggart, Letter to William R. Hatch, February 7, 1958, Merrill Cazier.

<sup>1039</sup> Ralph Smucker, Interview with Jeff Charnley, September 26, 2000, <http://onthebanks.msu.edu/sohp/Object/2-D-A0/transcript-with-ralph-smuckler-on-september-26-2000/> <accessed October 26, 2019>.

<sup>1040</sup> Majorie Jackson, Letter to Wesley A. Fischel, February 26, 1957, Merrill Cazier.

<sup>1041</sup> Glen Taggart, Letter to Theral Black, December 31, 1954, Merrill Cazier.

<sup>1042</sup> E.A. Chamberlain, Office Memo to Howard W. Hoyt, May 9, 1958, MSU Vietnam Project Records, Box 679, Folder 38, MSU Archives.

“new bureaucracy” did not only seek self-preservation.<sup>1043</sup> Sensitive to external pressure and committed to public service, the “new bureaucrat” would be forward facing and committed to community needs.<sup>1044</sup> “Make more contacts among the poor and underprivileged,” one MSU Vietnam hand summarizes his saying; “instead of the natural contacts you will make among the ruling classes.”<sup>1045</sup> And above all, he told the police force handlers to train officers to be “*protectors* instead of oppressors.”<sup>1046</sup> “If you succeed in this one phase of your work,” he promised them, I will consider your job well done.”<sup>1047</sup> Taggart not only *liked* the bureaucracy; he believed that bureaucracy was a social good.

Hannah considered the land-grant system, rooted in 19<sup>th</sup>-century land appropriation laws that expropriated land from Native American ownership, to be a society-wide mechanism for providing increased access for the general population: “Land-grant colleges were established to correct an existing inequality in educational opportunity,” Hannah said at a Washington, D.C. conference.<sup>1048</sup> Education must be interwoven with political ends. Liberal arts education *must* then be politically driven. “If educators are agreed on anything,” he told a National Conference on General Education, “it is that the fundamental purpose of education is to prepare young people to be good citizens.”<sup>1049</sup> Knowing *more* subjects rather than knowing *fewer* subjects not

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<sup>1043</sup> E.A. Chamberlain, Office Memo to Howard W. Hoyt, May 9, 1958, MSU Vietnam Project Records, Box 679, Folder 38, MSU Archives.

<sup>1044</sup> E.A. Chamberlain, Office Memo to Howard W. Hoyt, May 9, 1958, MSU Vietnam Project Records, Box 679, Folder 38, MSU Archives.

<sup>1045</sup> E.A. Chamberlain, Office Memo to Howard W. Hoyt, May 9, 1958. MSU Vietnam Project Records, Box 679, Folder 38, MSU Archives.

<sup>1046</sup> E.A. Chamberlain, Office Memo to Howard W. Hoyt, May 9, 1958. MSU Vietnam Project Records, Box 679, Folder 38, MSU Archives.

<sup>1047</sup> E.A. Chamberlain, Office Memo to Howard W. Hoyt, May 9, 1958. MSU Vietnam Project Records, Box 679, Folder 38, MSU Archives.

<sup>1048</sup> John A. Hannah, “The Challenge of Equal Opportunity to the Colleges,” in *Equal Opportunity for Higher Education: Proceedings of a Conference by the American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations in Cooperation with the Association of State Universities and Land-Grant Colleges* (Washington, D.C.: American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations, 1962): 10.

<sup>1049</sup> John A. Hannah, speech, November 3, 1961, in Terry Link, “Seeing the Trees But Not the Forest (A Working Draft),” November 3, 2005, PDF in author’s possession.

only made a populace more marketable; it also rendered them more fit for political sovereignty and, perhaps, nationhood.

### *Nigeria and American Developmentalism*

The notion of “development,” certainly, has indigenous resonance, too. J. D. Y. Peel has argued that *olaju* represents a complicated Yoruba construct of historical change and “development” that reflects individual advancement, external trade, and education. It connoted an “eye-opening.”<sup>1050</sup> As Azikiwe’s *West African Pilot* observed, “show the light and the people find the way.”<sup>1051</sup> Similarly, while “underdeveloped” carries the connotations of power and privilege, indigenous Igbo constructs appeal to related concepts bound up in “development.”<sup>1052</sup>

The notion of “development” *per se* in a universalizing sense may have been foreign to indigenous Igbo thought, but an internal sense of development, growth, and wealth-production fits comfortably within it. Barrister Ojo Maduekwe places “growth” and “development” in a paradigm of “mekaria”—“a new *can-do* spirit that clearly affirms we have got our destiny in our hands and that we can turn the corner.”<sup>1053</sup> The Igbo proverb, *aka aja aja na-ebute onu mmanu mmanu* [soily hands, oily mouth] suggests that hard labor will lead to profitability and growth. The very word for person that can be translated to be *mmadu* [“good life”] connotes “the highest point of ethical beauty, goodness, and prosperity.”<sup>1054</sup> Acquisition of the *mma ndu* demands *nghota* [understanding] and *ndidi* [patience]. But no built-in hierarchy can prevent individuals from achieving “development,” the sub-text of the proverb: *nwata kwochaa aka, o soro ndi*

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<sup>1050</sup> J.D.Y. Peel, “Olaju: A Yoruba Concept of Development,” *The Journal of Development Studies* 14, no. 2 (1978): 150, 154.

<sup>1051</sup> Nnamdi Azikiwe, *My Odyssey*, 307.

<sup>1052</sup> J.D.Y. Peel, “Olaju: A Yorba [sic] Concept of Development,” 139-165.

<sup>1053</sup> “Africa: The Challenge of State-Building,” in *Raising the Bar: Selected Speeches and Writings of Ojo Maduekwe* (Ibadan: Spectrum Books, 2005), 25.

<sup>1054</sup> Andrew I. Isiguzo, George Ukagba and Nkeonye Otakpor, “The Igbo Concept of a Person,” *Africa: Rivista trimestrale di studi e documentazione dell'Istituto italiano per l'Africa e l'Oriente* Anno 59, No. 2 (Giugno 2004): 235. It can also be translated as *mmuo di ndu*: “the spirit is incarnate.”

*okenye rie nri* [if the child washes his/her hands, he/she can eat with the elders]. Clear distinctions between the poor [*ogbenye*] and the wealthy [*aka ji aku*] are transparently clear, Could the Igbo language connote *under*-development, in which a person or society has either grown [*tolitere*], changed [*ghanwere*], multiplied in resources [*mutara ego*] or in people [*mutara mmadu*]. It connotes that there is a standard of living to which an individual or community *should* and *can* reach but *has not* reached. But it did not carry the industrial connotations with high modernity: the obsession with quantifiability, fixedness on the clock, and wage rates. The economic collapse of the late 1920s unleashed a torrent of new models for economic change, most of them focused on the needs of industrial centers. Theorists such as Paul Rosenstein-Rodan argued for linkages between the “backward” nations and “developed” nations to infuse the “underdeveloped” market with capital, a state-centered response that mirrors the New Deal-era ethos.<sup>1055</sup> Other theorists such as Ragnar Nrukse, Albert Otto Hirschman, Arthur Lewis, and particularly, Walt W. Rostow argued for a variety of tactics to produce economically viable nation-states—but they all agreed on a central factor: the “developed” state must intervene directly in establishing infrastructure and industry in the “underdeveloped” state.<sup>1056</sup> Walt Rostow, in particular, held that colonial rule served as an important developmental dialectic; it established physical infrastructure (e.g. ports, roads, docks) while, simultaneously, inspiring “reactive nationalism,” so-called, which he defined as “reacting against intrusion from more advanced countries,”—which, by Rostow’s theorizing, would produce leaders such as Nnamdi

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<sup>1055</sup> See also Walt W. Rostow, *Theorists of Economic Growth from David Hume to the Present with a Perspective on the Next Century* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 409-414.

<sup>1056</sup> For a summary of development theorists’ work in mid-century America, see Nils Gilman, *Mandarins of the Future: Modernization Theory in Cold War America* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2007). See also Walt W. Rostow, *Theorists of Economic Growth from David Hume to the Present with a Perspective on the Next Century* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992).

Azikiwe.<sup>1057</sup> The University, it seemed, would be a proper step for Nigeria according to what the Americans considered to be “its present stage of development.”<sup>1058</sup>

Mid-century presidential administrations and Congress did little to support African independence, in new part due to former colonial interests in the regions. Senegal “belonged” to the French, and Nigeria as well as Ghana to the British.<sup>1059</sup> Truman’s plan for funding Europe, made its way to Nigeria-related projects: Marshall Plan funds helped to build the road connecting Kano and Maiduguri as well as improve the Enugu-Mamfe Road.<sup>1060</sup> Their neglect was rooted, at least in part, on suspicions, many of them racially-driven, that Africans could not be trusted to appropriate aid honestly.<sup>1061</sup> Their disinterest left African matters in the hands of middle-level diplomats and para-state and voluntary institutions such as Michigan State University and the American Committee on Africa.<sup>1062</sup> The Eisenhower administration funded limited projects in sub-Saharan Africa; in August 1959, Eisenhower’s International Cooperation Administration [ICA-the predecessor to USAID] provided 200,000 pounds to Great Britain; that fall, the funds were redirected for use throughout the colonies with the intent of facilitating industrialization loans.<sup>1063</sup> The contribution was among the first of its kind from the United States and was acknowledged to be a “small bag that cannot hold many chickens,” as Eboh quipped—and only through British channels, at that.<sup>1064</sup> But Kano City’s M. Maitama Sule hoped that it would be a

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<sup>1057</sup> W.W. Rostow, *The Stages of Economic Growth: A Non-Communist Manifesto* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1960). For a succinct summary, see Rostow, “The Stages of Economic Growth,” *The Economic History Review* 12, no. 1 (1959): 1-16.

<sup>1058</sup> GSHoffman, Telegram, December 3, 1959, Box 49, Folder 14, Hannah Papers.

<sup>1059</sup> Ebere Nwabuani, *The United States and Decolonization in West Africa, 1950-1960* (Rochester: University of Rochester, 2001), 228.

<sup>1060</sup> “Brief History of USAID/Nigeria,”

<sup>1061</sup> Ebere Nwabuani, *The United States and Decolonization in West Africa, 1950-1960* (Rochester: University of Rochester, 2001), 228.

<sup>1062</sup> Kevin E. Grimm, “Gazing Toward Ghana: African American Agency in the Eisenhower Administration's Relations with Africa,” *Journal of Contemporary History* 48, no. 3 (July 2013): 578-596.

<sup>1063</sup> *Eastern House of Representatives Parliamentary Debates* (Nigeria), August 6, 1959, 1512.

<sup>1064</sup> *Eastern House of Representatives Parliamentary Debates* (Nigeria), August 6, 1959, 1512.

“sign that the great American government is re-examining and re-furbishing its aid policies to make them really well adapted to our needs.”<sup>1065</sup> At a May 1958 meeting with the Department of State, C. Douglas Dillon acknowledged to Azikiwe that the federal government “had not given as much attention to Africa, including Nigeria, as it should.”<sup>1066</sup>

Established in 1949 in Zaria, the Nigerian College of Arts, Science, and Technology [NCAST] framed itself as an “indigenous university.” It would house 750 students with a staff of 85.<sup>1067</sup> With professional courses geared to students acquiring a United Kingdom General Certificate, the College existed under Nigerian auspices.<sup>1068</sup> Siting a branch in Enugu or the Plateau would provide easy access to mining resources; Enugu was ultimately chosen.<sup>1069</sup> Such schools often expropriated land from nation groups; although “traditions” of British promises not to expropriate land for public matters existed for certain nations. When the Ogwi and Akegbe communities near Enugu came to believe that the NCAST would expropriate their land, they enlisted the service of barrister Charles Onyeana to “protest strongly” against “the Government policy of gradual encroachment,” invoking the promises of a Captain O’Connor.<sup>1070</sup> The promise was orally delivered, Ogwi claims; as Udi Division Officer H. J. Harding noted, “I cannot find the authority” confirming O’Connor’s alleged promise.<sup>1071</sup>

The Akegbe almost succeeded in negotiating for the return of lands already taken for the purposes of the Women’s Training College; Harding observed a “strong political argument” for

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<sup>1065</sup> *House of Representatives Parliamentary Debates*, August 6, 1959, 1512.

<sup>1066</sup> Memorandum of Conversation, May 1958, Box 3239, Folder 1958, College Park, Maryland.

<sup>1067</sup> “Nigerian College of Arts, Science, and Technology,” *Africa* 24, no. 1 (January 1954): 63.

<sup>1068</sup> “Nigerian College of Arts, Science, and Technology,” *Nature*, December 26, 1959, 1985.

<sup>1069</sup> “Nigeria College of Arts, Science, & Technology-Enugu Site,” ONDIT 20/1/167.

<sup>1070</sup> Charles Onyeama, “Public Lands Acquisition Government Notice No.1280,” December 5, 1951, ONDIT 20/1/167.

<sup>1071</sup> H.J.M. Harding, “Nigerian College of Arts, Science, and Technology,” Memo, March 5, 1952, ONDIT 20/1/167.



returning land clearly unused by the College.<sup>1072</sup> But Orlando P. Gunning, the Acting Resident, rejected the argument out of hand: while the Acting Resident considered the land grab to be “unreasonably large,” the Authorities felt otherwise.<sup>1073</sup> Harding could issue an apology for sending the notice to them late, but the “acquisition of the site . . . must go forward as planned.”<sup>1074</sup> Bonafide land ownership became a sticking point; the Ogui and Akegbe lands had contested claims within the communities—did they belong, for instance, to Chief Madu Nwagbo or was it on a communal plot?<sup>1075</sup> The government’s suit had exposed and exploited pre-existing community rifts. The Udi District Officer felt that litigating the dispute would do the families a favor: “they would accept almost with relief” and would be pleased that they “no longer [had] to make up their own minds.”<sup>1076</sup> By 1962, NCAST was subsumed into what would become the University of Nigeria, Nsukka, with the federal government agreeing to pay faculty salaries.<sup>1077</sup> University-building, whether in colonial or post-independence regimes, tended to rely upon these kinds of maneuverings.

*Nnamdi Azikiwe and the Michigan State University Project*

Since becoming Premier of the Eastern Region in 1953, Azikiwe considered his hope for a Nigerian university a possibility. As hinted in Azikiwe’s conversations with Albert Post at the British Empire desk in Foggy Bottom, since 1955, Azikiwe had discussed the prospects of building a “land grant college” with the assistance of International Cooperation Agency [ICA] officials.<sup>1078</sup> Azikiwe did not initially approach Michigan State University directly, contrary to

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<sup>1072</sup> H.J.M. Harding, “Nigerian College of Arts, Science, and Technology,” March 24, 1952, ONDIT 20/1/167.

<sup>1073</sup> H.J.M. Harding, “Nigerian College of Arts, Science, and Technology,” March 24, 1952, ONDIT 20/1/167.

<sup>1074</sup> Acting Resident, “Nigerian College of Arts, Sciences and Technology,” April 24, 1952, 20/1/167, ONDIT 20/1/167.

<sup>1075</sup> Udi District Officer, Letter to Regional Land Officer, September 1953, No. D/7/4/160, ONDIT 20/1/167, EFA.

<sup>1076</sup> Udi District Officer, Letter to Regional Land Officer, September 1953, No. D/7/4/160, ONDIT 20/1/167, EFA.

<sup>1077</sup> “University of Nigeria, Nsukka, Annual Report, 1961-1962,” Rough Draft No. 2, 12, Box 50, Folder 2, Hannah Papers.

<sup>1078</sup> J. Russell Andrus, Letter to John A. Hannah, November 6, 1957, Box 49, Folder 13, Hannah Papers.

popular lore, but instead, suggested MSU as a potential advisory group to ICA officials—who then presented the request formally to Hannah.<sup>1079</sup> In 1956, Azikiwe approached Reginald Barrett, a liaison for the Colonial Office in Washington, to inquire of Michigan State University about their interest in linking with a university in Nigeria.<sup>1080</sup> MSU Vice President, Thomas H. Hamilton offered non-committal interest and then passed the suggestion to Hannah.<sup>1081</sup>

The thought of an indigenous university, conceptualized by no less than Azikiwe, was more than acceptable. And the Americans had limited options in dealing with British administrators. The University could not be “in a position to negotiate . . . unless and until advised otherwise from London.”<sup>1082</sup> Surely, ICA’s Education Deputy Chief, J. Russell Andrus wrote in November 1957—with a hint of warning—neither MSU nor “any other first class American university” would want to assist in developing a non-affiliated institution.<sup>1083</sup> The University would need to collaborate with the British Inter-University Council (IUC).<sup>1084</sup> MSU’s success with government contracts in South Vietnam and Pakistan instilled confidence in the ICA that MSU could be successful in Nigeria as well.<sup>1085</sup>

The IUC had developed shortly after the war as an arm for expanding educational facilities throughout the empire, primarily through the University College model.<sup>1086</sup> That is, the University of London or some other “respectable” British University would establish an “associated” college in a given colony, such as Makerere College, the University College of

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<sup>1079</sup> J. Russell Andrus, Letter to John A. Hannah, November 29, 1957, Box 49, Folder 13, Hannah Papers.

<sup>1080</sup> Thomas H. Hamilton, Letter to John A. Hannah, Box 49, Folder 13, Hannah Papers.

<sup>1081</sup> Thomas H. Hamilton, Letter to John A. Hannah, Box 49, Folder 13, Hannah Papers.

<sup>1082</sup> J. Russell Andrus, Letter to John A. Hannah, November 6, 1957, Hannah Papers, Box 49, Folder 1, MSU Archives.

<sup>1083</sup> J. Russell Andrus, Letter to John A. Hannah, November 6, 1957, Box 49, Folder 13, Hannah Papers.

<sup>1084</sup> J. Russell Andrus, Letter to John A. Hannah, November 29, 1957, Box 49, Folder 13, Hannah Papers.

<sup>1085</sup> J. Russell Andrus, Letter to John A. Hannah, November 6, 1957, Box 49, Folder 13, Hannah Papers.

<sup>1086</sup> Livsey, *Nigeria’s University Age*, Location 1167.

Khartoum, the Royal University of Malta, and the University of Hong Kong.<sup>1087</sup> At the University College, Ibadan, British botanist Kenneth Mellanby served as the first principal.<sup>1088</sup> Similar institutions in the Gold Coast, Rhodesia, Kenya, and Tanganyika had proliferated since the 1920s; all enjoyed a “special relationship” with the University of London.<sup>1089</sup> The IUC’s



Figure 10: Nnamdi Azikiwe at an MSU reception, standing to the right of John A. Hannah, 1959.  
Courtesy of Michigan State University Archives.

<sup>1087</sup> Martin Kolinsky, “The Demise of the Inter-University Council for Higher Education Overseas: A Chapter in the History of the Idea of the University,” *Minerva*, Vol. 21, No. 1 (March 1983), 42.

<sup>1088</sup> For a full account of his tenure, see Kenneth Mellanby’s memoir, *The Birth of Nigeria’s University* (London: Methuen, 1958). *Passim*.

<sup>1089</sup> “Higher Education on the Gold Coast,” *The Times* (London), April 30, 1924, 13; “Rhodesia University College,” *Nature*, January 29, 1955, 193; “Plan for E. African University,” *The Times*, February 26, 1959, 9.

purpose was not to reproduce full British “universities” in the traditional sense; that would be too high of an aspiration. Moreover, conventional British institutions held little interest in producing a curriculum tailored to the locale; indeed, Ashby had warned about the detriments from unassimilated institutions in Nigeria.<sup>1090</sup>

Azikiwe wanted his university to be something different. The British-run U. C. I., he argued, was transforming “million-dollar baby,” for all its costs, and “every time the baby cries he is given a kiss worth one million pounds.”<sup>1091</sup> Additionally, Ibadan’s curriculum felt irrelevant to the lives of Nigerians, in spite of acknowledgements and vague promises of producing a distinctively Nigerian education.<sup>1092</sup> Above all, the certificates received from U. C. I. were not Nigerian; they were simply a “University of London” certificate, with relatively little utility outside of Nigeria except, if one could afford it, to get into a British institution.<sup>1093</sup> It was but a perpetuation of the colonial ethos. Chinua Achebe recalled a U. C. I. administrator acknowledging: “We may not be able to teach you what you want or even what you need. We can only teach you what we know.”<sup>1094</sup>

Azikiwe intended to rectify the Ibadan deficiency. In January 1958, Andrus invited MSU officials—Hannah and Taggart, specifically, along with J. W. Cook of Exeter University—to visit the Eastern Region that April.<sup>1095</sup> Andrus floated the possibility of MSU working independently “for the sake of simplicity,” but “courtesy demands,” Andrus concluded, that the Americans “give full consideration” to collaboration with the British.<sup>1096</sup> The Acting Premier,

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<sup>1090</sup> Ashby et. al., *Investment in Education*, 31.

<sup>1091</sup> Azikiwe, *Zik*, 33.

<sup>1092</sup> Axinn interview. See also “Nigeria’s University College: Ibadan’s Second Year,” *Manchester Guardian*, December 23, 1949, 6.

<sup>1093</sup> “Nigeria’s University College: Ibadan’s Second Year,” *Manchester Guardian*, December 23, 1949, 6.

<sup>1094</sup> Chinua Achebe, *The Education of a British-Protected Child* (New York: Penguin, 2009), 22.

<sup>1095</sup> J. Russell Andrus, Letter to John A. Hannah, January 14, 1958; Peter Allemanno, Letter to John A. Hannah, March 18, 1958, Box 49, Folder 13, Hannah Papers, both in MSU Archives.

<sup>1096</sup> J. Russell Andrus, Letter to John A. Hannah, January 14, 1958, Box 49, Folder 13, Hannah Papers.

Ibanga Udo Akpabio, reported that when Azikiwe visited Washington that January, where he took note of American “reserve and skepticism rather than the expected sympathy.”<sup>1097</sup> He concluded that the British were “undercutting” him.<sup>1098</sup>

### *Anxieties at Whitehall*

From the outset, the Whitehall Colonial Office was less than enthused—but, grudgingly, acknowledged the enrollment capacity of the existing university structure.<sup>1099</sup> As far back as 1955, the Colonial Office advised offering assistance to provide “some prospect of steering the new institutions along desirable lines.”<sup>1100</sup> Should Azikiwe link up with the Americans, as they rightly feared he would, “it would be a great pity.”<sup>1101</sup> When Cook arrived in Nsukka on April 6—his schedule would not allow him to be there at the same time as Hannah and Taggart—he became disenchanted on the spot.<sup>1102</sup> Citing an increasingly common refrain, Cook said that Nsukka was an odd place for university, nearly 50 miles from Enugu without any kind of rail transportation. ICA’s Peter Allemanno reported that Cook had “misgivings” about the project itself.<sup>1103</sup>

But the NCNC had made the University a 1957 election promise, and thus, the Colonial Office resigned themselves to the Eastern Region’s wishes: “it is clear that they will be satisfied with nothing short of a university of their own.”<sup>1104</sup> Under the circumstances, the British had little choice but to “do everything possible to ensure that the Institution is planned and developed

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<sup>1097</sup> Ralph H. Hunt, “Interview with the Acting Premier of the Eastern Region,” January 10, 1958, Box 3328, Folder 2257, Central Decimal File, National Archives II, College Park, Maryland.

<sup>1098</sup> Ralph H. Hunt, “Interview with the Acting Premier of the Eastern Region,” January 10, 1958, Box 3328, Folder 2257, Central Decimal File, National Archives II, College Park, Maryland.

<sup>1099</sup> Colonial Office, Letter to S.J. Worsley, September 5, 1955, Rhodes House.

<sup>1100</sup> Colonial Office, Letter to S.J. Worsley, September 5, 1955, Rhodes House.

<sup>1101</sup> Colonial Office, Letter to S.J. Worsley, September 5, 1955, Rhodes House.

<sup>1102</sup> Peter Allemanno, Letter to John A. Hannah, April 24, 1958, Box 49, Folder 13, Hannah Papers.

<sup>1103</sup> Peter Allemanno, Letter to John A. Hannah, April 24, 1958, Box 49, Folder 13, Hannah Papers.

<sup>1104</sup> Colonial Office Letter, December 17, 1957, Box 49, Folder 13, Hannah Papers.

in the right lines.”<sup>1105</sup> First and foremost, the Colonial Office recommended sending IUC officials to investigate discrepancies in the Eastern Region Marketing Board’s statements on its university appropriations: in one report, it indicated 1.5 million pounds for the university project—likely a part of the 2 million pounds Azikiwe would later reference in his debate with S. G. Ikoku.<sup>1106</sup> But in a companion statement, only ½ million pounds had been earmarked for it.<sup>1107</sup> Azikiwe had little patience for the meddling of either the Foster-Sutton Tribunal or the IUC “planning” or “investigating” his university.<sup>1108</sup> Two years later, Cook suspected that UNN’s governing Provisional Council had not yet met because it had “already served its main purpose. . . to enable Zik to lay his hands on the Marketing Board money.”<sup>1109</sup>

Hannah, Taggart, and Cook visited Nsukka in April 1958. “It would be highly desirable,” Taggart concluded, “provided adequate time and energy is applied to its planning and development.”<sup>1110</sup> Action Group had hired a London public relations firm, Patrick Dolan and Associates, to manage it.<sup>1111</sup> Seeking out intelligence on the University project, Dolan approached consular official John K. Emerson with a query: what did the United States plan on doing to celebrate Nigerian independence, forthcoming in fall 1960? “No decision had been made,” Emerson said, with diplomatic non-commitment.<sup>1112</sup>

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<sup>1105</sup> Colonial Office Letter, December 17, 1957, Box 49, Folder 13, Hannah Papers.

<sup>1106</sup> Colonial Office Letter, December 17, 1957, Box 49, Folder 13, Hannah Papers.

<sup>1107</sup> Colonial Office Letter, December 17, 1957, Box 49, Folder 13, Hannah Papers.

<sup>1108</sup> Colonial Office Letter, December 17, 1957, Box 49, Folder 13, Hannah Papers.

<sup>1109</sup> J.W. Cook, Letter to I.C.M. Maxwell, December 28, 1959, BW 90/606, National Archives-Kew.

<sup>1110</sup> Glen L. Taggart, Letter to Jack Berryhill, June 14, 1958, Box 49, Folder 13, Hannah Papers.

<sup>1111</sup> John K. Emerson, “Conversation with Mr. Patrick Dolan and Mr. Al Toombs of Patrick Dolan & Associations, Ltd., London,” September 11, 1959, Box 3238, Folder 459, Central Decimal File, National Archives II, College Park, Maryland.

<sup>1112</sup> John K. Emerson, “Conversation with Mr. Patrick Dolan and Mr. Al Toombs of Patrick Dolan & Associations, Ltd., London,” September 11, 1959, Box 3238, Folder 459, Central Decimal File, National Archives II, College Park, Maryland.

Dolan had an idea. Our account comes from diplomat John K. Emerson, to whom Dolan directed the proposal. Why not offer “an American university complete with buildings, equipment, and staff.”<sup>1113</sup> It could be modeled after the land-grant system and would signify a “magnificent gesture.”<sup>1114</sup> Whatever of the merits of several universities in Nigeria, Emerson responded that it would be difficult to plan a third university in Nigeria while “the plans for the institution in the Eastern Region were just being formulated.”<sup>1115</sup> Dolan’s idea was too extravagant to be taken at face-value; Dolan was likely serving a reconnaissance mission with the American consulate on the Action Group’s behalf.<sup>1116</sup> Meanwhile, the Northern People’s Congress sought to establish more University Colleges, multiply the teacher training centers, and expand NCAST throughout the regions “in order to expedite the supply of qualified men and women whom Nigeria needs so urgently.”<sup>1117</sup>

In composing the report, Taggart accounted for Cook’s “misgivings.”<sup>1118</sup> Following Taggart’s departure from Nigeria, he traveled to London, where he and Cook devised a consensus outline; as Taggart wrote the report, he framed it as a document that “follows fundamentally the outline and the point upon which Mr. Cook and I [Taggart] agreed.”<sup>1119</sup> Taggart actively avoided the “details”—meaning, in this instance, points over which Cook had

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<sup>1113</sup> John K. Emerson, “Conversation with Mr. Patrick Dolan and Mr. Al Toombs of Patrick Dolan & Associates, Ltd., London,” September 11, 1959, Box 3238, Folder 459, Central Decimal File, National Archives II, College Park, Maryland.

<sup>1114</sup> John K. Emerson, “Conversation with Mr. Patrick Dolan and Mr. Al Toombs of Patrick Dolan & Associates, Ltd., London,” September 11, 1959, Box 3238, Folder 459, Central Decimal File, National Archives II, College Park, Maryland.

<sup>1115</sup> John K. Emerson, “Conversation with Mr. Patrick Dolan and Mr. Al Toombs of Patrick Dolan & Associates, Ltd., London,” September 11, 1959, Box 3238, Folder 459, Central Decimal File, National Archives II, College Park, Maryland.

<sup>1116</sup> John K. Emerson, “Conversation with Mr. Patrick Dolan and Mr. Al Toombs of Patrick Dolan & Associates, Ltd., London,” September 11, 1959, Box 3238, Folder 459, Central Decimal File, National Archives II, College Park, Maryland.

<sup>1117</sup> “Policies for the Federal Government Conduct of Home Affairs,” Box 3238, FD 459.

<sup>1118</sup> Peter Allemanno, Letter to John A. Hannah, April 24, 1958, Box 49, Folder 13, Hannah Papers.

<sup>1119</sup> Glen L. Taggart, Letter to Jack Berryhill, June 14, 1958, Box 49, Folder 13, Hannah Papers.

“misgivings.”<sup>1120</sup> Cook could “then find it easier to sign then if the report were lengthy and went into too much detail.”<sup>1121</sup> Even still, Taggart invited Cook to offer feedback on portions of the report that he felt needed “redevelopment.”<sup>1122</sup> ICA officer Jack Berryhill complimented Taggart for “handl[ing] a very difficult situation extremely well, with delicate problems approached with firmness but also with tact.”<sup>1123</sup> Taggart submitted the document to Azikiwe, “for better or for worse.”<sup>1124</sup> Taggart’s ICA colleague, Hyde Buller, as well as Reginald Barrett at the English embassy both expressed their support for their report, Barrett taking particular note that he hoped MSU and ICU could “work together” in building the University.<sup>1125</sup> For the next two months,



Figure 11: Glenn Taggart, standing center, visits the proposed site for UNN, ca. 1958.  
Courtesy of Merrill-Cazier Library, Utah State University.

<sup>1120</sup> Peter Allemano, Letter to John A. Hannah, April 24, 1958, Box 49, Folder 13, Hannah Papers.

<sup>1121</sup> Glen L. Taggart, Letter to Hyde Buller, June 28, 1958, Box 49, Folder 13, Hannah Papers.

<sup>1122</sup> Glen L. Taggart, Letter to J.W. Cook, June 28, 1958, Box 49, Folder 13, Hannah Papers.

<sup>1123</sup> Jack H. Berryhill, Letter to Glen L. Taggart, July 28, 1958, Box 49, Folder 13, Hannah Papers.

<sup>1124</sup> Glen L. Taggart, Letter to Hyde Buller, July 16, 1958, Box 49, Folder 13, Hannah Papers.

<sup>1125</sup> Glen L. Taggart, Letter to John A. Hannah, July 7, 1958, Box 49, Folder 13, Hannah Papers.



Taggart heard nothing, either from ICA or from Azikiwe.<sup>1126</sup> “We are somewhat skeptical,” he confided in Cook, “and concerned about the ‘no reaction’ from Mr. Azikiwe and company.”<sup>1127</sup> The silence reflected not inaction but a tumult of violence (discussed in chapter 3). Although aware of the “difficult political situation,” Taggart did not fully appreciate its import.<sup>1128</sup>

By August 1959, ethnic minorities enjoyed little “real legislative power.”<sup>1129</sup> Azikiwe’s Ibibio ally, Michael Ogon, had attempted to placate the minorities by expressing his “profound respect” for their customs and that they would have space to “develop” on their own terms without coercion.<sup>1130</sup> Non-Igbo minorities were less earnest about seeking an independent state and more, as one Commission of Inquiry found, “wish[ing] for a greater share in roads, schools, hospitals, and water supplies”; as of August 1959, sites such as Eket were overlooked by the Eastern Region for electrification projects.<sup>1131</sup> Azikiwe expressed a willingness—to much applause—to create a new Midwestern state from the *Western* Region.<sup>1132</sup> But he would not humor the COR movement.<sup>1133</sup> The American consulate considered the COR movement to be “dead for the foreseeable future.”<sup>1134</sup>

Pre-Kennedy, Americans wavered between neglect and publicity exploitation, particularly through the MSU-University of Nigeria relationship. In February 1959, Finance

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<sup>1126</sup> Glen L. Taggart, Letter to J.W. Cook, August 21, 1958, Box 49, Folder 13, Hannah Papers.

<sup>1127</sup> Glen L. Taggart, Letter to J.W. Cook, August 21, 1958, Box 49, Folder 13, Hannah Papers.

<sup>1128</sup> Glen L. Taggart, Letter to Jack H. Berryhill, July 24, 1958, Box 49, Folder 13, Hannah Papers.

<sup>1129</sup> John K. Emerson, “Eastern Region Provincial Assemblies Believed Near,” August 6, 1959, Box 3238, Folder 459, Central Decimal File, National Archives II, College Park, Maryland.

<sup>1130</sup> John K. Emerson, “Eastern Region Provincial Assemblies Believed Near,” August 6, 1959, Box 3238, Folder 459, Central Decimal File, National Archives II, College Park, Maryland.

<sup>1131</sup> John K. Emerson, “Eastern Region Provincial Assemblies Believed Near,” August 6, 1959, Box 3238, Folder 459, Central Decimal File, National Archives II, College Park, Maryland.

<sup>1132</sup> John K. Emerson, “Zik Outlines Party Program,” August 30, 1959, Box 3238, Folder 459, Central Decimal File, National Archives II, College Park, Maryland.

<sup>1133</sup> John K. Emerson, “Zik Outlines Party Program,” August 30, 1959, Box 3238, Folder 459, Central Decimal File, National Archives II, College Park, Maryland.

<sup>1134</sup> John K. Emerson, “Zik Outlines Party Program,” August 30, 1959, Box 3238, Folder 459, Central Decimal File, National Archives II, College Park, Maryland.

Minister Eboh struggled to acquire a development loan from ICA, wondering “whether the authorities in Washington can realize how important these matters can be.”<sup>1135</sup> By August, as the University was reaching a broader press, Eboh chided the Americans, who “had better decide whether they want to use us for mere propaganda or whether they are going to give us the sort of assistance we require . . . It looks like propaganda rather than assistance of real value.”<sup>1136</sup> Noting the existing difficulties in granting the loans to Nigeria that year—most of their proposed projects were years down the road—Emerson dismissed Eboh’s comments as “made for political effect.” Emerson situated Eboh’s criticism against the existing electoral climate, rather than immediate needs.<sup>1137</sup> The high publicity the 1958 *ogu umunwanyi* coupled with the minority agitation forced NCNC politicians to defend NCNC education policies and make overtures to the minority groups.<sup>1138</sup> Funding for the University appeared to be slow in coming; where did all the money go, the Action Group asked?<sup>1139</sup>

#### *UNN and the Tumult of the 1959 Election*

While all major parties urged moderation, an American consular official predicted that “unruly crowds, overturned vehicles, fighting with some resultant fatalities almost certainly will occasionally mark the campaign . . . no political party in Nigeria is above resorting to suppressing opposition political activities when it is in a position to do so.”<sup>1140</sup> NCNC returned accusations the AG accusations. Emerson observed the “growing trend toward violence and the

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<sup>1135</sup> “Comments by Federal Finance Minister Okotie-Eboh on the subject of American Aid to Nigeria,” August 7, 1959, Box 3238, FD 459, Central Decimal File, National Archives II, College Park, Maryland.

<sup>1136</sup> “Comments by Federal Finance Minister Okotie-Eboh on the subject of American Aid to Nigeria,” August 7, 1959, Box 3238, FD 459, Central Decimal File, National Archives II, College Park Maryland.

<sup>1137</sup> “Comments by Federal Finance Minister Okotie-Eboh on the subject of American Aid to Nigeria,” August 7, 1959, Box 3238, FD 459, Central Decimal File, National Archives II, College Park Maryland.

<sup>1138</sup> John K. Emerson, “Eastern Region Provincial Assemblies Believed Near,” August 6, 1959, Box 3238, Folder 459, Central Decimal File, National Archives II, College Park Maryland.

<sup>1139</sup> “Is East Free STd. 2 Education Promise not propaganda Stunt,” *Eastern Observer*, November 30, 1959,

<sup>1140</sup> John K. Emerson, “Political ‘Incidents’ Mount,” September 11, 1959, Box 3238, Folder 459, Central Decimal File, National Archives II, College Park Maryland.

increasing use of strong-arm men.”<sup>1141</sup> Acts of violence proliferated throughout the countryside: the NCNC attacked an Action Group Helicopter in Nsukka in a “life and death struggle over the AG loudspeaker.”<sup>1142</sup> An Igbo Action Group activist, S. U. Eze “was bleeding badly from wounds sustained” from attacks by “armed NCNC thugs.”<sup>1143</sup> Eze warned that there would be “miscounting of Action Group votes to favour the NCNC”<sup>1144</sup> Most parties began to hurl the epithet of “black imperialism” at the other: Zik against the NPC, Zik against the Action Group, the Aba Press against Zik, and so forth.<sup>1145</sup> When Azikiwe’s caravan was attacked in the North, he, exasperated, asked a crowd: “why have they chosen to do this to us? We come as friends.”<sup>1146</sup> Meanwhile, the NCNC mounted charges of sedition against AG Minority Whip S. G. Ikoku for declaring his resistance to efforts at regulating the election of the Second Council of Chiefs into the Eastern House of Assembly.<sup>1147</sup> And Azikiwe charged crowds: in one speech before elites, he gave an address that John K. Emerson at the Consulate considered worthy for “a college seminar”; when Azikiwe told the crowd that he preferred words like *risorgimento* over *resurgence*, they laughed and responded with a unified cheer of “Zik!”<sup>1148</sup> The NCNC press drew on Azikiwe’s status as a Nigerian Messiah. One poet, O. E. Offiong, wrote a praise poem in the *Eastern Sentinel*:

*Long may you be our rock of ages  
On whom all true patriots will lean*

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<sup>1141</sup> John K. Emerson, “NCNC Wins Lagos Town Council Election,” November 3, 1959, Box 3238, Folder 459, Central Decimal File, National Archives II, College Park, Maryland., Central Decimal File, National Archives II, College Park Maryland.

<sup>1142</sup> “NCNC Thugs Attack AG Helicopter at Nsukka,” *Eastern Observer*, November 5, 1959, 1.

<sup>1143</sup> “NCNC Thugs Attack AG Helicopter at Nsukka,” *Eastern Observer*, November 5, 1959, 1.

<sup>1144</sup> “2 plans suspected may be used by NCNC to win Nsukka,” *Eastern States Express*, December 8, 1959, 1.

<sup>1145</sup> “Dr. Azikiwe’s Second Tour of the North,” November 14, 1959, Box 3329, Folder 259, Central Decimal File, National Archives II, College Park, Maryland.; “NCNC Attitude to Tribunal Report,” *Eastern States Express*, February 23, 1957, 2.

<sup>1146</sup> C.J. Quinlan, Letter to G.F. Linderman, Desp. 62, Box 3238, Folder 459, Central Decimal File, National Archives II, College Park, Maryland., Central Decimal File, National Archives II, College Park, Maryland.

<sup>1147</sup> “Sedition Case Against Ikoku Adjourned,” *Eastern Observer*, December 1, 1959, 1.

<sup>1148</sup> John K. Emerson, “Zik Outlines Party Program,” August 30, 1959, Box 3238, Folder 459, Central Decimal File, National Archives II, College Park Maryland.

*And history will record in golden page  
The part you played our freedom to win*

*Long may you be our renowned hero  
Whom the trial of time cannot sway  
But strengthened against many a fearful foe  
Will march our nation to the triumphant day.*<sup>1149</sup>

The Action Group mounted the University's absence as a final volley at the NCNC, charging that the "sweet University for which the UPE scheme was abandoned is still-born."<sup>1150</sup> Cognizant that the University—again—had come under scrutiny, Azikiwe hastened its development.<sup>1151</sup> In early 1960, he told a Michigan State University audience that local politics had required that the University be built more quickly than anticipated, acknowledging that "unless action were taken to provide the Region with a University, in the immediate future, it would become an election issue at any future elections."<sup>1152</sup> Azikiwe hoped to buttress his prestige through his relationship with Michigan State University, who had commended him for his "outstanding achievements as a statesman, author, and educator."<sup>1153</sup> The Action Group utilized the uncertainty about the project, issuing a statement on November 30 calling upon Azikiwe to answer for the University's failure to materialize:

Tell the Nigerian public what has become of your University of Nigeria x You will remember that you have travelled several items to Europe and the United States in order, so you said, to make arrangements for this University You have wasted a lot of public money in the process. x And you will remember your various promises at different times to the effect that this university of yours will start functioning this year. Now that the year is running to an end and there is no sign of your fulfilling this promise what excuse have you to offer?<sup>1154</sup>

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<sup>1149</sup> "LONG LIVE ZIK," *Eastern Sentinel*, July 13, 1959, 2.

<sup>1150</sup> "NCNC Big Lie is Exposed," *Eastern Observer*, December 12, 1959, 1.

<sup>1151</sup> Azikiwe, *Zik: A Selection of Speeches*, 297.

<sup>1152</sup> Azikiwe, *Zik: A Selection of Speeches*, 297.

<sup>1153</sup> "Dr. Zik Honoured as recognized leader in West African Affairs," *Eastern Sentinel*, July 17, 1959, 1.

<sup>1154</sup> "Is East Free STd. 2 Education Promise not propaganda Stunt," *Eastern Observer*, November 30, 1959.

The Action Group had made inroads in both the North and among the minorities of the Eastern Region, although Premier Awolowo had little hope for “development” in the Rivers region; communications were so poor, Emerson records in a conversation with Awolowo in Ibadan, “that there was no effective way to raise the standard of living. . . some resettlement project would have to be taken.”<sup>1155</sup> If the Action Group won, aspirations to “national” infrastructure—let alone a “national” university—would be in peril.<sup>1156</sup> Awolowo told the American consul general that if the Action Group won, “there would be no such government” as the “Nigerian” nation-state—and Awolowo even objected to the “national” government then constituted.<sup>1157</sup> But he still promised to abide by majority rule.<sup>1158</sup>

The 1959 election fever emboldened Azikiwe to celebrate the University. The Eastern Region “had staked its reputation” on the University of Nigeria, Azikiwe wrote in the *Eastern Sentinel* (an NCNC paper). He promised electrification, massive water infrastructure capable of producing 100,000 gallons/day, and a stadium—“one of the best in Africa.”<sup>1159</sup> The University would boast 4 football fields, 24 tennis courts, a golf links, a gymnasium, and a swimming pool. He celebrated ICA involvement and promised that a principal “will be announced shortly.”<sup>1160</sup> It would provide evidence “that Black and White can walk together, that God was not wrong in creating different races.”<sup>1161</sup> The University would exude cosmopolitanism with staff from

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<sup>1155</sup> Memo of Conversation with Obafemi Awolowo, October 31, 1959, Box 3238, Folder 459, Central Decimal File, National Archives II, College Park, Maryland.

<sup>1156</sup> Memo of Conversation with Obafemi Awolowo, October 31, 1959, Box 3238, Folder 459, Central Decimal File, National Archives II, College Park, Maryland.

<sup>1157</sup> Memo of Conversation with Obafemi Awolowo, October 31, 1959, Box 3238, Folder 459, Central Decimal File, National Archives II, College Park, Maryland.

<sup>1158</sup> Memo of Conversation with Obafemi Awolowo, October 31, 1959, Box 3238, Folder 459, Central Decimal File, National Archives II, College Park, Maryland.

<sup>1159</sup> “Dr. Azikiwe to Receive Another Doctorate Degree in USA,” *Eastern Sentinel*, July 10, 1959, 1.

<sup>1160</sup> “Dr. Azikiwe to Receive Another Doctorate Degree in USA,” *Eastern Sentinel*, July 10, 1959, 1.

<sup>1161</sup> “Dr. Azikiwe to Receive Another Doctorate Degree in USA,” *Eastern Sentinel*, July 10, 1959, 1.

Ghana, Japan, the United States, and Europe—the “consummation of a life’s dream.”<sup>1162</sup> Later that year, Azikiwe boasted to an election rally that the University site had a 500 foot bore hole for a “sparkling water supply.”<sup>1163</sup> The plans were of “perfect beauty. . . if you see them, you will feel they are not in Africa.”<sup>1164</sup> He promised a stadium for 30,000 and a massive land acquisition of 10,000 acres.<sup>1165</sup> The landscape was “fascinating” and “made by God and left there for us to use.”<sup>1166</sup> The academic atmosphere would be resplendent; to a roar of laughs, he joked that “any student reading in that exquisite environment should just find the academic stuff seeping into his brain.”<sup>1167</sup>

Azikiwe played to Nsukka’s cravings for infrastructure and access. “Nsukka did not have electricity. . . and did not have water supply,” George Axinn later recalled, and “did not have paved roads.”<sup>1168</sup> In April 1960, Professor Hugh Tredennick, a Classics Professor at Royal Holloway College and Professor C. T. Ingold, Botany Professor at Birbeck College visited the Nsukka site and saw the water problem right away, taking note of good “reason to doubt whether the water supply will be adequate.”<sup>1169</sup>

MSU contractors imported electric pumps that could be submersed in water—and when the electricity failed, the water would too. The Electric Corporation of Nigeria allowed them to bring in generators—only to refuse them arbitrarily a little later.<sup>1170</sup> The government constructed a 30-mile electric line along the Oji River that connected with Enugu.<sup>1171</sup> As George Axinn

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<sup>1162</sup> “Dr. Azikiwe to Receive Another Doctorate Degree in USA,” *Eastern Sentinel*, July 10, 1959, 1.

<sup>1163</sup> “Dr. Azikiwe to Receive Another Doctorate Degree in USA,” *Eastern Sentinel*, July 10, 1959, 1.

<sup>1164</sup> “Dr. Azikiwe to Receive Another Doctorate Degree in USA,” *Eastern Sentinel*, July 10, 1959, 1.

<sup>1165</sup> “Dr. Azikiwe to Receive Another Doctorate Degree in USA,” *Eastern Sentinel*, July 10, 1959, 1.

<sup>1166</sup> “Dr. Azikiwe to Receive Another Doctorate Degree in USA,” *Eastern Sentinel*, July 10, 1959, 1.

<sup>1167</sup> “University of Nigeria to Commence First Session Sept. 1960,” *Eastern Sentinel*, December 9, 1959, 1.

<sup>1168</sup> George Axinn, Interview with Peter Ezeocha, 111.

<sup>1169</sup> “Report Drafted by Professor Tredennick,” n.d. BW 90/606, National Archives-Kew.

<sup>1170</sup> George Axinn, Interview with Peter Ezeocha, 111.

<sup>1171</sup> George Axinn, Interview with Peter Ezeocha, 111.

recalls, Ministry of Works handlers utilized the Nsukka University's reliance on electricity to wage a water starvation war: "There were some people in Enugu [at the Ministry of Works] who didn't want there to be a university . . . they were able to shut off the water literally, in the early days, on several occasions."<sup>1172</sup> Axinn observed, "when the water wasn't available, the wives of the teaching staff would complain, the students would complain, and justly so."<sup>1173</sup>

Yet, Azikiwe's base lacked the same robustness of registered voters. Voter registration was lower in the Eastern Region than in any other: 75.7% of 3,423,000 eligible voters v. 93.7% of 3,885,000 in the North and 96.2% of 2,759,000 in the West.<sup>1174</sup> With 148 seats for the N.P.C. (137 from within the North, 4 switching seats post-election, 8 from the West—with 2/8 defecting), 90 seats for the N.E.P.U.-NCNC alliance, and 74 seats for the AG, the N.P.C. held the center of the Federal Parliament, even if they did not enjoy a firm majority.<sup>1175</sup> The A.G-friendly *Eastern Observer* felt resigned: "the result of the election has left no one single party better. . . none of them can form a government without going into coalition with another."<sup>1176</sup> John West of the *Observer* was resigned: "it is in the full knowledge of these issues that the people as a whole have chosen to give victory to no party."<sup>1177</sup> Azikiwe—and his university plans—had survived.

### *The Anglo-American Contest Over the Future of UNN*

Neither MSU, nor Carnegie, nor Ford, nor the British were considering the University their end game. It functioned, instead, as a test case for MSU's mettle in Africana matters

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<sup>1172</sup> George Axinn, Interview with Peter Ezeocha, 112.

<sup>1173</sup> George Axinn, Interview with Peter Ezeocha, 114.

<sup>1174</sup> "The Nigerian Federal Elections," December 5, 1959, Box 3238, Folder 459, Central Decimal File, National Archives II, College Park, Maryland.

<sup>1175</sup> John K. Emerson, "Six NCNC 'Dissident' Members of House of Representatives Declare for NPC," January 6, 1960, Box 1698, Folder 560, Central Decimal File, National Archives II, College Park, Maryland.

<sup>1176</sup> "That's Zik's Statement," *Eastern Observer*, December 28, 1959, 1.

<sup>1177</sup> John West, "Who Won the election?" *Eastern Observer*, December 22, 1959, 2.

“Because of the interest of this institution in building its academic competence in the international field,” Taggart and Hannah would seek out their own Western partners in London and New York to “select people to explore some of the basic areas” of analysis for Eastern Nigeria.<sup>1178</sup> The outcome would be a win-win, regardless of Azikiwe’s feelings. Then, they could pass on the acquired information both to their academics “and to our government.”<sup>1179</sup> Azikiwe told them that he needed a University Provisional Council—a kind of steering committee for the establishment of the University.<sup>1180</sup> The committee would consist of three personalities from each country involved: three Americans, three British, and three Nigerians.<sup>1181</sup> And Azikiwe’s first choice surprised all: Marguerite Cartwright, an independent sociologist-journalist from New York City.<sup>1182</sup>

The conflict over Cartwright’s appointment demonstrates the fractures between the Americans, the Nigerians, and the British. After receiving degrees from Boston University, Cartwright had worked as a teacher and journalist, even appearing in the black Biblical drama, *Green Pastures*.<sup>1183</sup> She worked a short stint in the Welfare Department and then received her Ph.D. from New York University in 1947, becoming a “pinch-hitter” speaker, substituting for men like Jackie Robinson and Ralph Bunche when they were unable to fulfill their speaking engagements.<sup>1184</sup> In summer 1958, Cartwright met Azikiwe shortly following the Hannah-Taggart-Cook visit; that December, Azikiwe invited Cartwright, then visiting Monrovia and

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<sup>1178</sup> Glen L. Taggart, Letter to J.W. Cook, January 8, 1959, BW 90/606, National Archives-Kew.

<sup>1179</sup> Glen L. Taggart, Letter to J.W. Cook, January 8, 1959, BW 90/606, National Archives-Kew.

<sup>1180</sup> C.G. Eastwood, Letter to John W. Gardner, March 6, 1959, BW 90/606, National Archives-Kew.

<sup>1181</sup> C.G. Eastwood, Letter to John W. Gardner, March 6, 1959, BW 90/606, National Archives-Kew.

<sup>1182</sup> H.P. Elliott, Letter to Secretary of the IUC, January 26, 1959, BW 90/606, National Archives-Kew.

<sup>1183</sup> Marguerite Cartwright, “World Backdrop,” *Pittsburgh Courier*, August 22, 1959, 10.

<sup>1184</sup> Marguerite Cartwright, “Profile of Dr. Marguerite Cartwright: From the Hunter College ‘Post Meridian,’” *Negro History Bulletin* 17, no. 6 (March 1954):122.



Accra “as a friend and guest of Dr. Nkrumah,” to hold “extensive discussions with the Premier concerning the proposed new University of Nigeria.”<sup>1185</sup>

Cartwright served as a leading black American voice calling for engagement with decolonizing African nations, proclaiming that the United States “is in a strong position to assist in furthering . . . western acculturation” and more, for buttressing Christianity in Nigeria.<sup>1186</sup> She cultivated a close relationship with both Ghanaian president Kwame Nkrumah and Zik alike, as well as the Lincoln University President, Horace M. Bond.<sup>1187</sup> It was a “seemingly little-known fact,” she warned, that “in addition to the tug-of-war between the communist and non-communist world,” the “struggle for ascendancy between the Christian and Moslem faiths” would be a “much more complicated problem with which to cope.”<sup>1188</sup> Cartwright’s sin was making an enemy of Tuskegee. “Perhaps I don’t qualify as a sociologist, Tuskegee style—or a statistician,” she wrote, her resentment at the strength of the Tuskegee Machine.<sup>1189</sup> In 1953, she challenged the Tuskegee Institution’s report on lynching that used a “technical and doctrinaire definition” to claim that lynching’s prevalence had decreased in the United States: “What has happened is a shift in the plane of violence from lynching to more sophisticated legal lynching.”<sup>1190</sup> Lynching “may be the work of the small lunatic fringe, but responsible elements have failed to curb this fringe.”<sup>1191</sup> She was not prolific; her tendency was to dilettantism, writing on the Taylor family

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<sup>1185</sup> “Dr. Cartwright Visit in Africa,” *Negro History Bulletin* 22, no. 6 (March 1959): 124.

<sup>1186</sup> Marguerite Cartwright, “Investment and Education in Nigeria,” *Negro History Bulletin* 21, no. 6 (March 1958):134.

<sup>1187</sup> Marguerite Cartwright, Letter to Pres. Horace M. Bond, March 3, 1956, University of Massachusetts-Amherst Special Collections, <https://credo.library.umass.edu/view/pageturn/mums411-b009-f074/#page/1/mode/1up>. <accessed November 8, 2020>.

<sup>1188</sup> Marguerite Cartwright, “Investment and Education in Nigeria,” *Negro History Bulletin* 21, no. 6 (March 1958):134.

<sup>1189</sup> Marguerite Cartwright, “Investment and Education in Nigeria,” *Negro History Bulletin* 21, no. 6 (March 1958):134

<sup>1190</sup> Marguerite Cartwright, “The Mob Still Rides,” *Negro History Bulletin* 19, No. 5 (February 1956): 106.

<sup>1191</sup> Marguerite Cartwright, “The Mob Still Rides,” *Negro History Bulletin* 19, No. 5 (February 1956): 106.

of Milwaukee one month, on New York anti-discrimination law in another, and on her “good friend” Kwame Nkrumah in yet another.<sup>1192</sup> Cartwright, like Azikiwe, celebrated the fundamentals of public works as fundamentally American : “Sparked nationalism can be a bulwark against communism,” she urged American readers; it need not be a vehicle for a Communist takeover.<sup>1193</sup> In 1961, Cartwright published a biography for youth readers of Azikiwe—published by Heinemann, the same publisher of many other first generation African nationalist authors.<sup>1194</sup>

From the moment of Cartwright’s announcement, Cartwright sent off alarms among the Foundations; Carnegie’s Alan Pifer confided in Sir Christopher Cox of the Colonial Office that “nothing [Azikiwe] could have done could have been better calculated to discredit this project in American eyes.”<sup>1195</sup> Cartwright is a “person of no standing in this country,” Pifer complained, either “with her own Negro community” where she is “a laughing stock or anywhere else.”<sup>1196</sup> Cartwright “meddl[ed] in West Affairs” and had “insinuate[ed] herself into the good graces of Zik, Nkrumah, and other leaders.”<sup>1197</sup> When Pifer heard the Voice of America describe newly-appointed Cartwright as an “eminent sociologist and writer,” he did not think it difficult “to imagine the origin of this information.”<sup>1198</sup>

The British wrung their hands. The Cartwright decision sent a ripple throughout the British establishment, prompting Maxwell at IUC called the Pifer note “most disturbing.”<sup>1199</sup> Charles Morris advised discretion: “we had better keep this to ourselves for the moment” until it

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<sup>1192</sup> Marguerite Cartwright, “Legislation as a Social Control in New York State,” *Journal of Educational Sociology* 21, no. 7 (March 1948): 391-396.

<sup>1193</sup> Marguerite Cartwright, “Nigeria,” *Negro History Bulletin* 21, no. 3 (December 1957): 63.

<sup>1194</sup> “American Writes Youth Biography of Azikiwe,” *Jet* (Sep. 14, 1961): 46.

<sup>1195</sup> Alan Pifer, Letter to Sir Christopher Cox, February 4, 1959, BW 90/606, National Archives-Kew.

<sup>1196</sup> Alan Pifer, Letter to Sir Christopher Cox, February 4, 1959, BW 90/606, National Archives-Kew.

<sup>1197</sup> Alan Pifer, Letter to Sir Christopher Cox, February 4, 1959, BW 90/606, National Archives-Kew.

<sup>1198</sup> Alan Pifer, Letter to Sir Christopher Cox, February 4, 1959, BW 90/606, National Archives-Kew.

<sup>1199</sup> I.C.M. Maxwell, Note to Charles Morris, February 6, 1959, BW 90/606, National Archives-Kew.

was discussed with Cook.<sup>1200</sup> The Cartwright appointment “deeply depressed” Christopher Cox at the Colonial Office; he hoped that “somehow or other,” Azikiwe sensed that he had been “led into making a nomination in which there could be no confidence at all in America.”<sup>1201</sup> Azikiwe could do nothing to fix it now, Cox acknowledged—but he should be prepared for a dysfunctional Provisional Council.<sup>1202</sup> Pifer should notify Hugh Elliot of the High Commission immediately; his position was slated to be “Nigerianized” as soon as he went on leave at the end of March.<sup>1203</sup> Pifer was not merely a philanthropic heavyweight; he served as Secretary John Foster Dulles’ Education Adviser and shaped educational “development” policy throughout the ever-expanding areas of American influence in Latin America and now, Africa.<sup>1204</sup> He believed in the expansion of education, but he was of a particular school of thought. Pifer believed in expanded African education—and the dismantling of British colonial educational systems: “My own view,” he observed, “is that. . . a lot has happened in the African colonies in the past ten years.” to facilitate educational expansion.<sup>1205</sup> More, the Soviets seemed to loom in the background: the proliferation of relatively small states dependent upon external sources might, Pifer wrote, “give the Russians their big chance in Africa.”<sup>1206</sup>

As far back as the 1920s, Carnegie brokered a triangular relationship with the Tuskegee Institute and the Colonial Office: Carnegie drawing on Tuskegee philosophy and personnel while utilizing Colonial Office bureaucratic streamlining.<sup>1207</sup> Carnegie placed a high premium on

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<sup>1200</sup> Sir Charles Morris, Letter to I.C.M. Maxwell, February 9, 1959, BW 90/606, National Archives-Kew.

<sup>1201</sup> Sir Christopher Cox, Letter to Alan Pifer, February 12, 1959, BW 90/606, National Archives-Kew.

<sup>1202</sup> Sir Christopher Cox, Letter to Alan Pifer, February 12, 1959, BW 90/606, National Archives-Kew.

<sup>1203</sup> Sir Christopher Cox, Letter to Alan Pifer, February 12, 1959, BW 90/606, National Archives-Kew.

<sup>1204</sup> Edward H. Berman, *The Ideology of Philanthropy: The Influence of the Carnegie, Ford, and Rockefeller Foundations on American Foreign Policy* (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 1983), 62.

<sup>1205</sup> Ogechi Anyanwu, “The Anglo-American-Nigerian Collaboration in Nigeria's Higher Education Reform: The Cold War and Decolonization, 1948-1960,” *Journal of Colonialism and Colonial History* 11, no. 3 (Winter 2011): 5.

<sup>1206</sup> Anyanwu, “The Anglo-American-Nigerian Collaboration in Nigeria's Higher Education Reform,” 10.

<sup>1207</sup> For a discussion of Carnegie’s and Ford’s resistance to American higher education, see Berman, *The Ideology of Philanthropy*, 148.

teacher training—particularly in the realm of trade and industry.<sup>1208</sup> Utilizing fellowship monies and grants to fund institutes and colleges, Carnegie, as well as Ford and Rockefeller, forged an international network of intellectual linkages connecting scholars to American universities—functionally producing the Intellectual Industrial Complex of 20<sup>th</sup>-century.<sup>1209</sup> Cartwright cared little for the networks of Ford and Rockefeller—and certainly for the Tuskegee Tradition.<sup>1210</sup> These scholars “allegedly come for research and study, but arrive with their minds made up and spend their time seeking support for their previously decided conclusions”—all while “sipping highballs with the professional anti-government, British- trained elite . . . the professional armchair politicians who infest Ghana's universities, or the members of the parliamentary opposition.”<sup>1211</sup>

For Pifer, Cartwright was a race hustler, the kind that alienated the white donors Booker T. Washington had long attempted to court, never-ceasingly complaining about contrived racial bugaboos.<sup>1212</sup> She represented “difficult” black American aspirants who never-endingly unsatisfied with the government In 1940, for instance, Tuskegee and the NAACP had publicly spat over what, exactly, constituted a lynching, prompting a lynching convention held at the Tuskegee Institute.<sup>1213</sup> At the convention, Ralph Davis, McClellan Van der Veer, and Jessie Ames of Tuskegee had urged a narrow definition, while Arthur Raper of the NAACP warned

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<sup>1208</sup> For a discussion of Carnegie’s and Ford’s resistance to American higher education, see Berman, *The Ideology of Philanthropy*, 148.

<sup>1209</sup> For a discussion of Carnegie’s and Ford’s resistance to American higher education, see Berman, *The Ideology of Philanthropy*, 148.

<sup>1210</sup> Marguerite Cartwright, "Ghana's First Year: A Summing Up," *Negro History Bulletin* 21, 7 (April 1958): 147. See also Edward H. Berman, 92-105.

<sup>1211</sup> Marguerite Cartwright, "Ghana's First Year: A Summing Up," *Negro History Bulletin* 21, 7 (April 1958): 147. See also Edward H. Berman, 92-105.

<sup>1212</sup> See Norrell, *Up from History*, chpt. 3, for more on Washington’s fundraising efforts.

<sup>1213</sup> Christopher Waldrep, “Word and Deed: The Language of Lynching,” in Michael A. Bellisles, ed., *Lethal Imagination Violence and Brutality in American History* (New York City: New York University Press, 1999), 249.

that they ought not “drive lynching out of the picture by definition.”<sup>1214</sup> Cartwright had made no friends among the Tuskegee crowd. While established white authorities and the Tuskegee Institute celebrated a decline in “lynchings,” she complained that the Tuskegee definition was affecting the NAACP’s capacity to fundraise.<sup>1215</sup>

Thus, Cartwright was a natural fit for an Azikiwe doggedly committed to African sovereignty and indigenous liberal arts education—the kinds of things at which Pifer and the boys at the Colonial Office rolled their eyes at the already eye-roll worthy project. While she had held no position of academic influence like Alain Locke, clearly, neither was she the “laughing stock” of black Americans, nor was Pifer serious about finding a black person of whom he approved; his suggested replacement for Cartwright, after all, was Glen Taggart.<sup>1216</sup> The British floated their own names, too: Lockwood, Wilson, Fulton.<sup>1217</sup> The Americans and British alike struggled with the problem of institutional intimacy: how close did they *need* to be versus how far? To ICA’s embarrassment, Azikiwe asked for an ICA member to serve on the Provisional Council alongside Cartwright, Kalu Ezera, a professor at University College, Ibadan, and M. O. Balonwu, an Onitsha barrister.<sup>1218</sup>

By October 1959, the ICA had signed onto the project—though resisting any primary contact with Premier Azikiwe; Azikiwe’s Chief Secretary, J. O. Udoji found it curious that the Premier had “not received any letter from the staff of the ICA.”<sup>1219</sup> When an “Acting Principal” was to be appointed, the ICA wanted him to work solely under Azikiwe’s authority; the ICA’s role would be “limited to financing advisory services through a university contract wit[h]

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<sup>1214</sup> Christopher Waldrep, “Word and Deed,” 249.

<sup>1215</sup> Christopher Waldrep, “Word and Deed,” 250.

<sup>1216</sup> Alan Pifer, Letter to Sir Christopher Cox, February 4, 1959, BW 90/606, National Archives-Kew.

<sup>1217</sup> Alan Pifer, Letter to Sir Christopher Cox, February 4, 1959, BW 90/606, National Archives-Kew.

<sup>1218</sup> J.O. Udoji, Letter to John A. Hannah, November 4, 1959, Box 49, Folder 14, Hannah Papers.

<sup>1219</sup> J.O. Udoji, Letter to John A. Hannah, November 4, 1959, Box 49, Folder 14, Hannah Papers.

MSU.”<sup>1220</sup> More, ICA did not want to tread on Commonwealth domain; the Colonial Office already felt irked by the American meddling, and ICA’s presence would not help. The ICA hands turned to the Colonial Office for advice.<sup>1221</sup> The Provisional Council would not meet until April; the delay offered the ICA, IUC, and Colonial Office room for collaboration—but also, indicated a tendency to delay and protract decisions at an early stage of the project.<sup>1222</sup> The American consulate felt assured that “it is also the desire of Michigan State to have UK participation” in the University building project.<sup>1223</sup> The British, more or less, needed to work with them—and in 1959, even state, much to their disdain, maintain that their interest in working with Americans had “never been greater than it is at present.”<sup>1224</sup> The ICA avoided recommending either Taggart or Hannah to serve on the University’s governing Provisional Council because “such a nomination might not be welcomed by the British.”<sup>1225</sup> The ICA’s concerns were ill-founded, as it happens; when the British saw that Azikiwe had picked Cartwright, Taggart became a leading choice.<sup>1226</sup>

*MSU: A Mid-Wife to Independence*

At times, scholars have depicted the UNN project as an American-driven project, but if it was, it was in spite of the American officials’ best efforts to make it otherwise.<sup>1227</sup> Rumors had circulated early that it was an American project, much to British officials’ dismay.<sup>1228</sup> ICA’s

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<sup>1220</sup> GSHoffman, Telegram, December 1, 1959, Box 49, Folder 14, Hannah Papers.

<sup>1221</sup> Kenneth Thompson, Letter to Morris, February 13, 1959; I.C.M. Maxwell, Letter to Christopher Cox, February 24, 1959, both in BW 90/606, National Archives-Kew.

<sup>1222</sup> J.K. Thompson, Letter to Robert W. Powers, February 26, 1959, BW 90/606, National Archives-Kew.

<sup>1223</sup> GSHoffman, Telegram, December 3, 1959, Box 49, Folder 14, Hannah Papers.

<sup>1224</sup> GSHoffman, Telegram, September 25, 1959, Box 49, Folder 14, Hannah Papers.

<sup>1225</sup> GSHoffman, Telegram, December 3, 1959, Box 49, Folder 14, Hannah Papers., MSU Archives.

<sup>1226</sup> Alan Pifer, Letter to Sir Christopher Cox, February 4, 1959, BW 90/606, BW 90/606, National Archives-Kew.

<sup>1227</sup> Ike’s *The Naked Gods*, while fictional, spins the UNN project as American-centered. See also Livsey, *Nigeria’s University Age*, chpt. 6.

<sup>1228</sup> ICA-London Telegram, undated (December 1, 1959), Box 49, Folder 14, Hannah Papers. See also Axinn interview.

George Hoffman reported to the ICA offices in London and Lagos that at every stage, MSU recognized the need for British collaboration; both Hannah and Taggart keenly felt the need for keeping the British educators “informed and enlisting their support in the undertaking.”<sup>1229</sup>

But Azikiwe needed convincing.<sup>1230</sup> He had sought out the Americans for a reason, waxing long about his affection for the ICA and he “seemed to recognize the importance” of an alliance only after it was “pointed out to him.”<sup>1231</sup> The University, as ICA designed it, would be “responsive not only to the needs of all the regions but also to other countries of West Africa.”<sup>1232</sup> Another ICA official concurred that “the desire of top-level Britain and American educators for cooperation in providing assistance on under-developed areas has never been greater.”<sup>1233</sup> Hannah was glad “to see that the report ha[d] been accepted so wholeheartedly by you and your people.”<sup>1234</sup>

Azikiwe reciprocated the enthusiasm: he had secured 2 million pounds from his palm tax for “buildings, equipment and other installations which are ancillary to the construction of a modern university.”<sup>1235</sup> He saw the MSU-UNN relationship in a parental role: MSU would be serving as “mid-wife to the birth of this University.”<sup>1236</sup> He would come to America in July, he assured the MSU hands with a sense of self-grandeur, with a visit that would be an “epoch-making event in the cultural history of the relationship between the United States and my country.”<sup>1237</sup> Eager to continue, Azikiwe had requested ICA’s assistance in appointing a

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<sup>1229</sup> ICA-London Telegram, undated (December 1, 1959), Box 49, Folder 14, Hannah Papers. See also Axinn interview.

<sup>1230</sup> G.S. Hoffman, Telegram, December 1, 1959, Box 49, Folder 14, Hannah Papers.

<sup>1231</sup> G.S. Hoffman, Telegram, December 1, 1959, Box 49, Folder 14, Hannah Papers.

<sup>1232</sup> G.S. Hoffman, Telegram, December 1, 1959, Box 49, Folder 14, Hannah Papers.

<sup>1233</sup> R. Powers, Telegram, November 27, 1959, Box 49, Folder 14, Hannah Papers.

<sup>1234</sup> John A. Hannah, Letter to Nnamdi Azikiwe, February 10, 1959, Box 49, Folder 15, Hannah Papers.

<sup>1235</sup> Nnamdi Azikiwe, Letter to President Hannah, April 15, 1959, Box 49, Folder 15, Hannah Papers.

<sup>1236</sup> Nnamdi Azikiwe, Letter to President Hannah, April 15, 1959, Box 49, Folder 15, Hannah Papers.

<sup>1237</sup> Nnamdi Azikiwe, Letter to President Hannah, April 15, 1959, Box 49, Folder 15, Hannah Papers.

Provisional Council—someone with gravitas, all hoped.<sup>1238</sup> The ICA concurred that it would be “desirable . . . to react as expeditiously as possible to the Eastern Region’s request for our nomination of an individual to serve.”<sup>1239</sup>

British officers worried that the Nigerians could exploit American-British differences—to do as British officers had done in Nigeria for years; Taggart, they warned, should be “particularly careful not to permit the Eastern Region to play the U.S. off against the British in this matter.”<sup>1240</sup> But the Colonial Office “neither want[ed] to nor is in a position to hold up this proposal.”<sup>1241</sup> Taggart elicited the support of Sir Charles Morris; the University of Nigeria project was not *strictly* about UNN, Taggart confided in Exeter University’s Vice Chancellor J. W. Cook.<sup>1242</sup> They could utilize UNN to “lend support to the broader cooperative development between American and British higher education.”<sup>1243</sup> When MSU received a grant to develop an American-British higher education committee in colonial and former colonial regions, Hannah was “pleased.”<sup>1244</sup> Writing to George Hoffman at the ICA Central Africa Division, Taggart noted that the ICA had been mentioned in passing to Azikiwe—surely a safe assumption, he supposed, since they had sponsored the 1958 Hannah-Taggart-Cook trip to Nigeria?<sup>1245</sup>

But Taggart was a cautious man. He hesitated to record plans on paper prematurely. He recognized who had power, who did not—and navigated around the rules of the powerful, taking care to offer them a maximum degree of latitude in decision making. In June 1959, Taggart reached out again to Hoffman—one month before the planned July 12 meeting between himself,

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<sup>1238</sup> Hyde Buller, Letter to Glen Taggart, January 13, 1959, Box 49, Folder 14, Hannah Papers.

<sup>1239</sup> Hyde Buller, Letter to Glen Taggart, January 13, 1959, Box 49, Folder 14, Hannah Papers.

<sup>1240</sup> R. Powers, Telegram, November 20, 1959, Box 49, Folder 14, Hannah Papers.

<sup>1241</sup> Whitney Telegram, November 6, 1959, Box 49, Folder 14, Hannah Papers.

<sup>1242</sup> Glen L. Taggart, Letter to J.W. Cook, January 8, 1959, Box 49, Folder 15, Hannah Papers.

<sup>1243</sup> Glen L. Taggart, Letter to J.W. Cook, January 8, 1959, Box 49, Folder 15, Hannah Papers.

<sup>1244</sup> Glen L. Taggart, Letter to Arthur S. Adams, May 29, 1959, Box 49, Folder 15, Hannah Papers.

<sup>1245</sup> Glen Taggart, Letter to George Hoffman, May 14, 1959, Box 49, Folder 15, Hannah Papers.



Hannah, and Azikiwe.<sup>1246</sup> Before writing out a potential ICA proposal, he suggested that Hoffman wait until the July meeting. He would call or send an overnight letter with a summary of the meeting only after discerning a “more fundamental concept of his approach to the development of the University.”<sup>1247</sup> Taggart needed to nudge, not push—but he knew, too, that MSU could glean support from the major donors in ways that other institutions could not. Reaching out to John Gardner at the Carnegie Foundation, John Howard at the Ford Foundation, and Dean Rusk, now at the Rockefeller Foundation, Taggart knew that the MSU hands recognized the need for British collaboration—but not for the Anglo-American relationship but rather, for Nigerian support: “We’re not legitimate in the Nigerian eyes unless the British are our partners.”<sup>1248</sup> But he kept his fundraising efforts mum from the Colonial Office; that task was better left to government hands rather himself—he knew how London saw East Lansing’s apparent meddling in Commonwealth affairs.<sup>1249</sup>

Hannah and Taggart opted not only to provide financial assistance—which they could have done with a wire transfer; they planned to offer Azikiwe an honorary Ph.D., functionally legitimizing him as a world leader in African politics and higher education. On May 27, they wired him the news.<sup>1250</sup> The move was likely an effort to rein Azikiwe in; the ICA’s central Africa hand felt it would encourage “a more deliberate approach.”<sup>1251</sup> The British had been ever-prepared to wring their hands over the American and Nigerian choices; when IUC secretary I.C.M. Maxwell informed Morris of the likely American choice, Eldon Johnson, he re-assured

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<sup>1246</sup> Glen Taggart, Letter to George Hoffman, June 18, 1959, Box 49, Folder 15, Hannah Papers.

<sup>1247</sup> Glen Taggart, Letter to George Hoffman, June 18, 1959, Box 49, Folder 15, Hannah Papers.

<sup>1248</sup> Axinn interview.

<sup>1249</sup> R. Powers, Telegram, November 20, 1959, Box 49, Folder 14, Hannah Papers.

<sup>1250</sup> Glen L. Taggart, Letter to John A. Hannah, May 27, 1959; John Hannah, Letter to J.L. Morrell, May 29, 1959, both in Box 49, Folder 14, Hannah Papers.

<sup>1251</sup> Hyde Buller, Letter to Glen Taggart, January 13, 1959, Box 49, Folder 14, Hannah Papers.

him that his sources suggest they “need have no reason for apprehension.”<sup>1252</sup> Meanwhile, the IUC nominated Professor J. S. Fulton, the Vice Chancellor for the University of Wales.<sup>1253</sup>

At MSU, Taggart urged all to “work together” in order to avoid “over-surveying” the Eastern Region, a likelihood when dealing with multiple, independent foundations and government entities.<sup>1254</sup> In December 1959, Taggart presented a formal plan for IUC/MSU/ICA co-operation to British officials at the American embassy in London—urging them to provide “sponsorship” (not merely consultancy) for the new University.<sup>1255</sup> All acknowledged that their power was limited: they could “only assist [Azikiwe] within the limitations of the proposed contracts with MSU.”<sup>1256</sup> The Anglo-American summit in December 1959 hoped for a British university to work in collaboration with Michigan State University in the University building project. Taggart still hoped for “the fullest U.S./U.K. co-operation in working out the planning of assistance on this project.”<sup>1257</sup> Grudgingly, the Colonial Office obliged in “considering the best and most expeditious way” to offer the Americans assistance—reaching out to University College, Ibadan’s benefactor, the University of London, for assistance.<sup>1258</sup>

Taggart pressed the British on representation: of the nine members, seven were Americans or British; it did not signify that the University “was developing under the guidance of public-spirited Nigerians.”<sup>1259</sup> Taggart imagined a local institution being driven by local leaders: it was “not quite fulfilling the purpose” that he and J. W. Cook were seeking.<sup>1260</sup> He

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<sup>1252</sup> I.C.M. Maxwell, Letter to Charles Morris, March 26, 1959, BW 90/606, National Archives-Kew.

<sup>1253</sup> I.C.M. Maxwell, Letter to Robert W. Powers, April 1, 1959, BW 90/606, National Archives Kew.

<sup>1254</sup> Glen L. Taggart, Letter to J.W.Cook, March 14, 1959, BW 90/606, National Archives-Kew.

<sup>1255</sup> File Note, December 11, 1959, BW 90/606, National Archives-Kew

<sup>1256</sup> GSHoffman, Telegram, December 3, 1959, Box 49, Folder 14, Hannah Papers.

<sup>1257</sup> File Note, December 11, 1959, BW 90/606, National Archives-Kew.

<sup>1258</sup> Telegram from Secretary of State for the Colonies, September 22, 1959, BW 90/606, National Archives-Kew.

<sup>1259</sup> File Note, December 11, 1959, BW 90/606, National Archives-Kew.

<sup>1260</sup> File Note, December 11, 1959, BW 90/606, National Archives-Kew.

questioned the lack of fellowships available to Nigerian graduates; the British officials sighed—did he not realize how few competent Nigerians there were?<sup>1261</sup>

Azikiwe was committed to the Americans. In September 1959, Azikiwe asked Taggart to be the Acting Principal of his new university to: “supervise at the initial stages the organization, administration and management” of his University “so that the philosophy of the land-grant college system can be blended perfectly with our British traditions” and be “translate[d] into positive action.”<sup>1262</sup> Taggart declined. But he and Hannah collected a list of names to serve as the University’s first “Acting Principal”—“Chairman” would not do, since Azikiwe wanted to serve as the University’s head until the Council was convened.<sup>1263</sup> This power delegation would have consequences in the events discussed in chapter six. By mid-January, Taggart and Hannah had drawn up a list of names—and made a selection: it would be Troy Stearns, that woodsy professor of rural education who had experience collaborating with British educators at other institutions throughout the empire.<sup>1264</sup> After receiving a clean bill of health, Stearns was set to assume his role that February.<sup>1265</sup>

In February 1960 an Anglo-American cohort developed a consensus about the kind of University Azikiwe should establish. Cook, Taggart, and Johnson attended, with John F. Lockwood from the Inter-University Council as well Troy Stearns and Ralph Smuckler from MSU.<sup>1266</sup> Most notable about the meeting is the lack of knowledge that both the British and Americans had about the project.<sup>1267</sup> No one knew the exact status of building or contracts; all

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<sup>1261</sup> File Note, December 11, 1959, BW 90/606, National Archives-Kew.

<sup>1262</sup> Nnamdi Azikiwe, Letter to John A. Hannah, September 17, 1959, Box 49, Folder 14, Hannah Papers.

<sup>1263</sup> J.O. Udoji, Letter to John A. Hannah, December 7, 1959, Box 49, Folder 16, Hannah Papers.

<sup>1264</sup> Glen L. Taggart, Letter to Joel Bernstein, January 18, 1960, Box 49, Folder 16, Hannah Papers.

<sup>1265</sup> Glen L. Taggart, Cable to J. Udoji, January 25, 1960, Box 49, Folder 16, Hannah Papers.

<sup>1266</sup> Summary of Discussions on University of Nigeria-East Lansing, February 23-26, 1960, BW 90/606, National Archives-Kew.

<sup>1267</sup> Summary of Discussions on University of Nigeria-East Lansing, February 23-26, 1960, BW 90/606, National Archives-Kew.

rested in the hands of the Provisional Council.<sup>1268</sup> Assumed to be a steering committee, the Council had yet to exist anywhere but on paper.<sup>1269</sup> They could only “hope” that the Council would “assert influence.”<sup>1270</sup> Marguerite Cartwright, a Council member, was not invited, a point not lost on her. When Troy Stearns later learned that Cartwright felt “slighted,” he confided to Taggart their own “confusion about her still being on the Council.”<sup>1271</sup>

And whose degrees would UNN grant? The meeting floated the possibility that the University of Nigeria would function under Michigan State University and University of London *sponsorship*.<sup>1272</sup> “The exact nature of such sponsorship could be a matter of discussion.”<sup>1273</sup> The Inter-University Council’s Executive recruited the University of London to serve as a collaborator in this most undesired alliance.<sup>1274</sup> Predictably, the University of London had established tastes in university education. When universities called themselves by such a name, it they invoked a tradition, an ethos, and an identity. If the University of Nigeria, Nsukka was to call itself a “university,” then it must be a “university in the fullest sense.”<sup>1275</sup> The University of London’s staff members enjoyed “a good deal of experience of academic work in Africa” and “personal knowledge of the problems involved,” all of whom were also “keenly aware of the importance of a new approach” for expanding Nigerian higher education that virtually everyone

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<sup>1268</sup> Summary of Discussions on University of Nigeria-East Lansing, February 23-26, 1960, BW 90/606, National Archives-Kew.

<sup>1269</sup> Summary of Discussions on University of Nigeria-East Lansing, February 23-26, 1960, BW 90/606, National Archives-Kew.

<sup>1270</sup> Summary of Discussions on University of Nigeria-East Lansing, February 23-26, 1960, BW 90/606, National Archives-Kew.

<sup>1271</sup> Troy L. Stearns, Letter to Glen L. Taggart, March 12, 1960, Box 49, Folder 16, Hannah Papers.

<sup>1272</sup> Summary of Discussions on University of Nigeria-East Lansing, February 23-26, 1960, BW 90/606, National Archives-Kew.

<sup>1273</sup> Summary of Discussions on University of Nigeria-East Lansing, February 23-26, 1960, BW 90/606, National Archives-Kew.

<sup>1274</sup> Lillian M. Person, Letter to Glen L. Taggart, May 25, 1960, BW 90/606, National Archives-Kew.

<sup>1275</sup> Lillian M. Person, Letter to Glen L. Taggart, May 25, 1960, BW 90/606, National Archives-Kew.

knew Nigeria badly needed for a population soon anticipating the departure of its British civil service.<sup>1276</sup>

The University of London's administration questioned UNN's academic autonomy; the Nigerian Constitution offered the Minister of Education the right to "give directions of a general or specific character as to the exercise and performance of the functions of the Council."<sup>1277</sup> For the University of London, "political directions would be unacceptable."<sup>1278</sup> They further wondered about how the University of Nigeria would preserve the "quality of the academic staff."<sup>1279</sup> They wanted a "guarantee" that if University of London "sponsored" UNN, their sense of a "university" could be upheld rather than diluted.<sup>1280</sup> Above all, Lilian M. Penson, a former University of London Vice Chancellor, informed Taggart how "greatly impressed" she was by the IUC's "anxiety to procure from this university the cooperation which it sought."<sup>1281</sup> A less diplomatic, but equally correct, word may well have been "desperation."

For Azikiwe, all the Commissions and Councils had become a bother—the same kinds of meddling institutions that had given Azikiwe difficulties two years previous over his banking practices. Sir Eric Ashby planned for the Nigerian authorities to "themselves make the choice" on Provisional Council members, but Azikiwe found little need for most of the IUC or Provisional Council assistance.<sup>1282</sup> He did not mind fraternizing with Cartwright, who was eager to present Azikiwe's story to the American press.<sup>1283</sup> Maxwell hoped to influence Azikiwe

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<sup>1276</sup> Lillian M. Person, Letter to Glen L. Taggart, May 25, 1960, BW 90/606, National Archives-Kew.

<sup>1277</sup> Lillian M. Person, Letter to Glen L. Taggart, May 25, 1960, BW 90/606, National Archives-Kew.

<sup>1278</sup> Lillian M. Person, Letter to Glen L. Taggart, May 25, 1960, BW 90/606, National Archives-Kew.

<sup>1279</sup> Lillian M. Person, Letter to Glen L. Taggart, May 25, 1960, BW 90/606, National Archives-Kew.

<sup>1280</sup> Lillian M. Person, Letter to Glen L. Taggart, May 25, 1960, BW 90/606, National Archives-Kew.

<sup>1281</sup> Lillian M. Person, Letter to Glen L. Taggart, May 25, 1960, BW 90/606, National Archives-Kew.

<sup>1282</sup> Eric Ashby, Letter to Alan Pifer, March 6, 1959; J.W. Cook, Letter to I.C.M. Maxwell, July 24, 1959, BW 90/606, National Archives Kew.

<sup>1283</sup> Eric Ashby, Letter to Alan Pifer, March 6, 1959; J.W. Cook, Letter to I.C.M. Maxwell, July 24, 1959, BW 90/606, National Archives Kew

through the back door: “In the event of the Provisional Council being ignored,” the “close relationship between the IUC and those helping in the U.S.A. is a valuable alternative.”<sup>1284</sup>

Cook acknowledged Azikiwe’s strength: “Dr. Azikiwe holds all the cards in relation to the new university & is unlikely to be influenced” by outside parties.<sup>1285</sup> When Azikiwe announced that the University would open in September 1960, Cook resigned himself to Azikiwe’s authority.<sup>1286</sup> Azikiwe was “in a hurry,” as Sir Charles Morris of the Commonwealth Relations had observed. He wanted a university akin to the University of Puerto Rico that took applicants from “all kinds of non-academic walks of life.”<sup>1287</sup> Azikiwe wanted it all, the British groaned: “British prestige, American money, and Puerto Rico pace.”<sup>1288</sup> Former Secretary of State Dean Rusk, now with the Rockefeller Foundation, had unsuccessfully attempted to “mov[e] [him] from some very large aspirations in his mind to the practicalities of the specific steps required to bring a new university into being.”<sup>1289</sup> Azikiwe told a Michigan State University audience, upon receiving his honorary degree, that Nigerians were “late comers in the race for progress among the civilized nations of the world.”<sup>1290</sup> English-speaking readers liked reading about councils. Azikiwe had no inclination to wait.

#### *Africa’s Land Grant University?*

But what kind of university would this be? Maxwell suggested, perhaps, drawing the Nigerians’ attention to institutions in Hong Kong, to show that “the kind of problems arising in

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<sup>1284</sup> I.C.M. Maxwell, Letter to Mr. November 9, 1959, BW 90/606, National Archives-Kew.

<sup>1285</sup> J.W. Cook, Letter to I.C.M. Maxwell, July 24, 1959, BW 90/606, National Archives Kew.

<sup>1286</sup> Eric Ashby, Letter to Alan Pifer, March 6, 1959; J.W. Cook, Letter to I.C.M. Maxwell, July 24, 1959, BW 90/606, National Archives Kew.

<sup>1287</sup> “Note of a Meeting Held at the Commonwealth Relations Office,” May 11, 1961, BW 90/608, National Archives-Kew.

<sup>1288</sup> “Note of a Meeting Held at the Commonwealth Relations Office,” May 11, 1961, BW 90/608, National Archives-Kew.

<sup>1289</sup> Dean Rusk, Letter to John Hannah, May 11, 1959, Box 49, Folder 14, Hannah Papers.

<sup>1290</sup> Nnamdi Azikiwe, Speech, July 10, 1959, BW 90/606, National Archives-Kew.

Africa and the Far East in University affairs were not necessarily very different after all.”<sup>1291</sup>

Azikiwe had billed the University to be one founded on the “land grant” model; pioneered by Jonathan Baldwin Turner and federally funded through Vermont Senator Justin Morrill, “land grant” universities subverted the very ideas that had made up the elites of the Big Three foundations: that ordinary farmers and laborers could enjoy access to a university education.<sup>1292</sup>

By Azikiwe’s own admission, his upbringing had done little to instill in him this sort of academic ethos; while at Hope Waddell Training Institute, he had looked down on or was indifferent to the plight of most Nigerians. Storer President McDonald, the affable consensus-builder, had—for the first time—illustrated to him what the laborer-scholar looked like.<sup>1293</sup>

Nigeria’s Governor-General, James Robertson was concerned; Nigeria had produced a glut of white-collar professionals.<sup>1294</sup> “You have many distinguished and able doctors and lawyers,” he told the Federal House, “but few engineers, chemists and scientists . . . a young nation requires all sorts and conditions of experts and technicians.”<sup>1295</sup> Cook had long-considered Azikiwe’s “university” to be more of a scheme than a plan, but following the February meeting in East Lansing, Cook felt “considerable sympathy with Zik’s desires to apply this concept in Nigeria.”<sup>1296</sup>

“The pressure is terrific to get on with the job,” ICA hand Joel Bernstein reported to Taggart.<sup>1297</sup> Could not the ICA send MSU advisors sooner than later? Azikiwe had brokered

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<sup>1291</sup> I.C.M. Maxwell, Letter to L.T. Ride, January 1, 1960, BW 90/606, National Archives-Kew.

<sup>1292</sup> *Increased Funds for Land-grant Colleges Hearings Before the Committee on Agriculture, House of Representatives, Eighty-sixth Congress, Second Session, on H.R. 10876 and H.R. 10974. May 16 and 24, 1960* (Washington: 1960), 10.

<sup>1293</sup> See chapter 3 of this dissertation.

<sup>1294</sup> Governor General James Robertson, Speech, August 22, 1955, Box 3239, Folder 959, Central Decimal File, National Archives II, College Park, Maryland.

<sup>1295</sup> Governor General James Robertson, Speech, August 22, 1955, Box 3239, Folder 959, Central Decimal File, National Archives II, College Park, Maryland.

<sup>1296</sup> Joel Bernstein, Letter to Glen L. Taggart, January 15, 1960, Box 49, Folder 16, Hannah Papers.

<sup>1297</sup> Joel Bernstein, Letter to Glen L. Taggart, January 15, 1960, Box 49, Folder 16, Hannah Papers.

contracts and the work had begun. Why, then were there not advisers on the ground? The Provincial Council would be meeting soon, and the project needed to continue “with greater speed” still.<sup>1298</sup> If MSU advisers could arrive at the same time as the Provincial Council meeting, Bernstein advised, it “would be a very happy coincidence.”<sup>1299</sup> Also, could Michigan State University pay for the expedited arrival, Bernstein asked? The I.C.A. had still not been issued a formal contract, so the I.C.A. could not “take the responsibility” yet.<sup>1300</sup> Taggart hoped that once Stearns was “on the ground to start preliminary arrangements, Dr. Azikiwe will see fit to call [the Provincial Council] together.”<sup>1301</sup>

Stearns, known for his expeditions into the Michigan countryside, left Michigan in early March 1960 to serve as the “Executive Secretary” of the University for the next two years.<sup>1302</sup> IUC official Charles Morris of the Commonwealth Office advised Taggart against naming him as “Acting Principal”—“set[ting] him up . . . that he will become the Principal” may cause “some difficulties in relationships” with the British.<sup>1303</sup> Morris advised the MSU team to “go ahead with planning and implementation” while the British hands could determine the scope of their cooperation.<sup>1304</sup>

Upon arrival in Nsukka, Stearns appreciated the aggressive plan for an opening date before independence in October.<sup>1305</sup> The University, Stearns argued, “represented evolution in lieu of revolution” and would be a fitting symbol for the rise of the Nigerian nation-state.<sup>1306</sup>

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<sup>1298</sup> Joel Bernstein, Letter to Glen L. Taggart, January 15, 1960, Box 49, Folder 16, Hannah Papers.

<sup>1299</sup> Joel Bernstein, Letter to Glen L. Taggart, January 15, 1960, Box 49, Folder 16, Hannah Papers.

<sup>1300</sup> Joel Bernstein, Letter to Glen L. Taggart, January 15, 1960, Box 49, Folder 16, Hannah Papers.

<sup>1301</sup> Glen L. Taggart, Letter to Eldon L. Johnson, January 29, 1960, Box 49, Folder 16, Hannah Papers.

<sup>1302</sup> Troy L. Stearns, Letter to John Hannah, January 12, 1960, Box 49, Folder 16, Hannah Papers.

<sup>1303</sup> Glen L. Taggart, Letter to Joel Bernstein, January 18, 1960, Box 49, Folder 16, Hannah Papers.

<sup>1304</sup> Glen L. Taggart, Letter to Joel Bernstein, January 18, 1960, Box 49, Folder 16, Hannah Papers.

<sup>1305</sup> Troy L. Stearns, Letter to Glen L. Taggart, March 12, 1960, Box 49, Folder 16, Hannah Papers.

<sup>1306</sup> Troy L. Stearns, Letter to Glen L. Taggart, March 12, 1960, Box 49, Folder 16, Hannah Papers.



Under the circumstances, plans must proceed at a rapid pace.<sup>1307</sup> But the planning had been haphazard and unsystematic, Stearns complained. Azikiwe had rendered it impossible to carry out the project gradually, “letting the university grow from the people.”<sup>1308</sup> Azikiwe had brokered the contracts, and Nsukka planned. “We will have to plan as best we can within the framework already set.”<sup>1309</sup>

Azikiwe had modeled the University after *British* universities: a sprawling estate with semi-independent structures, which Stearns knew “from experience could be very unwieldy.”<sup>1310</sup> Confused—the University had been billed to him as “Africa’s First Land Grant University—Stearns thumbed through the Eastern Region law authorizing the establishment of the University.<sup>1311</sup> Then it dawned on Stearns—the University as a whole was not, in fact, a “land grant university.”<sup>1312</sup> The 1955 law authorizing the establishment of the University “relegate[d] the Land Grant emphasis to Institutes within the Faculties instead of giving them equal status.”<sup>1313</sup> The University was not, in fact, “combin[ing] the ‘best of the British and American systems.’”<sup>1314</sup> Exasperated, Stearns chalked up the design to Azikiwe-as-Enigma: “he professes great interest in our philosophy, but on the other hand, he has largely been responsible for ignoring us.”<sup>1315</sup> The University of Nigeria, Nsukka, was not a “land grant university” but rather, a British-style university that happened to house a handful of “land grant institutes.”<sup>1316</sup>

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<sup>1307</sup> Troy L. Stearns, Letter to Glen L. Taggart, March 12, 1960, Box 49, Folder 16, Hannah Papers.

<sup>1308</sup> Troy L. Stearns, Letter to Glen L. Taggart, March 12, 1960, Box 49, Folder 16, Hannah Papers.

<sup>1309</sup> Troy L. Stearns, Letter to Glen L. Taggart, March 12, 1960, Box 49, Folder 16, Hannah Papers.

<sup>1310</sup> Troy L. Stearns, Letter to Glen L. Taggart, March 12, 1960, Box 49, Folder 16, Hannah Papers.

<sup>1311</sup> Troy L. Stearns, Letter to Glen L. Taggart, March 12, 1960, Box 49, Folder 16, Hannah Papers.

<sup>1312</sup> Troy L. Stearns, Letter to Glen L. Taggart, March 12, 1960, Box 49, Folder 16, Hannah Papers.

<sup>1313</sup> Troy L. Stearns, Letter to Glen L. Taggart, March 12, 1960, Box 49, Folder 16, Hannah Papers.

<sup>1314</sup> Troy L. Stearns, Letter to Glen L. Taggart, March 12, 1960, Box 49, Folder 16, Hannah Papers.

<sup>1315</sup> Troy L. Stearns, Letter to Glen L. Taggart, March 12, 1960, Box 49, Folder 16, Hannah Papers.

<sup>1316</sup> Troy L. Stearns, Letter to Glen L. Taggart, March 12, 1960, Box 49, Folder 16, Hannah Papers.

The location itself baffled the American and British observers. Nsukka was “bush village,” so one British observer believed; Enugu seemed to be a far better fit as the “nucleus” of the campus.<sup>1317</sup> Although small, Enugu, a city 45 miles to the Southeast was “large and modern” by comparison to West African standards.<sup>1318</sup> Europeans came to the greater Nike area in 1909, where Albert Kitson first identified coal for exploitation by Western industry.<sup>1319</sup> Enugu soon became a coal-mining town, with labor drawn from nearby prison populations.<sup>1320</sup> It attracted laborers from throughout the East—with labor flows stretching Southeast to Calabar and North into the Hausa trading markets.<sup>1321</sup> By 1959, several European businesses—and one Indian—had settled into the region.<sup>1322</sup> Boasting a large library, a shopping district, and a heavy concentration of Western businesses, Enugu would have seemed to be a better fit with the American and British observers.<sup>1323</sup>

Cook urged Azikiwe to be mindful of deliberation in his architecture: “it would be a grave mistake,” he warned him in a private letter of July 1958, “to allow building operations to proceed too rapidly.”<sup>1324</sup> When Stearns asked Azikiwe about building plans, he “was very evasive.”<sup>1325</sup> Christopher Cox of the Colonial Office concurred that Azikiwe should avoid

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<sup>1317</sup> “Report Drafted by Professor Ingold,” BW 90/606, National Archives-Kew.

<sup>1318</sup> “Report Drafted by Professor Ingold,” BW 90/606, National Archives-Kew.

<sup>1319</sup> Prince of Peace Volunteers, *Enugu: A Social Survey: Discovering the Meaning of Servanthood in an African City* (November 1966), EFA.

<sup>1320</sup> Prince of Peace Volunteers, *Enugu: A Social Survey: Discovering the Meaning of Servanthood in an African City* (November 1966), EFA.

<sup>1321</sup> Prince of Peace Volunteers, *Enugu: A Social Survey: Discovering the Meaning of Servanthood in an African City* (November 1966), EFA.

<sup>1322</sup> Prince of Peace Volunteers, *Enugu: A Social Survey: Discovering the Meaning of Servanthood in an African City* (November 1966), EFA.

<sup>1323</sup> Prince of Peace Volunteers, *Enugu: A Social Survey: Discovering the Meaning of Servanthood in an African City* (November 1966), EFA.

<sup>1324</sup> J.W. Cook, Letter to Nnamdi Azikiwe, July 7, 1960, Box 49, Folder 13, Hannah Papers.

<sup>1325</sup> T.L. Stearns, Letter to J.S. Fulton, March 21, 1960, BW 90/606, National Archives-Kew.

contracting architects prematurely: “otherwise there may be very considerable complications.”<sup>1326</sup>

Stearns and Peter Wright finally approached the contractors directly and were shocked at a “number of things [they] saw in the plans.” Most had “little chance” of revision.<sup>1327</sup>

That March, the Provisional Council hired Professor Alfred Mansfield, an Israeli architect and urban planner to serve as the primary architect for the University. Mansfield had replaced a Mr. Cubitt.<sup>1328</sup> When Stearns and Wright found that one of Mansfield’s consulting architect, a Mr. Steinberg had “considerable authority,” Stearns and Wright had hope of “salvag[ing] a great deal.”<sup>1329</sup> Stearns felt confident that the whole of the university—from classrooms and laboratories to hostels and housing, would be improved—but “still far from ideal.”<sup>1330</sup> Stearns and Wright were “swamped” and “needed help desperately if the university is to get off to a respectable start.”<sup>1331</sup> The following month, Eldon Johnson “found plans well advanced” and “tried as best as we could to shape some of the inevitable into directions as fruitful as we could foresee.”<sup>1332</sup> Johnson anticipated a “most interesting” future provided that the planners could be persuaded that “careful planning” is necessary.<sup>1333</sup> Fresh off a Colombia trip in February, Taggart and MSU advisor, Dr. Harold Lautner, followed up on the Stearns/Wright arrival in April.<sup>1334</sup> Stearns and Wright, beleaguered, had been attempting, with little success, to clamp down on Azikiwe’s sprawling plans.<sup>1335</sup> Lautner reported that they “spent

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<sup>1326</sup> Christopher Cox, Letter to John A. Hannah, July 1, 1958, Box 49, Folder 13, Hannah Papers.

<sup>1327</sup> T.L. Stearns, Letter to J.S. Fulton, March 21, 1960, BW 90/606, National Archives-Kew.

<sup>1328</sup> Robert W. Powers, Letter to Glen L. Taggart, July 10, 1958, Box 49, Folder 13, Hannah Papers.

<sup>1329</sup> T.L. Stearns, Letter to J.S. Fulton, March 21, 1960, BW 90/606, National Archives-Kew.

<sup>1330</sup> T.L. Stearns, Letter to J.S. Fulton, March 21, 1960, BW 90/606, National Archives-Kew.

<sup>1331</sup> T.L. Stearns, Letter to J.S. Fulton, March 21, 1960, BW 90/606, National Archives-Kew.

<sup>1332</sup> Eldon Johnson, Letter to I.C.M. Maxwell, April 6, 1960, BW 90/606, National Archives-Kew.

<sup>1333</sup> Eldon Johnson, Letter to I.C.M. Maxwell, April 6, 1960, BW 90/606, National Archives-Kew.

<sup>1334</sup> David Launtum, Letter to John A. Hannah, April 22, 1960, Box 49, Folder 16, Hannah Papers.

<sup>1335</sup> David Launtum, Letter to John A. Hannah, April 22, 1960, Box 49, Folder 16, Hannah Papers.

the first few days trying to raise the spirits of Stearns and Wright” of Mansfield and Steinberg to “cut down the work started to reasonable limits” as well as “cut out permanently some bad architecture and planning.”<sup>1336</sup>

Taggart confirmed Lautner’s account. Azikiwe had overextended his resources and was premature in brokering contracts that “presupposed getting everything started at once.”<sup>1337</sup> Azikiwe was set to “offer everything” in the 1955 act, including European and American staff, facilities for 600-700 students and a faculty of 50-60. “I could go on ad infinitum detailing his aspirations and plans . . . almost all of which were fairly unrealizable and unaccomplishable.”<sup>1338</sup> Taggart hoped that with the help of Mansfield, they could “stop a good deal of the patch work” and convince the contractors to focus on facilities necessary for a fall opening. Taggart convinced Azikiwe to accept their changes. He lowered the planned enrollment to 200 and devised a new building plan “on a more modest scale.”<sup>1339</sup> Taggart supposed that Azikiwe was “pleased to have” the particulars of the project “taken off his shoulders.”<sup>1340</sup>

As with most villages in Nigeria, water access provided an issue of division and mobilization; water shortages seemed rampant throughout the 1950s. In Aba, landlords mounted a protest to the Urban District Council’s efforts to exact a water usage charge in advance when, as the *Express* observed, “the part exclusively inhabited by Africans has been without pipe borne water supply for many years.”<sup>1341</sup> One landlord asked what the water rate was paying for; each day, he needed to employ laborers to retrieve stream water due to the lack of city piping.<sup>1342</sup> The

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<sup>1336</sup> David Launtum, Letter to John A. Hannah, April 22, 1960, Box 49, Folder 16, Hannah Papers.

<sup>1337</sup> Glen L. Taggart, Letter to John A. Hannah, April 19, 1960, Box 49, Folder 16, Hannah Papers.

<sup>1338</sup> Glen L. Taggart, Letter to Leonard S. Kenworthy, May 5, 1960, Box 49, Folder 16, Hannah Papers.

<sup>1339</sup> Glen L. Taggart, Letter to Leonard S. Kenworthy, May 5, 1960, Box 49, Folder 16, Hannah Papers.

<sup>1340</sup> Glen L. Taggart, Letter to John A. Hannah, April 19, 1960, Box 49, Folder 16, Hannah Papers.

<sup>1341</sup> “Landlords Protest Against Payment of Water Rate in Aba—No Water in Town,” *Eastern States Express*, January 5, 1957, 1, 4.

<sup>1342</sup> “Landlords Protest Against Payment of Water Rate in Aba—No Water in Town,” *Eastern States Express*, January 5, 1957, 1, 4.

*Express* considered the Urban District Council's water charge to be "a big joke" given the "inhuman neglect" of Aba's water supply.<sup>1343</sup> While the white expatriates had full access to clean water, "the majority of people go without a good glassful of drinking water from day to day."<sup>1344</sup> Meanwhile, the *Observer* said elsewhere, "waste water from various houses run into the lanes and form stagnant pools where mosquitoes and other dangerous insects breed in millions."<sup>1345</sup>

Powered water pipes were slated by the Onitsha Urban District Council in late 1957 "to improve the water shortage."<sup>1346</sup> In Aguata, the "scarcity of drinking water" ensured, at least according to the NCNC owned newspaper, *Nigerian Outlook*, that "Aguata people are very loyal to the government and will ever be."<sup>1347</sup> When the Nsukka Provincial Secretary C. H. Crossdale and the Honourable E. A. Chima greeted Nsukka councils in November 1959, they lobbied for more water bore-holes, electrification, four secondary schools, increased industrialization, better roads, and "expansion of telecommunications facilities to district councils headquarters, health centres and secondary institutions."<sup>1348</sup> The water holes throughout Ede Oballa had guinea worms—and also needed a water bore hole. To implement the bore hole in Nsukka, Azikiwe exacted a tax of 1,000 pounds from Ede Oballa.<sup>1349</sup>

Staff housing fell far below needs.<sup>1350</sup> George Axinn told the IUC that the "senior staff housing shortage at Nsukka had become so acute" that they had to stop sending advisors.<sup>1351</sup> And the shortage was notable, since they had a hard time hiring a full university personnel. In hiring

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<sup>1343</sup> "Landlords Protest Against Payment of Water Rate in Aba—No Water in Town," *Eastern States Express*, January 5, 1957, 1, 4.

<sup>1344</sup> "Landlords Protest Against Payment of Water Rate in Aba—No Water in Town," *Eastern States Express*, January 5, 1957, 1, 4.

<sup>1345</sup> "Sanitation in Aba," *Eastern States Express*, March 30, 1957, 2.

<sup>1346</sup> "Electrically Operated Pipe Borne Water for Onitsha," *Eastern States Express*, January 16, 1957, 1.

<sup>1347</sup> *Nigerian Outlook*, September 9, 1963, 2.

<sup>1348</sup> "Provincial Commissioner Meets Nsukka Councils," *Eastern Sentinel*, August 21, 1959, 4.

<sup>1349</sup> "Community Efforts in Nsukka," *Eastern Sentinel*, November 19, 1959, 3.

<sup>1350</sup> George Axinn, Letter to I.C.M. Maxwell, October 23, 1961, BW 90/607, National Archives-Kew.

<sup>1351</sup> George Axinn, Letter to I.C.M. Maxwell, October 23, 1961, BW 90/607, National Archives Kew.

science faculty, I.C.M. Maxwell reported that Fulton had approached “a long line of people, one after the other, but all have declined.”<sup>1352</sup> Professor B. Pattison at the University of London Institute of Education noted that while the University was building two theaters for drama, “there is nobody at Nsukka who knows anything about equipping theaters.”<sup>1353</sup> Requests for assistance needed to come from the Principal personally, as the “ordinary machinery for sending requests is apparently too slow.”<sup>1354</sup>

Few challenged the necessity of the University; the problems of mass education had been known for a generation. But then again, few Nigerians outside Azikiwe and the Americans knew about the project, even as late as June 1960.<sup>1355</sup> The “public . . . knows astonishingly little about the University,” Donald Burns wrote Maxwell, “public support and goodwill can mean a great deal in a venture of this kind.”<sup>1356</sup> The building program progressed slowly; the forthcoming Independence celebration absorbed all the labor supply.<sup>1357</sup> Worse still, P. A. Carter of the Colonial Office complained, the “American partner in the venture is getting all the limelight and the ICA are making more of the running than the British connection.”<sup>1358</sup>

The excesses of the university—and the lavish treatment on faculty—was no secret. Following a budget session, Azikiwe told Johnson: “We did the best we could.”<sup>1359</sup> Johnson considered such talk rubbish: “Of course this is not true,” he complained to Hannah: “Under his influence many unnecessary expenditures have been authorized.”<sup>1360</sup> The Eastern Premier, Michael Okpara, Johnson reported, had complained that Azikiwe “does not know enough about

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<sup>1352</sup> I.C.M. Maxwell, Letter to D.H. Fowler, July 27, 1961, BW 90/607, National Archives-Kew.

<sup>1353</sup> B. Pattison, Letter to I.U. Maxwell, July 21, 1961, BW 90/607, National Archives-Kew.

<sup>1354</sup> B. Pattison, Letter to I.U. Maxwell, July 21, 1961, BW 90/607, National Archives-Kew.

<sup>1355</sup> Donald G. Burns, Letter to I.C.M. Maxwell, June 21, 1960, BW 90/606, National Archives-Kew.

<sup>1356</sup> Donald G. Burns, Letter to I.C.M. Maxwell, June 21, 1960, BW 90/606, National Archives-Kew.

<sup>1357</sup> J.D. McCormack, Letter to Charles Morris, August 16, 1961, BW 90/607, National Archives-Kew.

<sup>1358</sup> P.A. Carter, Letter, August 11, 1960, BW 90/606, National Archives-Kew.

<sup>1359</sup> George Johnson, Letter to John A. Hannah, June 8, 1963, Box 49, Folder 22, Hannah Papers.

<sup>1360</sup> George Johnson, Letter to John A. Hannah, June 8, 1963, Box 49, Folder 22, Hannah Papers.

the day-to-day problems of the University.”<sup>1361</sup> Hannah questioned—in diplomatic tones—whether the University even had the capacity to be financially viable over the coming years; Azikiwe needed a plan—and “in the not far distant future.”<sup>1362</sup>

He had received a clean bill of health from a physical examination on January 21 before his departure.<sup>1363</sup> During Taggart’s April trip, he observed that both Stearns and his wife, Thera, were “taking the strain of the situation nicely.”<sup>1364</sup> Taggart feared that Stearns “might break,” but Stearns “has come through” and, he wrote Hannah, “felt strengthened by the experience.”<sup>1365</sup> Thera Stearns, who had accompanied Troy, assured President Hannah that they would “do [their] very best not to disappoint you.”<sup>1366</sup> Stearns acknowledged working at the University meant holding onto a “healthy bear by the tail.”<sup>1367</sup> Taggart joked with Hannah: “don’t be surprised if I look ten years older as a result of the experience.”<sup>1368</sup> Shortly after returning in late July for a second time, Stearns collapsed and suffered a “serious ‘physical breakdown,’” requiring that Taggart travel to Nsukka to “hold the fort” for the coming months.<sup>1369</sup> Over the summer months, University of Leeds’ Donald G. Burns managed the Nsukka campus while Stearns took leave in the summer in East Lansing.<sup>1370</sup> George Axinn recalls how one engineer, obsessed with efficiency, needed to return home “in a strait jacket” and how several other American faculty members turned to alcohol.<sup>1371</sup> Nancy Axinn attributed American faculty members’ mental strain

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<sup>1361</sup> George Johnson, Letter to John A. Hannah, June 8, 1963, Box 49, Folder 22, Hannah Papers.

<sup>1362</sup> John A. Hannah, Letter to Nnamdi Azikiwe, March 21, 1963, Box 49, Folder 22, Hannah Papers.

<sup>1363</sup> Glen L. Taggart, Letter to Joel Bernstein, January 18, 1960, Box 49, Folder 16, Hannah Papers.

<sup>1364</sup> Glen L. Taggart, Letter to John A. Hannah, April 19, 1960, Box 49, Folder 16, Hannah Papers.

<sup>1365</sup> Glen L. Taggart, Letter to John A. Hannah, April 19, 1960, Box 49, Folder 16, Hannah Papers.

<sup>1366</sup> Thera Stearns, Letter to John A. Hannah, ca. May 1960, Hannah Papers, both in Box 49, Folder 16, Hannah Papers.

<sup>1367</sup> Troy L. Stearns, Letter to Glen L. Taggart, March 12, 1960, Box 49, Folder 16, Hannah Papers.

<sup>1368</sup> Glen L. Taggart, Letter to John A. Hannah, April 19, 1960, John A. Box 49, Folder 16, Hannah Papers.

<sup>1369</sup> Donald G. Burns, Letter to I.C.M. Maxwell, August 7, 1960, BW 90/606, National Archives-Kew.

<sup>1370</sup> Donald G. Burns, Letter to I.C.M. Maxwell, August 7, 1960, BW 90/606, National Archives-Kew.

<sup>1371</sup> Axinn interview.

to feelings of isolation: “no telephones, no television, lord knows, even radios. . . you were totally isolated, and that’s very, very hard.”<sup>1372</sup> Only a few Americans—education professor John Hanson, for instance—“but not many,” George Axinn recalled, enjoyed their time in Nsukka.<sup>1373</sup> Due to malaria and water-borne disease, some didn’t survive Nsukka at all.<sup>1374</sup> Nancy Axinn noted one instance in which a faculty wife died due to the medical malpractice of her husband, a veterinarian, who improperly treated her. When the ambulance driver failed to show up, Nancy “stole” the ambulance and drove the corpse to the bus that served as the hearse.<sup>1375</sup>

With an incapacitated principal, an elusive Chairman, and a non-functioning Provisional Council, both the Inter-university Council and the Colonial Office came to believe that supporting the University was a terrible mistake: “Poor Stearns has had a tough assignment.”<sup>1376</sup> The construction of the University was shaping to be not just a sub-par university but something of a small-scale humanitarian crisis waiting to happen. Ingwold acknowledged that “it would be easy to reject the whole scheme at Nsukka as lunacy.”<sup>1377</sup> Tredennick and Ingold “deplor[ed] that a major development in African higher education should have been undertaken with so little preliminary preparation.”<sup>1378</sup> Sans assistance from Britain, the team “fore[saw] grave difficulties.”<sup>1379</sup>

The sticking point remained: Azikiwe held all the cards. “The one uncertain factor is Dr. Azikiwe,” Tredennick concluded—only with his adherence could the University continue on

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<sup>1372</sup> Nancy Axinn, Interview with David Wiley.

<sup>1373</sup> George Axinn, Interview with David Wiley.

<sup>1374</sup> Nancy Axinn, Interview with David Wiley.

<sup>1375</sup> Nancy Axinn, Interview with David Wiley.

<sup>1376</sup> Donald G. Burns, Letter to I.C.M. Maxwell, August 7, 1960, BW 90/606, National Archives-Kew. See also J.D. McCormack, Letters to Charles Morris, August 2 and August 24, 1960, both in BW 90/606, National Archives-Kew.

<sup>1377</sup> “Report Drafted by Professor Tredennick,” BW 90/606, National Archives-Kew.

<sup>1378</sup> “Report Drafted by Professor Tredennick,” BW 90/606, National Archives-Kew.

<sup>1379</sup> “Report Drafted by Professor Tredennick,” BW 90/606, National Archives-Kew.



“sound academic lines.”<sup>1380</sup> Should Azikiwe open the university in fall 1960, it would “be almost a miracle.”<sup>1381</sup> The British should stay with the project—to preserve the empire, if nothing else. quoting Alexander Carr-Saunders, they warned that “if London were to refuse to advise, its influence on university education in Nigeria might well come to an end.”<sup>1382</sup> But “if it agrees to advise, its influence might well last long after independence.”<sup>1383</sup> The new appointment, George M. Johnson, the Dean of Howard Law School, took over the post of University principal. Azikiwe’s deputy, Benjamin Chukwudebe, took over the responsibility of overseeing the contractors. Johnson considered Chukwudebe to be a man of talent who, too often, assumed the role of “cheap politician.”<sup>1384</sup>

British educators were just as concerned about preserving their legacy as about Nigerian welfare; as Ibadan education professor Constance Geary would observe later, British education “may not be bigger or better; it may not even be good. But if it’s English, it’s right.”<sup>1385</sup> British administrators mistrusted Azikiwe. John Willis, a colonial officer, reported that his British colleagues in the East were “despondent”; while Azikiwe claimed to “need” the British, Willis felt that Azikiwe “and his boys . . . lose no opportunity of giving them slaps in the face.”<sup>1386</sup> A. Trevor Clark acknowledged to Perham that “emergent Nigeria was hell for those who took themselves, their work, their wives, their superiors and Nigerians too seriously.”<sup>1387</sup>

Less than a year into the project, Morris implied that he wanted to withdraw from the project. The Colonial Office responded with discouraging, but sympathetic news. “None of us

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<sup>1380</sup> “Report Drafted by Professor Tredennick,” BW 90/606, National Archives-Kew.

<sup>1381</sup> “Report Drafted by Professor Tredennick,” BW 90/606, National Archives-Kew.

<sup>1382</sup> “Report Drafted by Professor Tredennick,” BW 90/606, National Archives-Kew.

<sup>1383</sup> “Report Drafted by Professor Tredennick,” BW 90/606, National Archives-Kew.

<sup>1384</sup> George M. Johnson, Letter to Glen L. Taggart, November 21, 1960, Box 49, Folder 16, Hannah Papers.

<sup>1385</sup> “Supplement to End-of-Tour Report, Edith Lord,” Box 186, Folder 80, UNN Papers.

<sup>1386</sup> John Willis, Letter to Margery Perham, August 1, 1955, Perham Papers, Rhodes House.

<sup>1387</sup> A. Trevor Clark, Letter to Margery Perham, December 1960, Perham Papers, Rhodes House.

here could honestly say that we do not share your misgivings about the way things are developing,” they assured him.<sup>1388</sup> Too polite to name names, the Colonial Office acknowledged that the “Chairman”—Nnamdi Azikiwe—was “unpredictable and erratic,” but they reminded him that they must come to terms with the fact that Azikiwe and his cohort had a “firm intention” to build the University “whether we like it or not.”<sup>1389</sup> Withdrawing from the project would both “mar the happy association” with Michigan State University and undermine the post-independence Nigerian project.<sup>1390</sup> “There are grave problems ahead,” they predicted, so they would “make it [their] job to see that the project develops along as sound lines as is possible.”<sup>1391</sup>

By November 1960, no IUC. advisors had arrived at Nsukka. The British lack of interest in the project had been known for over a year—and Taggart sensed it from the beginning. Unlike the frustrated white Americans, the new Acting Principal, Johnson, sympathized with Azikiwe’s plight—and his “several personal conferences with him have only strengthened that admiration.”<sup>1392</sup> And for all his “outward graciousness” toward British officials, Johnson sensed that beneath the veneer of cordiality, “there seems to be a constant question mark.”<sup>1393</sup> His skepticism of British motives, Johnson acknowledged, “was not without justification.”<sup>1394</sup> Azikiwe had “suffered at their hands,” and “the fact that the IUC had failed to send any advisers to the UNN campus “has tended to confirm Azikiwe’s suspicions.”<sup>1395</sup>

By May 1961, Morris had not changed his mind. He credited Hannah as a “go-ahead” president but considered MSU to be little more than an agricultural college that lacked “the

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<sup>1388</sup> Colonial Office, Letter to Charles Morris, April 14, 1960, BW 90/606, National Archives-Kew

<sup>1389</sup> Colonial Office, Letter to Charles Morris, April 14, 1960, BW 90/606, National Archives-Kew

<sup>1390</sup> Colonial Office, Letter to Charles Morris, April 14, 1960, BW 90/606, National Archives-Kew

<sup>1391</sup> Colonial Office, Letter to Charles Morris, April 14, 1960, BW 90/606, National Archives-Kew

<sup>1392</sup> George M. Johnson, Letter to Glen L. Taggart, November 21, 1960, Box 49, Folder 16, Hannah Papers.

<sup>1393</sup> George M. Johnson, Letter to Glen L. Taggart, November 21, 1960, Box 49, Folder 16, Hannah Papers.

<sup>1394</sup> George M. Johnson, Letter to Glen L. Taggart, November 21, 1960, Box 49, Folder 16, Hannah Papers.

<sup>1395</sup> George M. Johnson, Letter to Glen L. Taggart, November 21, 1960, Box 49, Folder 16, Hannah Papers.

knowledge or experience necessary for the task.”<sup>1396</sup> The institutions Azikiwe implemented, such as the University’s Provisional Council were little used; the Council did not meet at all during its first year of existence.<sup>1397</sup> The Council competed for administrative territory with a group of ruling *ndi isi*; when the Council was not in session—which was generally—the *ndi isi* terminated the architect without any consultation with the Council.<sup>1398</sup> Financing the University weighed on everyone’s mind, but Morris shrugged his shoulders; as his meeting minutes indicate, all agreed that Azikwe “being the man he is will likely continue to circumvent” financial constraints.<sup>1399</sup> Morris did not even consider a bilateral inter-university relationship viable, given the taxing strain it would require of the external university’s faculty members.<sup>1400</sup>

Sussex University Principal J. S. Fulton felt that the IUC had “plenty of excuses” to justify aborting the project—but Fulton advised them that they should see it through in hopes of “steering” it aright.<sup>1401</sup> George Axinn recalled that Nsukka developed an institutional reaction to ongoing attacks in the glamorization of British. During their visit to Nsukka, Professors Tredernnick and Ingold found that Taggart wanted to model UNN “essentially [after] the *British* pattern.”<sup>1402</sup> If the Americans had their way, their “American model” would not be so American.<sup>1403</sup>

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<sup>1396</sup> “Note of a Meeting Held at the Commonwealth Relations Office,” May 11, 1961, BW 90/608, National Archives-Kew.

<sup>1397</sup> “Note of a Meeting Held at the Commonwealth Relations Office,” May 11, 1961, BW 90/608, National Archives-Kew.

<sup>1398</sup> “Note of a Meeting Held at the Commonwealth Relations Office,” May 11, 1961, BW 90/608, National Archives-Kew.

<sup>1399</sup> “Note of a Meeting Held at the Commonwealth Relations Office,” May 11, 1961, BW 90/608, National Archives-Kew.

<sup>1400</sup> “Note of a Meeting Held at the Commonwealth Relations Office,” May 11, 1961, BW 90/608, National Archives-Kew.

<sup>1401</sup> “Note of a Meeting Held at the Commonwealth Relations Office,” May 11, 1961, BW 90/608, National Archives-Kew.

<sup>1402</sup> “Reported Drafted by Professor Ingold,” BW 90/606, National Archives-Kew.

<sup>1403</sup> “Reported Drafted by Professor Ingold,” BW 90/606, National Archives-Kew.

In the Anglo-British calculations re: UNN, the Cold War enjoyed little relevance. Little evidence of Communist subversion—or, for that matter, even of *American perception* of Communist subversion existed. As of January 1956, the American Consul reported that “the Soviets have not yet significantly changed their low-priority approach to Nigeria.”<sup>1404</sup> The Anglo-American tensions over the University of Nigeria project reflected a general sense of unease in Anglo-American clashes over foreign policy. The nature of their “happy relationship” demanded investment and commitment, in spite of profound “misgivings” about the likelihood of success.

### *Conclusion*

Miller’s concern over the fading of an empire reflected on-the-ground political realities and shifting imperial boundaries. The University attracted the full range of critiques and plaudits, from local politicians to international observers. It revealed the rise of a new kind of foreign dominance: American technocracy, informed through the influence of the agricultural-industrial complex which Michigan State University exemplified. British educational officials guarded their domain closely, considering that their education had been the finest heritage they could offer to Nigerians. While Michigan State University officials attempted to broker collaboration and compromise with the British officials, Azikiwe’s independence bucked all foreign stakeholders, requiring them to adjust and re-adjust to agenda—sometimes on a month-to-month basis. The University of Nigeria, Nsukka revealed the diminishing influence of the British hold over Nigerian educational life. Emboldened by American technocracy, Azikiwe could dodge, avoid, and evade as he saw fit—all without the need to account to either British officials or American advisors. In December 1960, Azikiwe delivered his inaugural address as Governor-

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<sup>1404</sup> Herbert T. Krueger, “Communist Activity in Nigeria,” January 6, 1956, Box 3238, Folder 459, Central Decimal File, National Archives II, College Park, Maryland.

General; echoing the motto of his newly-found university, he urged Nigerians to “bind the nation’s wound and let us heal the breaches of the past so that in forging our nation there shall emerge on this continent a hate-free and greed-free people who shall be in the vanguard of the world task force. . . to restore the dignity of man in the world.”<sup>1405</sup>

The next chapter will situate UNN as the international space which Nnamdi Azikiwe intended it to be. UNN became a contact zone to which Nigerians gathered in hopes of cultivating a cosmopolitan, multi-disciplinary Nigeria unbounded by intellectual strictures, both foreign and domestic. Indeed, if UNN proved successful, there would be no such thing as “foreign” knowledge anymore.

## CHAPTER 5

In April 1962, Victor Olaiya that “famous, fabulous, fantastic, victorious” trumpeter of highlife, set up his music equipment at the Margaret Ekpo Refectory at the University of Nigeria.<sup>1406</sup> Olaiya had planned to be an engineer at Howard University—but knew that fame awaited him in the music halls of Lagos. The Ekpo party royalty would be named: “Miss Floral

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<sup>1405</sup> “Salute to Dr. Azikiwe,” *The Crisis* (December 1960): 659.

<sup>1406</sup> “Floral Carnival at Nsukka Varsity,” *Eastern Nigeria Guardian*, April 19, 1962, 3.

Carnival and Mr. Personality Head Gear.”<sup>1407</sup> Olaiya spent little time in the villages and hamlets of the East. Although born and raised in Owerri, he spent his days in urban Lagos—disconnected from the historic Igbo music of his land of birth.<sup>1408</sup> Legendary musician Fela Kuti had sung in Olaiya’s band, and some of Olaiya’s earliest music, such as “Koola o Olobito” came from Kuti’s mind. Capable of singing in Hausa, Igbo, Yoruba, an Efik, Olaiya seemed to exemplify a pan-Nigerian-ness, an Afro-beat, about what Kuti might sing as an “African man.”<sup>1409</sup> Held at Nigeria’s first Nigerian university, the dance reflected not just a celebration but a concerted effort at cultivating “highlife” vibes at the university spurned by Lagosian elite—to challenge the supremacy of sense that only Lagosian elites were capable of hosting events worthy of attendance.<sup>1410</sup>

This chapter will highlight how the University of Nigeria, Nsukka served as a site for cultural matrix, producing an intellectual milieu which cultivated a complicated and layered sense of the University’s “indigenous” character—an indigenous-ness that challenged the national boundaries that UNN claimed to serve. Although Nsukka had historically served as a point of convergence for communities between Northern and Southern Nigeria, it had yet to see British, Irish, English, Indian, Dutch, German, and American mingle on terms that aspired to social equity rather than colonial rule or economic profit. Nsukka, then, served as an unusual point of convergence for this eclectic community of scholars. As this chapter will show, the University proved transformative, serving an engine for in-migration and outmigration. Its participants returned to their countries of origins enlivened with new ideas; whether sent to or

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<sup>1407</sup> “Floral Carnival at Nsukka Varsity,” *Eastern Nigeria Guardian*, April 19, 1962, 3.

<sup>1408</sup> Bode Omojola, “Politics, Identity, and Nostalgia in Nigerian Music: A Study of Victor Olaiya's Highlife,” *Ethnomusicology* 53, no. 2 (Spring/summer 2009): 252.

<sup>1409</sup> Bode Omojola, “Politics, Identity, and Nostalgia in Nigerian Music: A Study of Victor Olaiya's Highlife,” *Ethnomusicology* 53, no. 2 (Spring/summer 2009): 254.

<sup>1410</sup> Bode Omojola, “Politics, Identity, and Nostalgia in Nigerian Music: A Study of Victor Olaiya's Highlife,” *Ethnomusicology* 53, no. 2 (Spring/summer 2009): 252.

invited from other countries through the UNN network, UNN- and UNN-affiliated scholars produced an environment for boundless knowledge—in which an “Afro-politanist” ethos could flourish—in which African-ness was all encompassing while deeply rooted in the red soil of Nsukka.<sup>1411</sup> UNN facilitated what Eze calls the “contamination” of African life. Contamination is a social good, he concludes. “The African is contaminated in the sense that she is not culturally or biologically pure. . . The African is a mutt.”<sup>1412</sup> The University thus became an avenue by which “indigenous” identity became more rich, more diverse, and multi-varied—all while retaining its essentially Nigerian character. “Foreign educational systems provide a reservoir of ideas and experience,” one statement acknowledged, “yet final answers will be found only by adapting these ideas to the new setting of our time and country.”<sup>1413</sup> Axinn recalled that the founding faculty members of UNN were “enthusiastic” and “excited”—to “do something new and different” to “break the path into the future for all of Africa.”<sup>1414</sup> An *Eastern Nigerian Guardian* reporter predicted that the University was “destined to play a leading role in the affairs of the missing millions of mankind.”<sup>1415</sup>

### *The Americans Come to Nsukka*

The first principal of UNN, George M. Johnson had been a long-time civil rights advocate.<sup>1416</sup> Having attended predominantly white school in San Bernadino, California, at an army training program in preparation for the Great War facilitated his enrollment at Berkeley,

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<sup>1411</sup> Chielozone Eze, “Rethinking African culture and identity: the Afropolitan model,” *Journal of African Cultural Studies* 26:2 (2014): 234-247.

<sup>1412</sup> Chielozone Eze, “Rethinking African culture and identity: the Afropolitan model,” *Journal of African Cultural Studies* 26, 2 (2014): 239.

<sup>1413</sup> Franz Ansprenger, “Hansberry College Inaugural Seminar on the Emergence of African Political Thought,” *Journal of Modern African Studies* 1, no. 4 (December 1963): 541.

<sup>1414</sup> Axinn interview.

<sup>1415</sup> “C XRYDZ Eyutcha reporting,” *Eastern Nigeria Guardian*, November 7, 1962, 1.

<sup>1416</sup> Peter J. Levinson, “George Marion Johnson and the Irrelevance of Race,” *University of Hawaii Law Review* 15, no. 1 (June 1993): 1-22.

George Marion Johnson liked to smoke his pipes, particularly while in conversation with people of note.<sup>1417</sup> Johnson knew something about working through schooling piecemeal. When the army program was terminated following the war, he took a break in his coursework to work as a janitor.<sup>1418</sup> Once he re-enrolled, he became a domestic servant for a weekly salary of \$5.00.<sup>1419</sup> After he graduated with his bachelor's degree, he worked for three more years doing odd jobs until he could begin his L.L.B studies at Berkeley in 1929.<sup>1420</sup> As a student of white-dominant faculty, Johnson studied with Roger Traynor, later a California Supreme Court Justice, who instilled in Johnson a veneration of the presence of government daily life and the expanded power of taxation.<sup>1421</sup>

In 1939, Johnson began his long-time teaching career at Howard University—one of two law schools in the country willing to hire black law professors (the other was Lincoln University, which admitted only black students).<sup>1422</sup> His career move cut his salary significantly, but in return, Johnson's position at Howard placed him at the vanguard of the professional civil rights struggle defined in board rooms and business lunches rather than on the streets.<sup>1423</sup> At Howard, he oversaw the Fair Employment Practice Committee with a "sense of order" that "provided an organizational glue badly needed by committee and staff."<sup>1424</sup> While Dean and later, Civil Rights Commissioner, he gained a reputation among his white colleagues for his even-keeled nature, for his "dispassionate approach" when dealing with "problems. . . [that] are susceptible to

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<sup>1417</sup> "Praise Former Law Dean on CR Commission," *Tri-State Defender* [Memphis], June 20, 1959, 6.

<sup>1418</sup> Levinson, "George Marion Johnson and the Irrelevance of Race," *University of Hawaii Law Review* 15, no. 1 (1993): 2.

<sup>1419</sup> Levinson, "George Marion Johnson and the Irrelevance of Race," 2.

<sup>1420</sup> Levinson, "George Marion Johnson and the Irrelevance of Race," 2.

<sup>1421</sup> Levinson, "George Marion Johnson and the Irrelevance of Race," 2.

<sup>1422</sup> Levinson, "George Marion Johnson and the Irrelevance of Race," 3.

<sup>1423</sup> Levinson, "George Marion Johnson and the Irrelevance of Race," 3.

<sup>1424</sup> Levinson, "George Marion Johnson and the Irrelevance of Race," 6.



extremes.”<sup>1425</sup> He resigned his post for full-time work in the Civil Rights Commission, where he became more closely acquainted with President John W. Hannah.<sup>1426</sup>

Johnson envisioned a university that would: “spurn the elite role of social parasites and instead elect careers of service to the country and its people.”<sup>1427</sup> The university was the stuff of dreams.<sup>1428</sup> For a university to be worthy of existence, Dr. Nathaniel Opubor, the Nigerian-born director of the Michigan State University African Studies Institute, believed that it “must be. . . of service to the larger community.”<sup>1429</sup> John P. Oriji, a University of Nigeria graduate, observed with some exaggeration, that pre-Nsukka, university graduates “looked down from these Olympian mountains upon the population with some measure of contempt.”<sup>1430</sup> UNN allowed the University “to be brought to the people.”<sup>1431</sup> Stephen Vincent, a Peace Corps poetry professor at UNN from the Bay Area in California, cracked that UNN was “considered like going to San Francisco State instead of going to University of California.”<sup>1432</sup>

In previous years, pharmacists, engineers, and the like received their training elsewhere: at Oxford, Cambridge, Glasgow, Manchester or at least at Ibadan. Nathaniel Opubor, the former director of the Michigan State University African Studies Center and a product of Ibadan, considers this to be UNN’s most notable distinction in philosophy: that students of engineering “can be trained in the African context” and “on your own soil.”<sup>1433</sup> Alum V.E. Chikwendu took

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<sup>1425</sup> “Praise Former Law Dean on CR Commission,” *Chicago Defender*, June 20, 1959, 11.

<sup>1426</sup> “Praise Former Law Dean on CR Commission,” *Chicago Defender*, June 20, 1959, 11; Levinson, “George Marion Johnson and the Irrelevance of Race,” 13.

<sup>1427</sup> George M. Johnson, “The University of Nigeria” in Murray G. Ross, ed., *New Universities in the Modern World*, (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), 87.

<sup>1428</sup> George M. Johnson, “The University of Nigeria” 87.

<sup>1429</sup> Nathaniel Opubor, Interview with Ezeocha, 178.

<sup>1430</sup> John P. Oriji, Interview with Ezeocha, 205.

<sup>1431</sup> John P. Oriji, Interview with Ezeocha, 205.

<sup>1432</sup> Stephen Vincent, Interview with Phyllis Noble, JFK Library.

<sup>1433</sup> Nathaniel Opubor, Interview with Ezeocha, 178.

care to emphasize UNN's "high concentration of renowned and excellent academics."<sup>1434</sup> The English wife of the Vice-Chancellor of Ahmadu Bello University and an education professor at Ibadan, Constance Geary, articulated sense of British superiority with uncharacteristic bluntness: "it isn't that we think things American are bad; it's just that they are not English. We've always believed that if it's English, it's right. It may not be bigger or better; it may not even be good. But if it's English, it's right" (underlines in original).<sup>1435</sup> The idea of Nigerians administering their own education challenged the very sense of British educational sovereignty. An expatriate scholar recalled a "tremendous sensitivity" that the University was being "looked down on as less than a 'real' university."<sup>1436</sup>

Michigan State University's UNN project departed from the British tradition through its incorporation of "General Studies," the implementation of a liberal arts core that required tradesmen and women to receive training in the full host of subjects: history, literature, mathematics, and science; the General Studies Faculty would forge a link between the knowledge of elite foreign universities with the general populace.<sup>1437</sup> Azikiwe planned for five faculties: Science, Engineering, Arts, Law, and Theology.<sup>1438</sup> Cook, Hannah, and Taggart—with Azikiwe's close oversight and intellectual influence, imagined that UNN would prevent "a vacuum in Nigerian society" as a "Temple of Knowledge. . . so organised as to give physical and

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<sup>1434</sup> V. E. Chikwendu, Interview with Wineth Nkechi Obi, "A History of the University of Nigeria, Nsukka Department of History," August 9, 1999, 100, UNN Bachelor's Theses, Nnamdi Azikiwe Library, University of Nigeria, Nsukka.

<sup>1435</sup> "Supplement to End-of-Tour Report, Edith Lord," Box 186, Folder 80, UNN Project Papers.

<sup>1436</sup> Andrew Walls, Interview with Russell W. Stevenson, May 24, 2017, Aberdeen, Scotland.

<sup>1437</sup> "University Development in Nigeria: Report of the National Universities Commission," *Minerva* (Winter 1965): 215.

<sup>1438</sup> "The University of Nigeria," *Architectural Review* 125, no. 745 (February 1, 1959): 133-134.

spiritual poise to Nigerians and facilitate the development of their personalities as free men and free women in a free world,” that “man shall no longer be a wolf to his fellow man.”<sup>1439</sup>

### *UNN's Opening Day*

Independence year was not only a celebratory year for Nigeria; it reflected the ongoing intra-regional tensions seen during the 1958 *ogu umunwanyi*. The 1959 elections had failed to produce a unified Nigeria; Azikiwe observed, according to an *Eastern Observer* summarized: “the result of the election has left no one single party better. . . none of the three major political parties the Action Group, the NCNC and the NPC can be said to have won the election,” and “none of them can form a government without going into coalition with another.”<sup>1440</sup> The “University of Nigeria” was not, in fact, representative of Nigeria at all. That April, Tiv violence exploded in Benue in resistance to Tiv Native Authority.<sup>1441</sup> The violence simmered through September, when 300-strong militias roaming about leveling attacks on the Tiv Native Authority.<sup>1442</sup> In response, the Eastern Region shut down the Native Authority and imposed a Regional Authority regime; Regional officials killed a large number of protestors and arrested more—on the order of 2,000.<sup>1443</sup>

Azikiwe was elected to the Presidency of the Senate, tasked with forming a coalition with either the Action Group or the Northern People’s Congress. Fearing backlash from NCNC.

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<sup>1439</sup> J. W. Cook, John A. Hannah, Glen L. Taggart, “Plans for a University of Nigeria,” Box 186, Folder 15, UNN Project Papers.

<sup>1440</sup> “That’s Zik’s Statement,” *Eastern Observer*, December 28, 1959, 1.

<sup>1441</sup> Clifford J. Quinlan, “Special Honors for Dr. Azikiwe on First Anniversary of Northern Region Self-government,” April 4, 1960, Central Decimal File, Box 1698, Folder 560, National Archives II, College Park, Maryland.

<sup>1442</sup> Kaduna Consulate, Telegram to Department of State, September 29, 1960 and Lagos Consulate, Telegram to State, September 30, 1960, Central Decimal File, Both in Box 1698, Folder 760, National Archives II, College Park, Maryland.

<sup>1443</sup> Kaduna Consulate, Telegram to Department of State, September 29, 1960 and Lagos Consulate, Telegram to State, September 30, 1960, Central Decimal File, Both in Box 1698, Folder 760, National Archives II, College Park, Maryland.

colleagues over collaborating with the AG, he extended an overture to Ahmadu Bello in Kaduna. Bello's British advisors, Peter Stallard and A.F.F.P. Newns, urged him to assume a fixed posture, but Azikiwe refused to accept anything less than a "partnership of equals."<sup>1444</sup> Bello and Azikiwe drew up a "top-secret agreement"—unknown even to James Robertson, Azikiwe assured the American Consul—that the NCNC will designate Chief of State while the NPC will designate the Chief of Government: with Azikiwe as Governor-General and Abubakr Balewa as Prime Minister.<sup>1445</sup> Azikiwe would assume the largely ceremonial role of Governor-General, which would not be officialized until after independence; in the meantime, Azikiwe said, he would "rest, travel, and write books."<sup>1446</sup> Azikiwe's NPC support assured that he would win the Senate Presidency—even if opposed by the AG.<sup>1447</sup> The thought of Azikiwe as Governor-General horrified most British; "so intense is the dislike of Zik among British civil servants," John K. Emerson reported, "that the thought of him as an occupant of the Government House is distasteful in the extreme."<sup>1448</sup> Yet, Azikiwe was a "fact of life" for Nigerians and would "likely play a public role of some consequence. . . at least for some time yet to come."<sup>1449</sup>

By March, Azikiwe had sent indications that he would try to wriggle out of the NPC.- NCNC agreement, form his own coalition government, and ascend to the Prime Ministership.<sup>1450</sup> Few believed he would be successful; Deputy-Governor –General A. G. H. Gardner Brown said

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<sup>1444</sup> John K. Emerson, "Interview with Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe, President of the Senate," January 15, 1960, Central Decimal File, Box 1698, Folder 560, National Archives II, College Park, Maryland.

<sup>1445</sup> John K. Emerson, "Interview with Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe, President of the Senate," January 15, 1960, Central Decimal File, Box 1698, Folder 560, National Archives II, College Park, Maryland.

<sup>1446</sup> John K. Emerson, "Interview with Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe, President of the Senate," January 15, 1960, Central Decimal File, Box 1698, Folder 560, National Archives II, College Park, Maryland.

<sup>1447</sup> Leon G. Dorros, "Nigerian Senate Established with Azikiwe as President," January 18, 1960, Central Decimal File, Box 1698, Folder 560, National Archives II, College Park, Maryland.

<sup>1448</sup> John K. Emerson, "The Prospect of Dr. Azikiwe as Governor-General," May 18, 1960, Central Decimal File, Box 1698, Folder 560, National Archives II, College Park, Maryland.

<sup>1449</sup> John K. Emerson, "Interview with Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe, President of the Senate," January 15, 1960, Central Decimal File, Box 1698, Folder 560, National Archives II, College Park, Maryland.

<sup>1450</sup> Leon G. Dorros, "Deputy Governor-General's Comments on Present Position of Dr. Azikiwe," March 4, 1960, Central Decimal File, Box 1698, Folder 560, National Archives II, College Park, Maryland.

that the NCNC members who now held a ministry because of the NPC.-NCNC alliance would reliably choose their salary over Azikiwe.<sup>1451</sup> And if Azikiwe did, Deputy Governor H. A. S. Johnston predicated that the NPC may retaliate by establishing a separatist, homogenous government with ‘assistance from splinter groups.’<sup>1452</sup> At least through April, the alliance held together, with Ahmadu Bello giving Azikiwe a “gold medal” at an NPC event *en absentia*.<sup>1453</sup> The Sarduna credited Azikiwe’s “courage, cooperation, and wisdom” for the creation of a “stable government” in Nigeria.<sup>1454</sup> Rumors circulated, as they often did, that Azikiwe would attempt to resign his post as NCNC party chief to remain “nonpartisan” as Governor-General; counter-rumors implied that the NCNC would not accept his nomination.<sup>1455</sup>

The rumor-mongering bore little resemblance to the lived realities on-the-ground. The internal tumult belied a deeper issue: a lack of labor forces throughout the country. Professor Frederick Harbison, commissioned by the Nigerian federal regime, urged that expatriate laborers be increased many times over during the next decade.<sup>1456</sup> “Nigerianization”—the systematic replacement of British laborers with Nigerians—would depend, ironically, on local expatriate personnel capable of providing “on-the-job training.”<sup>1457</sup> The American diplomat Leon G. Dorros worried that while most high posts held Nigerians of top quality, the mid-level

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<sup>1451</sup> Leon G. Dorros, “Deputy Governor-General’s Comments on Present Position of Dr. Azikiwe,” March 4, 1960, Central Decimal File, Box 1698, Folder 560, Central Decimal File, National Archives II, College Park, Maryland.

<sup>1452</sup> Memo of Conversation, March 10, 1960, Central Decimal File, Box 1698, Folder 560, National Archives II, College Park, Maryland.

<sup>1453</sup> Clifford J. Quinlan, “Special Honors for Dr. Azikiwe on First Anniversary of Northern Region Self-government,” April 4, 1960, Central Decimal File, Box 1698, Folder 560, National Archives II, College Park, Maryland.

<sup>1454</sup> Clifford J. Quinlan, “Special Honors for Dr. Azikiwe on First Anniversary of Northern Region Self-government,” April 4, 1960, Central Decimal File, Box 1698, Folder 560, National Archives II, College Park, Maryland.

<sup>1455</sup> John K. Emerson, “Dr. Azikiwe’s Expected Resignation,” June 30, 1960, Central Decimal, Box 1698, Folder 560, File, National Archives II, College Park, Maryland.

<sup>1456</sup> Leon G. Dorros, Telegram, March 21, 1960, Central Decimal File, Box 1698, Folder 560, National Archives II, College Park, Maryland.

<sup>1457</sup> Leon G. Dorros, Telegram, March 21, 1960, Central Decimal File, Box 1698, Folder 560, National Archives II, College Park, Maryland.

management of the Nigerian civil service “lack[ed] depth.”<sup>1458</sup> Some kind of educational intervention would be necessary. Azikiwe’s posturing indicated his doggedness to steer the country’s post-independence fate towards becoming a respected member of the global family of nation-states. Azikiwe believed that an indigenous university would transform Nigeria into a continental hub for learning, intellectual emancipation, and development.

#### *Azikiwe’s University and Mass Education*

The idea of a university had grown in prestige since the war of 1958 and the tumult of 1959. Efforts to challenge Azikiwe over the University’s location had largely failed. Ikoku and Eyo were outvoted in Aba by a large margin, and Mbadiwe’s group received little support.; word spread among the anti-NCNC press that Mbadiwe’s home would be targeted by NCNC partisans.<sup>1459</sup> Azikiwe may never become Prime Minister, but his lifelong of a dream of a local university would be actualized. The University, A. E. Afigbo observed, “was like his [Azikiwe’s] child.”<sup>1460</sup>

Azikiwe’s university aspired to a “Puerto Rico pace” of enrollment, incorporative of all skill levels. Meanwhile, in 1958, the University College, Ibadan had accepted 900 students, a paltry fraction of overall applicants with “quality over quantity.”<sup>1461</sup> American hands drew on the standard anti-colonial critique: it made no efforts to weight its admissions in subjects according to “their relative importance to Nigeria.”<sup>1462</sup> Competitive examinations also filtered out the vast majority of students permanently: few students had the opportunity to rectify their testing

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<sup>1458</sup> Leon G. Dorros, Telegram, March 21, 1960, Central Decimal File, Box 1698, Folder 560, National Archives II, College Park, Maryland.

<sup>1459</sup> “NCNC Plans attack on Mbadiwe’s House at Aba,” *Eastern Nigeria Observer*, December 15, 1959, 1.

<sup>1460</sup> A.E. Afigbo, interview with Wineth Wineth Nkechi Obi, June 16, 1999, UNN Bachelor’s Theses, Nnamdi Azikiwe Library, UNN

<sup>1461</sup> *The British Commonwealth Yearbook* (London: MacGibbon and Kee, 1959), 255.

<sup>1462</sup> John K. Emerson, “Nigerianization Continues to Smolder as an Important Issue in Nigerian Politics,” May 16, 1960, Central Decimal File, Box 1698, Folder 560, National Archives II, College Park, Maryland.

deficiencies.<sup>1463</sup> Nigerianization, the Sydney Phillipson-S. O. Adebo Commission found in 1954, could not be realized without a nation-wide “lowering of standards.”<sup>1464</sup> The Commission called for a four-member Public Service committed to ensuring Nigerian-preferential hiring practices across the board, concluding “no expatriate should be appointed on pensionable terms unless the Public Service is satisfied that no suitable Nigerian is available” (underline in original).<sup>1465</sup>

Even while fraught with expatriate influence, the hope for a university spread throughout Nsukka Division. Although costly in tax dollars, Azikiwe promised that the University would not only provide education but also, amenities: water, electricity, roads, and food.<sup>1466</sup> The possibility of employment was an attractive one—and white expatriates seemed to hold those prospects. In 1957, a jobless worker asked a British broadcaster, Elwyn Evans, for financial assistance: “I am dying of everything also worries in my mind every day and night. . . I have my Standard Six certificate and all evidence which can prove me in every way.”<sup>1467</sup> One day, a “twisted and legless leper” in Oji approached British IUC official, Dr. Donald G. Burns, then overseeing university operations.<sup>1468</sup> When he came within arm’s length, the leper “insisted on shaking hands” with Burns “because he ‘had read about Nsukka in the newspapers.’”<sup>1469</sup> Burns reported that it had become a “common but embarrassing experience to be stopped by villagers. . . crowding round to shake hands and say, ‘Welcome, you have come to help us’— a translation of

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<sup>1463</sup> John K. Emerson, “Nigerianization Continues to Smolder as an Important Issue in Nigerian Politics,” May 16, 1960, Central Decimal File, Box 1698, Folder 560, National Archives II, College Park, Maryland.

<sup>1464</sup> John K. Emerson, “Nigerianization Continues to Smolder as an Important Issue in Nigerian Politics,” May 16, 1960, Central Decimal File, Box 1698, Folder 560, National Archives II, College Park, Maryland.

<sup>1465</sup> John K. Emerson, “Nigerianization Continues to Smolder as an Important Issue in Nigerian Politics,” May 16, 1960, Central Decimal File, Box 1698, Folder 560, National Archives II, College Park, Maryland.

<sup>1466</sup> Donald G. Burns, “Progress Report on the University of Nigeria, Nsukka,” BW 90/606, National Archives-Kew.

<sup>1467</sup> Charles Anunobison, Letter to Elwyn Evans, August 13, 1957, Nigerian Broadcasting Company Papers, Rhodes House.

<sup>1468</sup> Donald G. Burns, “Progress Report on the University of Nigeria, Nsukka,” BW 90/606, National Archives-Kew.

<sup>1469</sup> Donald G. Burns, “Progress Report on the University of Nigeria, Nsukka,” BW 90/606, National Archives-Kew.

“*Nnọ, unu biala ga-enye anyi aka?*” frequently a euphemism for financial assistance.<sup>1470</sup> For the average Nigerian, life was more desperate than nationalistic.

On September 14, 1960, key players from the British higher educational establishment convened at SOAS in London to discuss “the present state of the University.”<sup>1471</sup> Included at the meeting was the dismal Professor Tredernnick, the anxiety-ridden C. T. Ingold, and the skeptical John F. Lockwood, all of whom had expressed abiding “misgivings” about the wisdom of the Nsukka project.<sup>1472</sup> Taggart assured them that “accommodation for the majority of the students is already available” and that “it is expected that sufficient staff housing will be available.”<sup>1473</sup> Of the 1,200 applications received, 275 (with 40 women, they took care to note) were accepted.<sup>1474</sup> The “difficulties in providing services,” Taggart and his British colleague, Donald G. Burns, felt had been “overcome.”<sup>1475</sup> The British considered Nsukka to be a looming disaster—one that would surely undermine their cherished educational legacy.

### *The University’s Opening*

The University opened its doors on October 12, 1960, badly funded and poorly organized, an inauspicious beginning to the university intended to represent a bright and illustrious future for the Nigerian nation-state. Princess Alexandra attended the festivities.

<sup>1476</sup>The *New York Herald Tribune* found the Nsukka milieu to be a study in contrasts:

Bare-breasted Nigeria women on their way to market with bundles on their head still wander across the campus. . . On one side of the hill huddles the village of dried mud huts with thatched roofs.

Meanwhile, “on the other side stretches the 1,000 acre campus with modern buildings of cement

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<sup>1470</sup> Donald G. Burns, “Progress Report on the University of Nigeria, Nsukka,” BW 90/606, National Archives-Kew.

<sup>1471</sup> R. Eustace, Letter to Glen L. Taggart, September 5, 1960, Box 49, Folder 16, Hannah Papers.

<sup>1472</sup> R. Eustace, Letter to Glen L. Taggart, September 5, 1960, Box 49, Folder 16, Hannah Papers.

<sup>1473</sup> Meeting Minutes, SOAS, September 14, 1960, National Archives-Kew.

<sup>1474</sup> Meeting Minutes, SOAS, September 14, 1960, National Archives-Kew.

<sup>1475</sup> Meeting Minutes, SOAS, September 14, 1960, National Archives-Kew.

<sup>1476</sup> “Nigeria University Opening Today,” *The Times*, October 10, 1960, 10.



blocks and glass, steel skeletons of others still rising and the playing fields and scaffolding of a stadium that will seat 3,000 people.<sup>1477</sup>

The Nsukka soil served well for the university's clay blocks.<sup>1478</sup> With blueprints designed by James Cubitt and Partners, a British firm that specialized in West African architecture, the University's campus had hopes of being comparable to Mexico City's "university city."<sup>1479</sup> Azikiwe promised that all staff members would each have private housing units.<sup>1480</sup> President Hannah spoke at the University's opening convocation, celebrating MSU's emphasis on community-centered education:

It is to the eternal credit of Nigeria as it takes its place in the international community of nations that one of its first official acts was to open this center of learning and to pledge that it shall forever be the handmaiden of the people who have created it.<sup>1481</sup>

Taking note of the "continuous flow of foot traffic," Andrew McGill of the *Detroit News*, while visiting the University, was struck at how "much of the continent is on foot."<sup>1482</sup> In spite of its framing as a distinctively "Nigerian" university, UNN was more commonly understood to be a project for integrating Nigeria into the Western dominant markets—more a Westernizing mission than a Nigerianizing one. The University, the Americans insisted, was for "tasks of nation-building," a philosophy which "set the tone" and "set the pace" and was the "essence of the University of Nigeria."<sup>1483</sup> Building, in this instance, meant the building of a nation-state akin to Western nation-states.

Hannah celebrated the perceived commonalities between Nigeria and the United States: a

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<sup>1477</sup> "Nigeria Builds a University on Palm Oil," *New York Herald Tribune*, December 10, 1961, 17.

<sup>1478</sup> "The University of Nigeria," *Architectural Review* 125, no. 745 (February 1, 1959): 133-134.

<sup>1479</sup> "The University of Nigeria," *Architectural Review* 125, no. 745 (February 1, 1959): 132.

<sup>1480</sup> "The University of Nigeria," *Architectural Review* 125, no. 745 (February 1, 1959): 132.

<sup>1481</sup> John A. Hannah, "The University and the Nation," October 12, 1960, Box 50, Folder 62, Hannah Papers.

<sup>1482</sup> Andrew McGill, "Education is a Tool," *Muskegon Chronicle*, March 15, 1963, 6.

<sup>1483</sup> George Axinn, Interview with Peter Ezeocha, 149.

“rich tradition of respect for law and order, of fairness in inter-personal relationships of belief in the indestructible dignity of the individual, of insistence on a government of law, not of men.”<sup>1484</sup> He credited their values to the common English heritage: “This was a legacy from our early relationships with England” and Nigeria could “count such a legacy among your national assets.”<sup>1485</sup> This University would bestow “respect for all legitimate human activities as worthy of the most intense and lofty scholarly attention.”<sup>1486</sup> If Nigeria would “grow and prosper,” then “all work must be dignified.”<sup>1487</sup> The University housed several British staff members: J. B. Fleming, a Scottish accountant, Father B. J. Russell, an Irish lecturer in mathematics, Miss M. Christian, an India-trained physical education instructor, and Lt. Col. E.C. Alderton, former Permanent Secretary to the Minister of Internal Affairs.<sup>1488</sup>

The ongoing presence of past colonizers presented political problems for the university community. Intended to be an explicitly anti-colonial institution, the University made for a strange home to British educators committed to using British education as the reference point; for them, Nsukka was a barely tolerable passion project.

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<sup>1484</sup> John Hannah, Speech, October 12, 1960, Box 50, Folder 62, Hannah Papers.

<sup>1485</sup> John Hannah, Speech, October 12, 1960, Box 50, Folder 62, Hannah Papers.

<sup>1486</sup> John Hannah, Speech, October 12, 1960, Box 50, Folder 62, Hannah Papers.

<sup>1487</sup> John Hannah, Speech, October 12, 1960, Box 50, Folder 62, Hannah Papers.

<sup>1488</sup> *Annual Report, 1958-1960*, 8-9; E.C. Alderton, “Developments in Local Government in the Eastern Region of Nigeria,” *Journal of African Administration* 8, no. 4 (1956): 169.



Figure 12: UNN's Presidential Lodge, University of Nigeria Nsukka, 1960. Courtesy of Michigan State University Archives.

*Azikiwe, Wright, and the Erosion of British Influence at UNN*

In early 1960, Peter Strethill Wright, a 44-year-old veteran of British colonial service and secretary to the Inter-University Council, accompanied MSU official Troy L. Stearns to oversee the Nsukka project.<sup>1489</sup> Born in Essex, Wright had been trained at Exeter College in history with a Master's at Oxford. Following his degree, traversed the imperial holdings from Africa to India and back as an education official.<sup>1490</sup> He had taught history at Kanpur College from 1937 to 1939

<sup>1489</sup> John Hanson, *Education, Nsukka: A Study in Institution-Building Among the Ibo* (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1968), 21.

<sup>1490</sup> "Teacher Gets His Notice," *Daily Mail*, November 13, 1952, 5.

and served in Delhi as an intelligence officer during the war as a press manipulator.<sup>1491</sup>

Following the Indian Partition in 1948, he oversaw a Muslim refugee camp until he came to Kenya in 1950 to run the Indian Modern School for Girls in Nairobi.<sup>1492</sup> A bachelor with a taste for “the colonies,” Wright felt comfortable traversing the imperial landscape: from India to Kenya to India and Nigeria, then back again.<sup>1493</sup>

Eager to learn about local problems and society, he frequented a biracial club, the United Kenya Club and became its hospitality secretary.<sup>1494</sup> Wright aspired to establishing co-operatives, schools, and perhaps, a multi-racial University College in Nairobi in honor of Mahatma Ghandi.<sup>1495</sup> He cavorted with rising Kenyan nationalist journalists and politicians such as F. O. Odede, Joseph Murumbi, and W. W. W. Awori.<sup>1496</sup> Sir Oliver Lyttleton, the Secretary of State for the Colonies after whom one of Nigeria’s constitutions was named, reported that Wright had been “highly critical of the colonial policies” in Kenya, which earned him a warning from the Director of Education.<sup>1497</sup> Authorities also told him to distance himself from the University College project.<sup>1498</sup>

In June 1952, Wright learned that one of the meetings would be chaired by Jomo Kenyatta.<sup>1499</sup> Initially, Wright demurred; Kenyatta’s presence would inevitably render the meeting political in nature. He told Lyttleton that he only “allowed [him]self to be persuaded” on

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<sup>1491</sup> “Mau Mau Oath Ceremonies,” *The Times* [London], November 10, 1952, 4; “Kenya Arrests Shock MP,” *Daily Mail*, November 10, 1952, 2.

<sup>1492</sup> “Mau Mau Oath Ceremonies,” *The Times* [London], November 10, 1952, 4; “Kenya Arrests Shock MP,” *Daily Mail*, November 10, 1952, 2.

<sup>1493</sup> “Teacher Gets His Notice,” *Daily Mail*, November 13, 1952, 5.

<sup>1494</sup> “Mr. Peter Wright Protests,” *Manchester Guardian*, November 9, 1952, 10.

<sup>1495</sup> “Mr. Peter Wright Protests,” *Manchester Guardian*, November 9, 1952, 10.

<sup>1496</sup> Pio Gama Pinto, *Glimpses of Kenya’s Nationalist Struggle* (Nairobi: Asian African Heritage Trust, 1963), 20.

<sup>1497</sup> House of Commons Proceedings, November 26, 1952

<sup>1498</sup> “MR PETER WRIGHT: Denies Accusation of Improper Conduct,” *South China Morning Post*, November 20, 1952, 10.

<sup>1499</sup> “Mr. Wright’s Kenya Activities: Statement to Colonial Secretary,” *The Times* [London], November 19, 1952, 6.

the condition that he “take no part in the discussions and could be no more than an observer.”<sup>1500</sup>

The meeting was insubstantial, Wright assured him; once Wright arrived, Kenyatta made it clear that Wright was not wanted there.<sup>1501</sup> The meeting was held the next day, but Wright did not attend.<sup>1502</sup> In September, he lobbied local African and Indian news outlets to oppose the imposition of strict surveillance measures such as curfews and collective penalties for breach of regulations.<sup>1503</sup> A few weeks later, A. Margaret Wright (no relation), was stabbed in Thika, some miles outside of Nairobi; she had written her sister, D. Gainsborough, of “servant trouble.”<sup>1504</sup>

A month later, the Colonial regime launched Operation Jock Scott, a summary arrest of Gikūyū agitators whom they labeled as “Mau Mau”: in actuality, the Land and Freedom Movement.<sup>1505</sup> In a search of Wright’s home, they found a list of “Political Advisors” with his initials, five of whom would be detained. Wright’s list provided important evidence. The list provided an actionable lead in charging Kenyatta with “managing, or assisting in the management of the Mau Mau society.”<sup>1506</sup> Kenyatta was transported to the grazing lands of Lokitaung, four miles away from Nairobi.<sup>1507</sup> Historian Caroline Elkins writes that there “simply could not have been a more remote or inhospitable spot in Kenya.”<sup>1508</sup> Lyttleton determined that Wright had been in “active association” with Kenyatta and other Land and Freedom “Mau Mau” militants mounting attacks on local chieftaincies and British authorities.<sup>1509</sup>

As a civil servant, Wright was prohibited from political participation. Lyttleton

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<sup>1500</sup> “Mr. Wright’s Kenya Activities: Statement to Colonial Secretary,” *The Times* [London], November 19, 1952, 6.

<sup>1501</sup> “Mr. Wright’s Kenya Activities: Statement to Colonial Secretary,” *The Times* [London], November 19, 1952, 6.

<sup>1502</sup> “Mr. Wright’s Kenya Activities: Statement to Colonial Secretary,” *The Times* [London], November 19, 1952, 6.

<sup>1503</sup> Caroline Elkins, *Imperial Reckoning* (New York: Henry Holt, 2005), Kindle 761.

<sup>1504</sup> “Wife of Kenya Civil Servant Killed,” *The Times* [London], October 6, 1952, 4; “The Wife Who Was Murdered,” *Daily Mail*, October 7, 1952, 5.

<sup>1505</sup> Caroline Elkins, *Imperial Reckoning*, Location 822-831.

<sup>1506</sup> *House of Commons Proceedings*, November 26, 1952.

<sup>1507</sup> Caroline Elkins, *Imperial Reckoning*, Kindle Location 827.

<sup>1508</sup> Caroline Elkins, *Imperial Reckoning*, Kindle Location 827.

<sup>1509</sup> *House of Commons Debates*, November 26, 1952.

acknowledged that “judicial process should normally be obligatory,” but Lyttleton determined that “public interest would not permit the delay involved by an inquiry or appeal.”<sup>1510</sup> The Colonial government labeled Wright as a “prohibited immigrant” under Section 5 (1) (f) of the Immigration Ordinance and was deported. Eirene White of East Flintshire considered the whole affair a “preposterous way” of handling intra-Colonial British immigration.<sup>1511</sup> Wright protested that denying him a hearing was an “extraordinarily drastic measure” that was “wholly unjustifiable.”<sup>1512</sup> He was never given a direct explanation for his termination and deportation.<sup>1513</sup> Wright eschewed both “violence and subversive activity” and only sought “social and economic development” through “interracial cooperation.”<sup>1514</sup> When he arrived at Heathrow on November 14, he told the *Times* that he “did not learn what I [Wright] was supposed to have done until this morning, when I saw the newspapers.”<sup>1515</sup> He denied possessing the “Political Advisers List” or that he knew any “Mau Mau”—and made it a point to underscore that he “certainly was not a Communist, nor did he know any.”<sup>1516</sup>

When Wright came to Nsukka, his management annoyed the Americans. Azikiwe’s plans for water infrastructure had stalled, and Wright did little to help the Americans furnish—or, for that matter, acquire—their accommodations. As of September 30, no regular water supply was available at the University.<sup>1517</sup> John Hanson, an MSU education professor complained that Azikiwe and the MSU advisors had pushed for the university’s expansion “come hell or high

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<sup>1510</sup> House of Commons Debates, November 26, 1952.

<sup>1511</sup> House of Commons Debates, November 26, 1952.

<sup>1512</sup> “Expelled Teacher Sends Protest Letter to Mr. Lyttleton,” *Daily Mail*, November 19, 1952, 5.

<sup>1513</sup> “Expelled Teacher Sends Protest Letter to Mr. Lyttleton,” *Daily Mail*, November 19, 1952, 5.

<sup>1514</sup> “Mr. Wright’s Kenya Activities: Statement to Colonial Secretary,” *The Times* [London], November 19, 1952, 6.

<sup>1515</sup> “Mr. Peter Wright in London,” *The Times*, November 15, 1952, 6; “Mr. Peter Wright Demands a Full Public Inquiry,” *Manchester Guardian*, December 1, 1952, 10.

<sup>1516</sup> “Mr. Peter Wright in London,” *The Times*, November 15, 1952, 6; “Mr. Peter Wright Demands a Full Public Inquiry,” *Manchester Guardian*, December 1, 1952, 10.

<sup>1517</sup> Annual Report, 1958-1960, 12.

water (or no water, which proved to be the case.”<sup>1518</sup> Wright had been billing Nsukka’s as a “privilege.”<sup>1519</sup> The housing shortage dispirited Hanson. Staff hands were attempting to move MSU professors from the temporary shelters into the homes at an increased pace, even when homes had not been completed. In one instance, Hanson complained, “I don’t think there was even a bed in the house.”<sup>1520</sup> Hanson continued that they had “plenty of standards around here—standards of every kind except those of human decency.”<sup>1521</sup> Hanson accused Wright of widespread neglect; while Wright managed to locate a gas refrigerator for his home, he otherwise held that staff “must scrounge for ourselves—and the devil take those who don’t have influence through purchasing or hiring power.”<sup>1522</sup>

Johnson complained that the Provisional Council had little understanding of how to administer a budget, and the building contract problems “are beyond my competence to cope with.”<sup>1523</sup> Taggart sympathized with Johnson: “in spite of the fact that you are having one crisis after another,” Taggart felt reassured that Johnson and his staff “are well.”<sup>1524</sup> Johnson’s pipeline of crises seemed overwhelming to most observers. Registrar Horace King admitted that Johnson “has almost more problems than he can handle right now.”<sup>1525</sup>

Of complaints such as Hanson’s, King wondered if they “lacked a dedicated purpose to the University of Nigeria” with an excessive fixation “on their personal problems.”<sup>1526</sup> In the meantime, the Carnegie Corporation’s Alan Pifer had made it his mission to dismantle UNN top-

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<sup>1518</sup> John Hanson, Letter, October 4, 1960, Box 183, Folder 73, UNN Project Papers.

<sup>1519</sup> John Hanson, Letter, October 4, 1960, Box 183, Folder 73, UNN Project Papers.

<sup>1520</sup> John Hanson, Letter, October 4, 1960, Box 183, Folder 73, UNN Project Papers.

<sup>1521</sup> John Hanson, Letter, October 4, 1960, Box 183, Folder 73, UNN Project Papers.

<sup>1522</sup> John Hanson, Letter, October 4, 1960, Box 183, Folder 73, UNN Project Papers.

<sup>1523</sup> George M. Johnson, Letter to Glen L. Taggart, October 20, 1960, Box 183, Folder 73, UNN Project Papers.

<sup>1524</sup> Glen L. Taggart, Letter to George M. Johnson, October 28, 1960, Box 49, Folder 16, Hannah Papers,

<sup>1525</sup> Horace King, Letter to Glen L. Taggart, January 20, 1961, Box 49, Folder 17, Hannah Papers.

<sup>1526</sup> Horace King, Letter to Glen L. Taggart, January 20, 1961, Box 49, Folder 17, Hannah Papers.

to-bottom from within Nigeria itself.<sup>1527</sup> In virtually every conversation with people of influence in Enugu, Education professor Horace King reported, Pifer “preached this same negative story”: that Azikiwe’s influence was lowering academic standards and constricting academic freedom.<sup>1528</sup> A major problem of the University of Nigeria, Taggart wrote Hannah, was Azikiwe’s tendency to take “unilateral action. . . to expand the university in every way that he can as rapidly as he can.”<sup>1529</sup> Pifer’s warnings held sway: UNN received a total of 3,540 pounds from Carnegie between 1958 and 1960.<sup>1530</sup>

MSU contracts afforded MSU the right of overseership, with Azikiwe’s blessing. And thus, construction continued apace. By 1961, there were only a few buildings on campus: the Faculty of Education as well as Okpara, Russwurm, and Balewa Halls.<sup>1531</sup> Shortly thereafter, the Nnamdi Azikiwe Library was built, albeit hastily and without a clear blue print.<sup>1532</sup> J. B. C. Anyake, another early alum, noted that “the roads were yet being constructed” and that the site “was only grassland” without trees or bushes.<sup>1533</sup> Students often walked through “whirlwinds” of dust on their way to classes.<sup>1534</sup> Mansfield, the supervising architect, and Azikiwe were not on speaking terms, and Johnson expected “fireworks” at the forthcoming Provisional Council meeting in February.<sup>1535</sup> The 9<sup>th</sup> mile road became the channel for electrical lines. By September 1960, the lines had been built, but the equipment necessary to connect the lines to the University

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<sup>1527</sup> Horace King, Letter to Glen L. Taggart, January 20, 1961, Box 49, Folder 17, Hannah Papers.

<sup>1528</sup> Horace King, Letter to Glen L. Taggart, January 20, 1961, Box 49, Folder 17, Hannah Papers.

<sup>1529</sup> Glen L. Taggart, Letter to John A. Hannah, May 5, 1961, Box 49, Folder 18, Hannah Papers.

<sup>1530</sup> Annual Report, 1958-1960, Appendix A.

<sup>1531</sup> Emmanuel N. Obiechina, *The University of Nigeria, 1960-1985: An Experiment in Higher Education* (Nsukka: University of Nigeria Press, 1986), 374.

<sup>1532</sup> “Planning Sub-Committee on the Case for the Re-Development of the University,” Report on Meeting, December 6, 1975, Nnamdi Azikiwe Library.

<sup>1533</sup> J.B.C. Anyake, Interview with Wineth Nkechi Obi, July 26, 1999, 81.

<sup>1534</sup> J.B.C. Anyake, Interview with Wineth Nkechi Obi, July 26, 1999, 81.

<sup>1535</sup> George M. Johnson, Letter to Glen L. Taggart, November 21, 1960, Box 49, Folder 16, Hannah Papers.



had not been delivered.<sup>1536</sup>

In June 1960, the University commissioned the Eastern Region Water and Construction Company to build a 150,000 gallon water reservoir through a series of boreholes connecting to the University.<sup>1537</sup> The Works Ministry replaced petrol water pumps with diesel pumps, with “every assurance” offered that “permanent pumps” would be forthcoming.<sup>1538</sup> When the campus found that a single postal agent and a slot was insufficient, they lobbied the Ministry of Communication to build a postal branch office in Nsukka. While they agreed, a report acknowledged that “it is difficult to say when construction would start.”<sup>1539</sup>

Azikiwe was not the only university planner to have grand designs of an industrial-scale university. This sense of the self-sufficient University-As-All Things had gained traction among Western architectural firms. In Clark Kerr’s famed volume, *The Uses of the University*, this university was more properly described as a “multiversity”: a sprawling multiplex with diverse departments “called to merge its activities with industry in an unprecedented way.”<sup>1540</sup> Founded in 1962, the Ruhr-Universität Bochum boasted 25,000 students with architects pitching plans that would subsume vast swaths of the Bochum hills.<sup>1541</sup> Aldo Rossi in Italy advocated for a similar model with “shopping centres, universities, cultural centres and public buildings [that] will. . . all be the monuments of a wider metropolitan territory that will be marked by an impressive public transport network capable of augmenting and multiplying movement, contacts and the participation of everyman in the spirit of the new city.”<sup>1542</sup> In Calabria, the University of

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<sup>1536</sup> Annual Report, 1958-1960, 11.

<sup>1537</sup> Annual Report, 1958-1960, 11.

<sup>1538</sup> “News About the University of Nigeria, Nsukka for the Months of February and March, 1961,” Box 49, Folder 17, Hannah Papers.

<sup>1539</sup> Annual Report, 1963-1964, 40.

<sup>1540</sup> Clark Kerr, *The Uses of the University* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1963), 106.

<sup>1541</sup> Aldo Rossi, ‘Nuovi Problemi’, *Casabella*, no 264 (1962): 2-7.

<sup>1542</sup> Aldo Rossi, ‘Nuovi Problemi’, *Casabella*, no 264 (1962): 2-7.

Calabria, Milan Polytechnic lecturer, Guido Canella, imagined a university that not only included classrooms and administration halls but training centers and extensions at local schools.<sup>1543</sup> However, Calabria ultimately adopted a British model, as a residential university with assigned colleges; its isolated nature demanded self-sufficiency.<sup>1544</sup>

UNN lived up to none of these models. Yet, the University had hardly been self-sufficient. The capital available in 1960 totaled 2,500,000 pounds—all of which had been exacted from palm production and consumption.<sup>1545</sup> Expenditures exceeded the capital by 10,562.<sup>1546</sup> The University was not only constructing buildings but also, new kinds of institutions and linkages. The Americans supposed that the Igbo were experimenting in “institution-building” to be neither “British nor American in scope” but “directed toward the task of building a nation and its people.”<sup>1547</sup> Nathaniel Opubor observed that UNN’s “original idea” was “to build an institution,” to “creat[e] human beings.” Opubor was imagining the university as an institution capable of making *mmadu* (trans. “the goodness of life” or “the spirit becomes incarnate”)—a metaphysical articulation of a university’s goals, in which ideas and visions found mortal receptacles.<sup>1548</sup>

In July 1963, the Provisional Council became a formalized University Council with its first meeting in London, under the chairmanship of Dr. Okechukwu Ikejiani—Azikiwe’s old Toronto colleague with “reportedly strong Communist views.”<sup>1549</sup> Yet, the University Senate contained only 20% Nigerian component; Johnson wanted it to be at least 50%.<sup>1550</sup> Carnegie

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<sup>1543</sup> Aldo Rossi, 'Nuovi Problemi', *Casabella*, no 264 (1962): 2-7.

<sup>1544</sup> Aldo Rossi, 'Nuovi Problemi', *Casabella*, no 264 (1962): 2-7.

<sup>1545</sup> *University of Nigeria, Nsukka*, Annual Report, 1958-1960, Appendix A.

<sup>1546</sup> *University of Nigeria, Nsukka*, Annual Report, 1958-1960, Appendix A.

<sup>1547</sup> “Staff Development and Human Relations Training Center,” Red. September 22, 1964, Box 187, Folder 288, UNN Project Papers.

<sup>1548</sup> Nathaniel Opubor, Interview with Ezeocha, 176.

<sup>1549</sup> Annual Report, University of Nigeria, Nsukka, 1963-1964, 3.

<sup>1550</sup> Annual Report, University of Nigeria, Nsukka, 1963-1964, 3.

Corporation still would not offer much direct support to the University, preferring instead to contribute 104,000 dollars to the National Committee of Vice Chancellors—an indirect contribution, at best.<sup>1551</sup>

The University was fast running out of tax money, and Azikiwe was exacerbating it through his expansive measures.<sup>1552</sup> When the Bursar questioned Azikiwe’s oversized budget, Azikiwe supposed his bursar, a Brit, had allegiance to the Crown rather than Nsukka; Johnson had to ensure him that the Bursar was “thoroughly honest and loyal.”<sup>1553</sup> Ibadan had spent its first five years in debt, Azikiwe was quick to tell people.<sup>1554</sup> He was “firm”—the plan for expansion would continue.<sup>1555</sup>

When questioned, Azikiwe interrogated loyalty. Ralph Smuckler warned Taggart that UNN’s status as a *regional* university would limit possibilities and “may pose problems in gaining resources from US foundations and from others who might lean in the direction of the established national university rather than the newer regional institutions.”<sup>1556</sup> Two days later, Hannah echoed the same concerns, although in tones milder than Bernstein: “We need to know, in the not too distant future, the approximate level of continuing annual financial support” the University would receive for fixed, recurring expenses—and particularly, how much would come through indigenous sources.<sup>1557</sup> The Nigerian National Universities Commission shared their concern: “Of course,” Johnson acknowledged to Hannah, “they are concerned about where the money is coming from.”<sup>1558</sup>

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<sup>1551</sup> Annual Report, University of Nigeria, Nsukka, 1963-1964, 3.

<sup>1552</sup> George M. Johnson, Letter to John A. Hannah, April 19, 1961, Box 49, Folder 18, Hannah Papers.

<sup>1553</sup> George M. Johnson, Letter to John A. Hannah, April 19, 1961, Box 49, Folder 18, Hannah Papers.

<sup>1554</sup> George M. Johnson, Letter to John A. Hannah, April 19, 1961, Box 49, Folder 18, Hannah Papers.

<sup>1555</sup> George M. Johnson, Letter to John A. Hannah, April 19, 1961, Box 49, Folder 18, Hannah Papers.

<sup>1556</sup> Ralph Smuckler, Letter to Glen L. Taggart, March 19, 1963, Box 177A, Folder 46, UNN Project Papers.

<sup>1557</sup> John A. Hannah, Letter to Nnamdi Azikiwe, March 21, 1963, Box 49, Folder 22, Hannah Papers.

<sup>1558</sup> George M. Johnson, Letter to John A. Hannah, May 6, 1963, Box 49, Folder 22, Hannah Papers.

Contractors completed laying several roads within the University campus—seven out of eight by May 1961.<sup>1559</sup> George Axinn felt relieved to see that the Nsukka group was “over the hump” where “merely keeping alive from day to day and meeting family demands constituted a considerable drain on energies.”<sup>1560</sup> With a 124 blocks of flats and bungalows coupled with 36 additional university-related blocks, the library, and 60 junior staff houses underway, it seemed more of a construction site than a university.<sup>1561</sup> Axinn celebrated the “throngs of construction workers—pushing up buildings as if by magic—so that even daily growth was visible.”<sup>1562</sup> The underlying assumption for both Azikiwe and the Americans was that the University infrastructure would benefit Nsukka at-large.<sup>1563</sup> The facilities pleased anyone with an eye for “modern” universities in the West: with a 30,000-person stadium, four football fields, 12 tennis courts, and one golf course under construction, the University appeared to resemble the full-service university system that American universities had pioneered.<sup>1564</sup> The University infrastructure also expanded city bureaucracy.<sup>1565</sup> The Town Planning ministry established an “Nsukka Town Planning authority” to prevent squatting throughout the University estate and to ensure that the University developed “in a rational manner.”<sup>1566</sup> The Ministry expropriated an additional 1,000 acres of land for university use.<sup>1567</sup>

Even as Hanson kvetched about the water and electricity, he had been situating the UNN vision against the broader vision of Land Grant Philosophy. Horace King was not entirely right

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<sup>1559</sup> “News about the University of Nigeria, Nsukka for the Months of February and March, 1961,” Box 49, Folder 17, Hannah Papers.

<sup>1560</sup> George Axinn, Letter to John Hannah, May 1, 1961, Box 49, Folder 17, Hannah Papers.

<sup>1561</sup> Annual Report, 1958-1960, 10.

<sup>1562</sup> George Axinn, Letter to John Hannah, May 1, 1961, Box 49, Folder 17, Hannah Papers.

<sup>1563</sup> Annual Report, 1958-1960, 12.

<sup>1564</sup> Annual Report, 1958-1960, 12.

<sup>1565</sup> Annual Report, 1958-1960, 12.

<sup>1566</sup> Annual Report, 1958-1960, 12.

<sup>1567</sup> Annual Report, 1958-1960, 12.

in his assessment: faculty such as Hanson *were* dedicated to the broader land grant vision. On February 21, Hanson produced “Plans for the Development of the College of Education, University of Nigeria.”<sup>1568</sup> Taggart was thrilled: the document “represents a real landmark in the development of the University of Nigeria” and offered evidence that the faculty had started to plan out a long-range vision for the University.<sup>1569</sup> Hanson and his colleagues had produced “one of the best statements” Taggart had seen “translating the land grant college philosophy into action through a rather specific plan.”<sup>1570</sup> In 1966, Johnson wrote that the University encouraged students to “spurn the *élite* role of social parasites” preferring instead to “elect careers of service to the country and its people.”<sup>1571</sup>

Hanson placed global integration at the center of his plan: developing student at faculty exchange programs for linking the University of Nigeria with the global intellectual community. Such a plan could produce a “high quality University” that is “broader in outlook” and “less provincial in its contacts.”<sup>1572</sup> Hanson acknowledged in retrospect that they “did more planning and accomplished less” than he had hoped.<sup>1573</sup> Hanson’s team argued that the College of Education should support two priorities: 1. the production of a cohort of “excellent” teachers and 2. “research that lends itself to solving the problems of the society.”<sup>1574</sup> In curating his land grant vision, he convened a seminar drawing largely on Nigerian residents: “not many from out of the country.”<sup>1575</sup> He also “shifted the focus partly away from just the profession” and focused on the

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<sup>1568</sup> Glen L. Taggart, Letter to George M. Johnson, March 14, 1961, Box 49, Folder 17, Hannah Papers.

<sup>1569</sup> Glen L. Taggart, Letter to George M. Johnson, March 14, 1961, Box 49, Folder 17, Hannah Papers.

<sup>1570</sup> Glen L. Taggart, Letter to George M. Johnson, March 14, 1961, Box 49, Folder 17, Hannah Papers.

<sup>1571</sup> George M. Johnson, “The University of Nigeria,” in *New Universities in the Modern World*, 87.

<sup>1572</sup> Glen L. Taggart, Letter to John Hanson, March 14, 1961, Box 49, Folder 17, Hannah Papers.

<sup>1573</sup> John L. Hanson, Interview with Peter Ezeocha, 151.

<sup>1574</sup> “Plans for the Development of the College of Education, University of Nigeria,” Box 49, Folder 17, Hannah Papers.

<sup>1575</sup> “Plans for the Development of the College of Education, University of Nigeria,” Box 49, Folder 17, Hannah Papers.

“ultimate consumers of our products”: federal ministries, industries, and churches.<sup>1576</sup> While they did not establish a consensus, they collected “all kinds of ideas from all kinds of people.”<sup>1577</sup> If the University of Nigeria was to provide an education for the general population, who, exactly, would be appropriating their training? They elicited responses from clergy, industry, and educators alike.<sup>1578</sup> Taggart asked for a dozen copies: he wanted to ensure that Hansons’ plan received wide reception.<sup>1579</sup> “Any means by which man earns his bread,” Sheldon Cherney wrote, “is considered worthy of research and worthy of teaching.”<sup>1580</sup>

Yet, contrary to popular belief, the University of Nigeria was not, by law, a “land grant” university. Later, T. K. Cowden, an MSU agricultural professor, interrogated the University’s *raison d’être*. Given that it is intended to educate a largely agrarian country, the University housed but “one small building” dedicated to agriculture, with relatively few faculty members.<sup>1581</sup> “Does this university really have the seeds of the land-grant college philosophy—that of service to people, or is it just a slogan to be used when convenient? . . . Is academic prestige an idol to be bowed to rather than of being service to people?”<sup>1582</sup> By 1963, W. W. Armistead, visiting from Michigan State University on a brief visit, complained that the agriculture program paled in comparison to what it needed to be.<sup>1583</sup>

### *A University in Expansion*

Meanwhile, the University faced a flood of Nigerian students, primarily from the Eastern

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<sup>1576</sup> “Plans for the Development of the College of Education, University of Nigeria,” Box 49, Folder 17, Hannah Papers.

<sup>1577</sup> “Plans for the Development of the College of Education, University of Nigeria,” Box 49, Folder 17, Hannah Papers.

<sup>1578</sup> Glen L. Taggart, Letter to John Hanson, March 14, 1961, Box 49, Folder 17, Hannah Papers.

<sup>1579</sup> Glen L. Taggart, Letter to John Hanson, March 14, 1961, Box 49, Folder 17, Hannah Papers.

<sup>1580</sup> Sheldon Cherney, Letter to D.M. Fitzgerald, October 31, 1961, Box 194, Folder 75, UNN Project Papers.

<sup>1581</sup> T.K. Cowden, Letter to George Johnson, August 7, 1961, Box 49, Folder 22, UNN Project Papers.

<sup>1582</sup> T.K. Cowden, Letter to George Axinn, January 16, 1963, Box 177A, Folder 44, UNN Project Papers.

<sup>1583</sup> W.W. Armistead, Letter to George Johnson, January 31, 1963, Box 49, Folder 22, Hannah papers.

region. “The students overwhelmed the university,” Hanson recalled.<sup>1584</sup> All development projects occurred simultaneously: teaching, community outreach, graduate follow-up: “We did everything at once” as a “university in a hurry.”<sup>1585</sup> Johnson facilitated the flood of students, proposing that students only needed a West African School Certificate Grade I to qualify for admission—a stark departure from the Ashby Commission’s recommendation that students complete “sixth form” work first.<sup>1586</sup> Between October 1961 and October 1964, the University of Nigeria’s student body expanded from 905 to 2,842, an increase of 174%<sup>1587</sup>. The female count grew from 82 to 208, a growth of 154%, while the male student population expanded 823 to 2274—a total growth of 176%.<sup>1588</sup> The University was expanding at a fast rate in the upper tier of West African Universities, though slower than the small University College of Science Education in Cape Coast, the University of Ghana, and the University of Ife.<sup>1589</sup> The student population reached 1,828, with 3,012 applications for the 1963/64 year alone.<sup>1590</sup> By 1964, it was clear that the University had become an Eastern university not only in its legal status but also, in its population. 1,382 of nearly 1,800 students hailed from the Eastern Region. The University claimed a comparatively negligible Northern student population, totaling 14. Indeed, there was over half that number of American students attending.

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<sup>1584</sup> John L. Hanson, Interview with Peter Ezeocha, 151-152.

<sup>1585</sup> John L. Hanson, Interview with Peter Ezeocha, 151-152.

<sup>1586</sup> George M. Johnson, Letter to Glen L. Taggart, March 2, 1961, Box 49, Folder 17, John A. Hannah Papers, MSU Archives.

<sup>1587</sup> “Growth of Student Population in Some of the West African Universities,” Box 192, Fd. 65, UNN Project Papers.

<sup>1588</sup> “Growth of Student Population in Some of the West African Universities,” Box 192, Fd. 65, UNN Project Papers.

<sup>1589</sup> “Growth of Student Population in Some of the West African Universities,” Box 192, Fd. 65, UNN Project Papers.

<sup>1590</sup> Annual Report, 1963-1964, 31.

## ENROLMENT FIGURES

	1960-1	1961-2	1962-3	1963-4
No. of men	190	832	1,123	1,682
No. of women	30	75	125	146
TOTALS	220	907	1,248	1,828

Table 1: Gender distribution of UNN students, 1963-1964.  
From George Johnson, "The University of Nigeria" (1964)

### 1963-4 Geographical distribution of Students

#### NIGERIA

Eastern Region	1,382
Western Region	207
Mid-West Region	188
Northern Region	14
Federal Territory	10
Cameroon	10
Nyasaland	2
Tchad	1
Rhodesia	1
Ghana	1
South Africa	1
U.S.A.	8
Ireland	1
Germany	1
India	1

Table 2: Regional distribution of UNN students, 1963-1964.  
From George Johnson, "The University of Nigeria" (1964)



Johnson, typically supportive of more rather than less enrollment, stood aghast as the Finance and General Purpose Committee, against the Bursar's advice, expanded the enrollment from 300 admitted students to "a total enrolment [sic] of 1000!"<sup>1591</sup> Hannah accepted the notion of an expansive university, too—but Johnson feared that the University would be vulnerable to the charge of "financial irresponsibility."<sup>1592</sup> Azikiwe presumed that once the National University Commission was formed in May 1961, they would provide a grant to his University on the basis of enrollment.<sup>1593</sup> Axinn, now shuttling back and forth between East Lansing and Nsukka every three months, credited Azikiwe's political influence for keeping hopes for financing afloat.<sup>1594</sup> Azikiwe's "personal involvement" could leverage access with both regional and federal coffers. Dr. T. O. Elias, one of Nigeria's leading barristers and a member of the Provisional Council, shook his head as he warned Johnson that Azikiwe's plan was "wishful thinking and entirely without foundation in fact."<sup>1595</sup>

Joel C. Bernstein of the International Compliance Association inquired of Azikiwe for his financial information, but Azikiwe bristled; what good was independence, after all, if he *still* had to answer to outsiders about his finances?<sup>1596</sup> Bernstein informed Azikiwe that he would be flying to Lagos to discuss the expansion plans with him.<sup>1597</sup> Azikiwe did not particularly want to hear from Johnson about his dissent, but when he heard Johnson was in Lagos, he "hastily arranged" a dinner for Johnson, himself, Bernstein, Ambassador Peace Corps Joseph Palmer and Sargent Shriver as well as Harris Wafford, a Kennedy advisor from the.<sup>1598</sup> After the meeting,

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<sup>1591</sup> George M. Johnson, Letter to John A. Hannah, April 19, 1961, Box 49, Folder 18, Hannah Papers.

<sup>1592</sup> George M. Johnson, Letter to John A. Hannah, April 19, 1961, Box 49, Folder 18, Hannah Papers.

<sup>1593</sup> George M. Johnson, Letter to Mrs. Rowland, April 25, 1961, Box 49, Folder 18, Hannah Papers.

<sup>1594</sup> George Axinn, Letter to John A. Hannah, May 1, 1961, Box 49, Folder 18, Hannah Papers.

<sup>1595</sup> George M. Johnson, Letter to Mrs. Rowland, April 25, 1961, Box 49, Folder 18, Hannah Papers.

<sup>1596</sup> George M. Johnson, Letter to John A. Hannah, April 19, 1961, Box 49, Folder 18, Hannah Papers.

<sup>1597</sup> George M. Johnson, Letter to John A. Hannah, April 19, 1961, Box 49, Folder 18, Hannah Papers.

<sup>1598</sup> George M. Johnson, Letter to Mrs. Rowland, April 25, 1961, Box 49, Folder 18, Hannah Papers.

Chukwudebe and Azikiwe “took Bernstein to task” for inquiring about financial information.<sup>1599</sup> Johnson later joked with Bernstein—to Bernstein’s dismay—that Azikiwe “seemed to feel like a newlywed who would prefer not to have his in-laws move in and live with him until after he had gotten settled down.”<sup>1600</sup>

Johnson resisted the British in other ways, too. When the British felt the University needed external examiners, they extended an offer to Principal Johnson; he rebuffed them—for a university seeking to *expand* rather than *retrench*, external examination struck him as a way of slowing down the university rather than speeding it up.<sup>1601</sup> Johnson told Joel C. Bernstein, who likely agreed with the need for external examiners, that “external examiners may not be necessary”—and he wanted to know whether “they are the only or best answers” to the question of institutional integrity.<sup>1602</sup> Johnson knew of Azikiwe’s sensitivity to external review; when the National Universities Commission became ardent about the need for some kind of accountability process, Johnson was willing, but he was not sure “what Dr. Azikiwe’s reaction will be.”<sup>1603</sup> Such uncertainty seemed to define Western powers’ relationship with the UNN project.<sup>1604</sup> The University of Nigeria, Nsukka had become an obscure theater not in a cold war battle but in a post-colonial battle between Americans, British, and Nigerians fighting for educational ascendance.

By 1967, the University claimed scholars from the United States, England, Ireland, Scotland, the Netherlands, India, and the German Democratic Republic—as well as laborers and staff from Ghana and the Philippines. Drawing on intellectual resources from a host of countries

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<sup>1599</sup> George M. Johnson, Letter to Mrs. Rowland, April 25, 1961, Box 49, Folder 18, Hannah Papers.

<sup>1600</sup> George M. Johnson, Letter to Mrs. Rowland, April 25, 1961, Box 49, Folder 18, Hannah Papers.

<sup>1601</sup> George M. Johnson, Letter to Mrs. Rowland, April 25, 1961, Box 49, Folder 18, Hannah Papers.

<sup>1602</sup> George M. Johnson, Letter to Mrs. Rowland, April 25, 1961, Box 49, Folder 18, Hannah Papers.

<sup>1603</sup> George M. Johnson, Letter to John A. Hannah, May 6, 1963, Box 49, Folder 22, Hannah Papers.

<sup>1604</sup> George M. Johnson, Letter to John A. Hannah, May 6, 1963, Box 49, Folder 22, Hannah Papers.

and ethnicities, all under the explicit aegis of Nigerian nationhood, University planners imagined a milieu in which, as F. I. E. Ukattan representative observed, a Nigerian university was “starting right on its own principles. . . without first of all tied to the apron strings of a parent university in Europe or America.”<sup>1605</sup> Ukattan was pleased to see that UNN drew “models from world standards” that also take into account the “particular needs of the people of Nigeria” and “the people of Africa as a whole.”<sup>1606</sup> Axinn envisioned that the Nigerian administration would “mix it all together with their own, you know, indigenous way and develop something uniquely appropriate to Nigeria.”<sup>1607</sup>

The University was defined by personalities more than rigid protocols and programs. Michigan State University administrator, George Axinn, cast the University-making process as one of sifting: “these foreigners are coming with their ideas. . . let's see if we can sit down—the useful from the less useful, the good from the bad and bring to Nsukka the good from each country and leave at home the bad, you know.”<sup>1608</sup> In public, the Inter-University Council, too, highlighted the seeming contradiction between UNN’s cosmopolitan atmosphere and its nationalistic purpose; UNN was a “new community of scholars” who, “while international in character,” were “dedicated to the task of building a new independent nation.”<sup>1609</sup> By October 1961, plans for an “international center type building” were underway.<sup>1610</sup>

When the British advisors arrived in 1961, they were considered to be rescue mission for the skittish British: “a crash operation,” as Tredernnick had styled it, to save Nsukka from its

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<sup>1605</sup> *Parliamentary Debates, Eastern House of Assembly, 3rd, 4th, and 5th Sessions*, December 8, 1961 (Lagos: Federal Government Printer, 1962), 214-215.

<sup>1606</sup> *Parliamentary Debates, Eastern House of Assembly, 3rd, 4th, and 5th Sessions*, December 8, 1961 (Lagos: Federal Government Printer, 1962), 214-215.

<sup>1607</sup> George Axinn, Interview with Peter Ezeocha, 307.

<sup>1608</sup> George Axinn, Interview with Peter Ezeocha, 306-307.

<sup>1609</sup> I.U.C. Press Release, December 1961, BW 90/608, National Archives-Kew.

<sup>1610</sup> Meeting Minutes, October 4, 1961, UNN Project Papers.

“internationalist” elements.<sup>1611</sup> The University was the lone academic space in Nigeria averse to British influence. “There is an intense suspicion of expatriates,” Merchant reported, “particularly from the U.K.”<sup>1612</sup> Peter Wright, now the registrar, was charged with “criticizing the university outside university circles.”<sup>1613</sup> Acting Principal Johnson summarily downgraded his status from an S.G. 2 to an S.G. 3—and then, canceled his contract when Wright protested. Taken aback, Wright protested the revision as a “breach of my agreement with the University.”<sup>1614</sup> When Johnson terminated his contract, Wright asked for the reasons; not only did Johnson refuse to give them but, Wright reported to I.U.C. member, J .S. Fulton, that if he pressed, Johnson “hinted that the consequences might be disagreeable.”<sup>1615</sup> Wright felt sure that the termination had sent a chill throughout the campus staff.<sup>1616</sup>

Echoing his language from 1952, Wright “prot[ested] in the strongest possible terms against this singularly undemocratic procedure.”<sup>1617</sup> He acknowledged that “such methods are not entirely unknown to me,” since the University’s handling of Wright’s termination “is almost identical with that which I received from the colonial government of Kenya in 1952.”<sup>1618</sup> He did not expect such actions in “free and democratic Nigeria.”<sup>1619</sup> “I am astonished,” Wright needled Johnson, “that you, with your record of fighting for civil rights in the United States, should have taken responsibility for this type of action.”<sup>1620</sup> Wright had pleaded with Johnson for a meeting to resolve “any points of difference” between the men to ensure “greater harmony for the good of

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<sup>1611</sup> Lord Head, Letter to Sir Alexander Clutterbuck, February 10, 1961, BW 90/608, National Archives-Kew.

<sup>1612</sup> W. Merchant, Letter to Lord Head, April 17, 1961, BW 90/608, National Archives-Kew.

<sup>1613</sup> W. Merchant, Letter to Lord Head, April 17, 1961, BW 90/608, National Archives-Kew.

<sup>1614</sup> Peter Wright, Letter to George M. Johnson, April 15, 1961 BW 90/608, National Archives-Kew.

<sup>1615</sup> P.S. Wright, Letter to J.S. Fulton, April 22, 1961, BW 90/608, National Archives-Kew.

<sup>1616</sup> P.S. Wright, Letter to J.S. Fulton, April 22, 1961, BW 90/608, National Archives-Kew.

<sup>1617</sup> P.S. Wright, Letter to George M. Johnson, April 19, 1961, BW 90/608, National Archives-Kew.

<sup>1618</sup> P.S. Wright, Letter to George M. Johnson, April 19, 1961, BW 90/608, National Archives-Kew.

<sup>1619</sup> P.S. Wright, Letter to George M. Johnson, April 19, 1961, BW 90/608, National Archives-Kew.

<sup>1620</sup> P.S. Wright, Letter to George M. Johnson, April 19, 1961, BW 90/608, National Archives-Kew.

the University.”<sup>1621</sup> While Johnson had “taken responsibility” for the decision, Johnson did not make the decision; the Finance and General Purpose Committee did.<sup>1622</sup>

Wright had supposed that his former background as a sympathizer with the Land and Freedom movement a British expatriate would translate well into the milieu of Nigerian independence. But Wright also did not have a political sense of boundaries and discretion—nor did he recognize that his past credentials as a Land and Freedom sympathizer would not necessarily carry currency in the Nigerian regime. But Wright’s history as a “man of principle first and last” cut both ways, whether in challenging the British regime on the verge of launching their attack on the Gikūyū resistance or in criticizing Nnamdi Azikiwe on the verge of establishing Nigeria’s first indigenous university.<sup>1623</sup>

When he expressed his dissent a little too openly about the University in January 1961, Johnson urged him to be more discrete.<sup>1624</sup> Wright was willing to take measures to “be more cautious with regard to [his] comments” and avoid hostile parties—an odd move for university life, he felt, but necessary to preserve the peace.<sup>1625</sup> Merchant declared that Wright, a former missionary in Kenya, was a “man of principle first and last and devil take the consequences,” with a “wonderful record of service to humanity,” and should not be dismissed as an agitator.<sup>1626</sup> Merchant would try to offer Wright all the support he could. He echoed Lord Head: the British had a heritage to protect, and if they wanted to preserve it, they had little choice but to “ride the tiger” by supporting the University.<sup>1627</sup> By the end of the year, the University received its formal status as a corporate body with “perpetual succession” and the “power to hold examinations and

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<sup>1621</sup> P.S. Wright, Letter to Dr. Johnson, April 19, 1961, BW 90/608, National Archives-Kew.

<sup>1622</sup> P.S. Wright, Letter to George M. Johnson, April 19, 1961, BW 90/608, National Archives-Kew.

<sup>1623</sup> Wilfred Merchant, Letter to Lord Head, April 17, 1961, BW 90/608, National Archives-Kew.

<sup>1624</sup> P.S. Wright, Letter to J.S. Fulton, April 22, 1961, BW 90/608, National Archives-Kew.

<sup>1625</sup> P.S. Wright, Letter to J.S. Fulton, April 22, 1961, BW 90/608, National Archives-Kew.

<sup>1626</sup> Wilfred Merchant, Letter to Lord Head, April 17, 1961, BW 90/608, National Archives-Kew.

<sup>1627</sup> Wilfred Merchant, Letter to Lord Head, April 17, 1961, BW 90/608, National Archives-Kew

award its own degrees.”<sup>1628</sup> While Nigeria enjoyed political independence, it remained a member of the British Commonwealth; the Queen “assented” to the law on December 14, 1961.<sup>1629</sup>

The action proved too taxing for Merchant’s patience. On April 17, Merchant dismissed the charge out-of-hand as coming from “indigenous observers” and felt sure that ‘it could not be proven by Western standards of justice.’<sup>1630</sup> He made an “empassioned [sic] plea” to the whole of the MSU advisory group, including a “personal protest” to Azikiwe himself in Lagos.<sup>1631</sup> Merchant declared that he would leave the University immediately if it were not ameliorated.<sup>1632</sup> When Merchant called Azikiwe in Lagos, Azikiwe’s secretary informed Merchant that he could not see the Governor-General—and then notified Azikiwe of the call.<sup>1633</sup> While in Lagos, Merchant notified Johnson that he had been “thinking things over” and decided he would return to the U.K. for medical care.<sup>1634</sup> He sent a note to Johnson “regret[ting]” that he would “be unable to see Azikiwe” in Lagos, a meeting that the two of them had never planned.<sup>1635</sup> Azikiwe considered Merchant irrelevant; he came to carry out a position as an engineering consultant, not as a University administrator in “internal university matters.”<sup>1636</sup>

Two days later, on April 19, I.U.C. secretary, I. C. M. Maxwell called the move “repugnant to the consciences of civilized men.”<sup>1637</sup> British High Commissioner Lord Head fretted that “Nsukka University is in danger of breaking down.”<sup>1638</sup> Although the responsibility rested with “the people on the spot,” Head knew without “a shadow of a doubt” that the “blame,

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<sup>1628</sup> Glen L. Taggart, Letter to John Hannah, August 2, 1962, Box 49, Folder 20, Hannah Papers.

<sup>1629</sup> Glen L. Taggart, Letter to John Hannah, August 2, 1962, Box 49, Folder 20, Hannah Papers.

<sup>1630</sup> Wilfred Merchant, Letter to Lord Head, April 17, 1961, BW 90/608, National Archives-Kew.

<sup>1631</sup> George M. Johnson, Letter to John A. Hannah, April 19, 1961, Box 49, Folder 18, Hannah Papers.

<sup>1632</sup> George M. Johnson, Letter to John A. Hannah, April 19, 1961, Box 49, Folder 18, Hannah Papers.

<sup>1633</sup> George M. Johnson, Letter to Mrs. Rowland, April 29, 1961, Box 49, Folder 18, Hannah Papers.

<sup>1634</sup> George M. Johnson, Letter to Mrs. Rowland, April 29, 1961, Box 49, Folder 18, Hannah Papers.

<sup>1635</sup> George M. Johnson, Letter to Mrs. Rowland, April 29, 1961, Box 49, Folder 18, Hannah Papers.

<sup>1636</sup> George M. Johnson, Letter to Mrs. Rowland, April 29, 1961, Box 49, Folder 18, Hannah Papers.

<sup>1637</sup> I.C.M. Maxwell, Letter to George M. Johnson, April 19, 1961, BW 90/608, National Archives, Kew.

<sup>1638</sup> Lord Head, Letter to Sir Alexander Clutterbuck, February 10, 1961, BW 90/608, National Archives-Kew.

however unfairly, will be placed squarely on the British.”<sup>1639</sup> The collapse of UNN would not merely mean a severe blow to the academic progress of Nigeria; it would introduce a sharp crisis in relations between Nigeria and Britain.<sup>1640</sup>

George Axinn dodged the matter in reporting to Hannah. After George Axinn visited the campus later in mid-April, he reported a “dedicated senior staff of scholars” committed to building a nation composed of a diversity in a “battle for the minds and hearts of young men and women toward the end of universal human dignity.”<sup>1641</sup> Axinn spoke in generalities, only alluding to the Wright termination vaguely. He did not suggest all is “sweetness and light”—indeed, he urged, they needed a “top-level adviser on the organization of institutions of higher education”—likely to ensure that a Wright situation did not replicate itself.<sup>1642</sup> Axinn said nothing about the dust-up, but that is no surprise; Johnson reported that Axinn had been “very tactful in trying to keep things from getting out of hand.”<sup>1643</sup>

Both J. S. Fulton and Eldon Johnson, British members of the Provisional Council were “treated with courtesy” while their disagreements are “ignored for the record” and are “frequently resented off the record. . . when only ‘us Africans’ are together.”<sup>1644</sup> They knew that they are “little more than window dressing.”<sup>1645</sup> When George Johnson submitted his plans for the University to celebrate its one-year anniversary on Azikiwe’s birthday, he “recommend[ed] the subject” to the Provisional Council, “which means its all-African Finance and General Purposes Committee—which means, Dr. Azikiwe.”<sup>1646</sup> The Provisional Council was a

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<sup>1639</sup> Lord Head, Letter to Sir Alexander Clutterbuck, February 10, 1961, BW 90/608, National Archives-Kew.

<sup>1640</sup> Lord Head, Letter to Sir Alexander Clutterbuck, February 10, 1961, BW 90/608, National Archives-Kew.

<sup>1641</sup> George Axinn, Letter to John A. Hannah, April 24, 1961, Box 49, Folder 18, Hannah Papers.

<sup>1642</sup> George Axinn, Letter to John A. Hannah, April 24, 1961, Box 49, Folder 18, Hannah Papers.

<sup>1643</sup> George M. Johnson, Letter to John A. Hannah, April 19, 1961, Box 49, Folder 18, Hannah Papers.

<sup>1644</sup> George Johnson, Letter to John Hannah, September 7, 1961, Box 49, Folder 18, Hannah Papers.

<sup>1645</sup> George Johnson, Letter to John Hannah, September 7, 1961, Box 49, Folder 18, Hannah Papers.

<sup>1646</sup> George Johnson, Letter to John Hannah, September 7, 1961, Box 49, Folder 18, Hannah Papers.

showpiece—and nothing more.<sup>1647</sup>

The Americans agreed that either Taggart or Hannah needed to return to Nigeria “point out the danger and pitfalls of excessive political influence in the affair of a university.”<sup>1648</sup> The Wright termination reflected a clash of institutions, not a miscarriage of justice; it revealed, again, the extent to which the University of Nigeria, Nsukka was Azikiwe’s university. In August 1961, Johnson dictated a recording stating the failure of the University’s institutions to resist Azikiwe’s will.<sup>1649</sup> Johnson occupied a distinctive place in the racial dynamics of the University’s institutions. As a well-to-do black American, long affiliated with American institutions, he connected more with Americana than with Nigeria. He faced divided loyalties: a close relationship with Hannah, the need for Azikiwe’s confidence, and his commitment to the integrity of the University.<sup>1650</sup> Azikiwe is “a very suspicious individual,” Johnson confided in Hannah, and perhaps Hannah alone was “one of the few responsible non-Nigerians” in whom he had great confidence.<sup>1651</sup> The Provisional Council had “no effective opposition.”<sup>1652</sup> Johnson knew the Provincial Council’s limitations ; only a month earlier, he had indicated to Taggart that the Finance and General Purpose Committee may, unfortunately, “revers[e] the Provisional Council.”<sup>1653</sup>

Frustrated but not dejected, Johnson absorbed the difficulties: he assured Hannah that he was not “disappointed, disillusioned, or plain fed-up.”<sup>1654</sup> He always knew the Nsukka project would be taxing. Wright was replaced by an American, Jesse Morton.<sup>1655</sup> Wright’s termination

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<sup>1647</sup> George Johnson, Letter to John Hannah, September 7, 1961, Box 49, Folder 18, Hannah Papers.

<sup>1648</sup> Glen L. Taggart, Letter to John A. Hannah, May 5, 1961, Box 49, Folder 18, Hannah Papers.

<sup>1649</sup> George Johnson, Letter to John Hannah, September 7, 1961, Box 49, Folder 18, Hannah Papers.

<sup>1650</sup> George Johnson, Letter to John Hannah, September 7, 1961, Box 49, Folder 18, Hannah Papers.

<sup>1651</sup> George Johnson, Letter to John Hannah, September 7, 1961, Box 49, Folder 18, Hannah Papers.

<sup>1652</sup> George Johnson, Letter to John Hannah, September 7, 1961, Box 49, Folder 18, Hannah Papers.

<sup>1653</sup> Glen L. Taggart, Letter to George M. Johnson, March 14, 1961, Box 49, Folder 18, Hannah Papers.

<sup>1654</sup> George Johnson, Letter to John Hannah, September 7, 1961, Box 49, Folder 18, Hannah Papers.

<sup>1655</sup> Olabisi Are, Letter to Jesse Morton, January 24, 1962, National Archives-Kew.



did not mark the end of the British presence in Nsukka; on Wright's heels came University of London's J. A. Noonan for the English department and K.W. Wardle from Birmingham in summer of 1961.<sup>1656</sup> When Tredernnick and Ingold returned to Nsukka in July, they noticed that the campus milieu had "changed dramatically"; they attributed it to British influence and concluded that more British support would be "most valuable and highly appreciated."<sup>1657</sup> That August, Taggart celebrated the "specific and systematized arrangement. . . with London University" that "augers significant development."<sup>1658</sup>

### *The Cafeteria Uprising*

The earliest students were an enthusiastic sort, even if most of them incapable of attending Ibadan due to either family obligations, cost of tuition, or deficient entrance examinations.<sup>1659</sup> Former student P. O. Esedebe recalls of his early class that "there was no problem of enrollment because the admission policy in Ibadan was restrictive."<sup>1660</sup> Several were "eager to read, but could not travel abroad."<sup>1661</sup> Tuition in the earliest year was nominal: 170 pounds *per annum*—approximately equivalent to 5,000 USD in 2019.<sup>1662</sup> Students mirrored the American credit system, with typical course loads of 14 to 20 credit hours per term.<sup>1663</sup>

While university students congregated at Port Huron, Michigan to discuss student activism for the "New Left" in American academe, UNN students also advocated for increased control over this university that feel externally imposed, organized, and funded. They wanted

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<sup>1656</sup> Zerby and Zerby, *If I Should Wake Before I Die: The Nsukka Dream: A History of the University of Nigeria*, 81.

<sup>1657</sup> "Visit Notes from Professors Tredernnick and Ingold, July 5, 1961," BW 90/608, National Archives-Kew.

<sup>1658</sup> Glen L. Taggart, Letter to Eldon L. Johnson, August 14, 1961, Taggart Papers, Box 1, Folder 1, Merrill-Cazier.

<sup>1659</sup> P.O. Esedebe, Interview with Wineth Wineth Nkechi Obi, 78, Nnamdi Azikiwe Library, University of Nigeria, Nsukka.

<sup>1660</sup> P.O. Esedebe, Interview with Wineth Wineth Nkechi Obi, 78, Nnamdi Azikiwe Library, University of Nigeria, Nsukka.

<sup>1661</sup> P.O. Esedebe, Interview with Wineth Wineth Nkechi Obi, 78, Nnamdi Azikiwe Library, University of Nigeria, Nsukka.

<sup>1662</sup> "Advice on Advanced Programmes," Box 187, Folder 26, UNN Project Papers.

<sup>1663</sup> "Advice on Advanced Programmes," Box 187, Folder 26, UNN Project Papers.

better food, better housing, and more administrative strength.<sup>1664</sup> Worse, the food handlers, one news report summarized student grievances, “cooks, stewards, house mothers, and other domestic workers were usually hostile and most disrespectful to the students.”<sup>1665</sup>

On October 17, 1962, a group of students at UNN issued a “two weeks notice” demanding an improvement in the cafeteria selection.<sup>1666</sup> They “prepared a menu,” and when the cafeteria adjusted the menu, the students lobbied a complaint. More, the student hostels contained strict regulations barring female entrance into male dormitories.<sup>1667</sup> Some students maintained that the law prohibited their female relatives from accompanying them into their rooms. They felt the staff members had been rude, and the students wanted “more authority to help run the University.”<sup>1668</sup>

The culinary choices and hostel regulations remained. On October 31 at noon, when some students were “refused service,” the students mounted a demonstrated which deteriorated into a violent uprising against the cafeteria staff.<sup>1669</sup> “Plates were flying, tumblers cracking,” the *Eastern Nigerian Guardian* reported, “as stone-throwing undergraduates. . . charged and mauled staff, cooks and domestic workers of the University.”<sup>1670</sup> The *Guardian* summarized the student grievances to be “poor feeding, stringent hostel regulations, attitude of domestic workers towards

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<sup>1664</sup> Richard Flacks and Nelson Lichtenstein, eds. *The Port Huron Statement: Sources and Legacies of the New Left's Founding Manifesto* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2015), 54; see also C. Xrydz Eyutcha, “FACTS BEHIND NSUKKA INCIDENT,” *Eastern Nigerian Guardian*, November 9, 1962, 1.

<sup>1665</sup> C. Xrydz Eyutcha, “FACTS BEHIND NSUKKA INCIDENT,” *Eastern Nigerian Guardian*, November 9, 1962, 1.

<sup>1666</sup> C. Xrydz Eyutcha, “FACTS BEHIND NSUKKA INCIDENT,” *Eastern Nigerian Guardian*, November 9, 1962, 1.

<sup>1667</sup> C. Xrydz Eyutcha, “FACTS BEHIND NSUKKA INCIDENT,” *Eastern Nigerian Guardian*, November 9, 1962, 1.

<sup>1668</sup> C. Xrydz Eyutcha, “FACTS BEHIND NSUKKA INCIDENT,” *Eastern Nigerian Guardian*, November 9, 1962, 1.

<sup>1669</sup> C. Xrydz Eyutcha, “FACTS BEHIND NSUKKA INCIDENT,” *Eastern Nigerian Guardian*, November 9, 1962, 1.

<sup>1670</sup> C. Xrydz Eyutcha, “FACTS BEHIND NSUKKA INCIDENT,” *Eastern Nigerian Guardian*, November 9, 1962, 1.

students.”<sup>1671</sup> Johnson urged the demonstrators’ parents to “help these students realize that the sacrifices that these guardians and parents and sponsors are making are too great to be wasted in wreckless [sic] conduct.”<sup>1672</sup> Even with their relaxed standards, limited facilities meant that 9/10 of students could not be admitted, and thus, “when they waste the precious opportunity that has been given to them they hurt ten other students any one of whom could have taken their place.”<sup>1673</sup>

Johnson believed that the action was a “united student effort,” although certain students had been “coerced into participation.”<sup>1674</sup> In order to identify the organizers, he would carry out “a careful and painstaking enquiry” that would cause University administration “to suffer neglect and may well prove to be impossible.”<sup>1675</sup> As of 10 A.M. on November 8, Johnson would close the University “temporarily.”<sup>1676</sup> The students had three hours to pack their belongings and leave the campus. They would be transported as far as Enugu.<sup>1677</sup> When notified, they could re-apply for admission—and would be judged on a case-by-case basis. As the students packed up, a *Guardian* reporter observed with some irony, the University for which so many had grand hopes was but “a scene of rattling odds and ends” while “steel-helmeted” stood by to ensure an expeditious removal.<sup>1678</sup>

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<sup>1671</sup> C. Xrydz Eyutcha, “FACTS BEHIND NSUKKA INCIDENT,” *Eastern Nigerian Guardian*, November 9, 1962, 1.

<sup>1672</sup> G.M. Johnson, “University of Nigeria Proclamation,” *Eastern Nigeria Guardian*, Nov. 8, 1962 (Proclamation issued Nov. 6), 4.

<sup>1673</sup> G.M. Johnson, “University of Nigeria Proclamation,” *Eastern Nigeria Guardian*, Nov. 8, 1962 (Proclamation issued Nov. 6), 4.

<sup>1674</sup> G.M. Johnson, “University of Nigeria Proclamation,” *Eastern Nigeria Guardian*, Nov. 8, 1962 (Proclamation issued Nov. 6), 4.

<sup>1675</sup> G.M. Johnson, “University of Nigeria Proclamation,” *Eastern Nigeria Guardian*, Nov. 8, 1962 (Proclamation issued Nov. 6), 4.

<sup>1676</sup> G.M. Johnson, “University of Nigeria Proclamation,” *Eastern Nigeria Guardian*, Nov. 8, 1962 (Proclamation issued Nov. 6), 4.

<sup>1677</sup> C. Xrydz Eyutcha, “FACTS BEHIND NSUKKA INCIDENT,” *Eastern Nigeria Guardian* November 9, 1962, 1.

<sup>1678</sup> C. Xrydz Eyutcha, “FACTS BEHIND NSUKKA INCIDENT,” *Eastern Nigeria Guardian*, November 9, 1962, 1.

The *Guardian* chastised the students, regardless of the merits of their grievances: “their lack of restraint in sabotaging the effort put to build this great citadel of learning is highly condemnable.”<sup>1679</sup> *Eastern Nigeria Guardian* reporter F. A. Amungo asked why it was that “secondary school boys are able to control themselves about such matters” while it appeared “impossible for University students who are principals and leaders themselves” to “keep cool and work in the right way.”<sup>1680</sup> Universities, Amungo continued, “are not places to learn how to causes crisis, so know your worth and do the correct things.”<sup>1681</sup> American administrators felt more ambivalent. Alvin D. Loving, the first UNN Dean of Students and then, the first black full professor at the University of Michigan, told *Jet* magazine that he felt “sick inside” and predicted that they would be individually re-admitted “if they promise to be good little boys.”<sup>1682</sup> Taggart dismissed Loving’s criticisms as “poor judgment,” but hoped that Azikiwe would respond in print.<sup>1683</sup> Nigeria’s National Universities Commission, which adjudicated all university operations, also determined that Johnson had both acted in good faith and with wisdom in curtailing the uprising.<sup>1684</sup>

While the first generation of students were in disarray, the campus also brimmed with hope. For the first time, many students felt that they could lay claim on the promises of an independent Nigeria. Novelist Vincent Chukwuemeka Ike, the deputy university registrar, celebrated the work of innovative men and women, inviting them to “labor for a new, possibly great country.”<sup>1685</sup> And it was wide-open for admission. They accepted students who had

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<sup>1679</sup> C. Xrydz Eyutcha, “FACTS BEHIND NSUKKA INCIDENT,” *Eastern Nigeria, Guardian*, November 9, 1962, 1.

<sup>1680</sup> F.A. Amungo, “Varsity crisis,” *Eastern Nigeria Guardian*, November 7, 1962.

<sup>1681</sup> F.A. Amungo, “Varsity crisis,” *Eastern Nigeria Guardian*, November 7, 1962.

<sup>1682</sup> “U. of Nigeria Strife Laid to Administration,” *Jet*, November 29, 1962, 45.

<sup>1683</sup> Glen L. Taggart, Letter to John A. Hannah, February 7, 1963, Box 49, Folder 22, Hannah Papers.

<sup>1684</sup> Summary Report of Vice Chancellor on N.U.C. Visit, March 2-7, 1963, Box 49, Folder 22, Hannah Papers.

<sup>1685</sup> Obi Nwakanma, *Christopher Okigbo, 1930-1967: Thirsting for Sunlight* (London: James Currey, 2010), 229. 147.

attained an “O” level grade, never insisting on the A-level that Ibadan had demanded.<sup>1686</sup> And the results seemed promising: the students excelled just as much. One observer concluded that “so far as we can tell,” the “results being achieved by scholars trained in Nsukka are in no sense inferior to those of the more Oxbridge oriented alumni of the University of Ibadan.”<sup>1687</sup>

The excitement surrounding “general studies” spread throughout campus life. The teaching of geography improved. At UNN, the geography department became Nigeria dominant by 1968.<sup>1688</sup> Educational observer Robert Koehl observed in 1971 that UNN “*began* as a multiversity with twenty institutes ‘vague in function and miscellaneous in coverage,’ including “dramatics, domestic science, secretarial studies, journalism, public health, and many others.”<sup>1689</sup>

This university offered possibilities. By the mid-1960s, a Nigerian could study music at UNN, a country where, Dr. Edna M. Edet observed, “til recently, there were less than ten graduates in music out of fifty-five million people.”<sup>1690</sup> Edet was a little dispirited: “there is so much to do and so few of us to do it.”<sup>1691</sup> The department had “dropped a proverbial ‘stone in the stream,’ which, at best, “create[d] a musical ripple.”<sup>1692</sup> In 1964, Nnamdi Azikiwe, now chancellor, conferred the first degrees in journalism on UNN students, declaring that “this incident will be history in the making. . . for the first time in the annals of West Africa, an indigenous university will endorse the professional competence of journalists who have passed through the crucible of systematic university education.”<sup>1693</sup> Journalism instructor C.A.

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<sup>1686</sup> Audrey I. Richards, “The Adaption of Universities to the African Situation: A Review Article,” *Minerva* 3, no. 3 (Spring 1965): 339.

<sup>1687</sup> Adam Curle, “Transplanted Universities: A Review Article,” *Africa Today* 14, no. 2 (1967): 6.

<sup>1688</sup> Julie Okpala, “Geography in General Education in Nigeria,” *GeoJournal* 20, no. 1 (January 1990): 37.

<sup>1689</sup> Robert Koehl, “The Uses of the University: Past and Present in Nigerian Educational Culture, Part II,” *Comparative Education Review* 15, no. 3 (October 1971): 370-371.

<sup>1690</sup> “University of Nigeria, Nsukka Department of Music,” *African Music* 3, no. 4 (1965): 77.

<sup>1691</sup> “University of Nigeria, Nsukka Department of Music,” *African Music* 3, no. 4 (1965): 79.

<sup>1692</sup> “University of Nigeria, Nsukka Department of Music,” *African Music* 3, no. 4 (1965): 78.

<sup>1693</sup> Earl R. Roe, “First Journalism Graduates of Jackson College, West Africa,” *New Journal and Guide*, September 5, 1964, B13.

Doghudje celebrated that UNN's journalism program was "one of its kind in Nigeria," claiming six seasoned lecturers, one of them having trained at Michigan State University.<sup>1694</sup> Mal Whitfield, an American track and field Olympic Champion, oversaw the establishment of the athletic department.<sup>1695</sup>

## *The University of Nigeria*

### 1963-4 Enrolment by priority degree programmes

Science	386
Education	241
Agriculture	145
Business Administration	108
Engineering	104
Secretarial Studies	64
Surveying	39
Land Economy	27
Physical Education	19
Home Economy	13

Table 3: Disciplinary distribution of UNN students, 1963-1964.  
From George Johnson, "The University of Nigeria" (1964).

<sup>1694</sup> C.A. Doghudje, "Current Activities: The Department of Journalism of the University of Nigeria, Nsukka," *International Communication Gazette* (November 1, 1965): 330.

<sup>1695</sup> "Nigeria Builds A University on Palm Oil: Construction Races Enrollment Surge," *New York Herald Tribune*, December 10, 1961, 17.

The Faculty of Engineering flourished. “The University is young and vigorous,” the Faculty of Engineering publication, *The Nsukka Engineer* celebrated in 1966, with a “full-fledged” Engineering Bachelor of Science degree available.<sup>1696</sup> Engineers would build a new Nigeria, *The Nsukka Engineer* promised: “creating and managing new industries, improving communication systems, developing natural resources, building highways and bridges, designing tools for improving agriculture and planning better towns and cities to live in.”<sup>1697</sup> In January 1966, the University held an “Engineering Week” event at the Princess Alexandra Auditorium, across the street from the CEC. Observers “were amazed at the great changes which the past twelve months had brought” and newcomers made “the unmistakable confession that even here at Nsukka, silently but rapidly young men are being conditioned to grapple successfully the challenges posed by modern developments in science and technology.”<sup>1698</sup> They studied engineering subjects ranging from hydraulics and Public Health Engineering to soil Investigations.<sup>1699</sup> The Margaret Ekpo Refectory showed films by Shell-BP oil and the Nigerian Port authorities.<sup>1700</sup> They heard lectures on subjects such “Cracks in Buildings” and the construction of the Niger Bridge from Nigerian, British, American, and other scholars.<sup>1701</sup> The Faculty of Engineering also engaged in outreach with secondary students to encourage their future enrollment at the University.<sup>1702</sup> Former Principal George Johnson claimed 1,822 students were enrolled at UNN at the end of 1964, 1,162 were enrolled in “priority degree programs.”<sup>1703</sup>

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<sup>1696</sup> *Nsukka Engineer*, Vol. 1, 1966, 3.

<sup>1697</sup> *Nsukka Engineer*, Vol. 1, 1966, 3.

<sup>1698</sup> *Nsukka Engineer*, Vol. 1, 1966, 5.

<sup>1699</sup> *Nsukka Engineer*, Vol. 1, 1966, 5.

<sup>1700</sup> *Nsukka Engineer*, Vol. 1, 1966, 5.

<sup>1701</sup> *Nsukka Engineer*, Vol. 1, 1966, 6.

<sup>1702</sup> *Nsukka Engineer*, Vol. 1, 1966, 6.

<sup>1703</sup> George M. Johnson, “The University of Nigeria,” 98-99.



Figure 13: An MSU agricultural worker with two UNN students in a chicken coop.  
Courtesy of Michigan State University Archives.

The University of Nigeria, Nsukka, served among vanguard institutions for “religious studies” as a discipline.<sup>1704</sup> In 1947, the University College, Ibadan had developed a religious studies program targeted at a religiously diverse population.<sup>1705</sup> Fearful of the bloody outcome of the India partition, U. C. I. eschewed the conventional theology model.<sup>1706</sup> Most Nigerian students would not study theology in Nigeria, H.C.L. Heywood wrote to Kenneth Mellanby, U. C. I.’s botanist principal, but instead would travel to England for their theological studies.<sup>1707</sup>

<sup>1704</sup> Andrew Walls, “A Bag of Needments for the Road: Geoffrey Parrinder and the Study of Religion in Britain,” *Religion* 10 (1980): 141-150.

<sup>1705</sup> Andrew Walls, “A Bag of Needments for the Road: Geoffrey Parrinder and the Study of Religion in Britain,” *Religion* 10 (1980): 141-150.

<sup>1706</sup> Andrew Walls, “A Bag of Needments for the Road: Geoffrey Parrinder and the Study of Religion in Britain,” *Religion* 10 (1980): 141-150.

<sup>1707</sup> H.C.L. Heywood, March 7, 1948. Report to the Principal, University College Ibadan, Church Missionary Society Archive, University of Birmingham.



“Africans desire a religion,” he wrote, “and Africa without religion, in our view, would mean the complete social disintegration of the peoples.”<sup>1708</sup> Therefore, A. W. Pickard-Cambridge hoped for a University where “Mahomedans and Christians would learn religious toleration.” They had “failed to teach Indians this with fatal consequences.”<sup>1709</sup> Thus, H. C. L. Heywood argued, a “change in the designation of the subject is much to be desired.”<sup>1710</sup>

At Zik’s behest, the University attracted Andrew Walls, a Scottish patristics scholar at Fourah Bay College, a “sort of second University of Nigeria,” given its several Nigerian students, where he had taught “traditional English type” of theology.<sup>1711</sup> Walls borrowed the Ibadan model, hoping to establish religious toleration at the university as U. C. I. sought to do. Walls had “started as a very orthodox student of early church history, and in those days we used to talk about the younger churches, and of course, we were the custodians of the wisdom of the older church was to be handed on.”<sup>1712</sup> He gave his lectures, and the students listened dutifully, “but it clearly wasn’t doing anything, making any impact.”<sup>1713</sup>

Walls then “real[ized] that I was living in a second century church, and that I might learn more by looking all around me and listening.”<sup>1714</sup> He had been thinking in terms of classical languages such as Greek and Latin, he found, “when ought to be thinking in Syriac, and Coptic, and Ethiopic.”<sup>1715</sup> When Walls came to the University of Nigeria, Nsukka to establish the University’s religious studies department, he came in a moment when religiosity was

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<sup>1708</sup> H.C.L. Heywood, March 7, 1948. Report to the Principal, University College Ibadan, Church Missionary Society Archive, University of Birmingham.

<sup>1709</sup> Notes by Dr. A.W.Pickard-Cambridge on memo by Bishop Horstead, Nov. 7, 1945, Church Missionary Society Archive AF 35/49 AFW E3 1930-1945, University of Birmingham.

<sup>1710</sup> H.C.L. Heywood, March 7, 1948. Report to the Principal, University College Ibadan, Church Missionary Society Archive, University of Birmingham.

<sup>1711</sup> Andrew Walls, interview with Russell Stevenson, May 24, 2017, Aberdeen, Scotland, author’s transcript.

<sup>1712</sup> Walls Interview.

<sup>1713</sup> Walls Interview.

<sup>1714</sup> Walls Interview.

<sup>1715</sup> Walls Interview.

experiencing a new revival.<sup>1716</sup> At Nsukka, the religious studies division had a wall map, in which they placed pins to identify the Christian congregations surrounding Uyo.<sup>1717</sup> It was “very much an indigenous movement,” a “shifting [in] the center of gravity” for Christianity from the Western world to Africa.<sup>1718</sup> Walls has argued that such “religious studies” programs re-shaped the trajectory of the institutional study of religion in the United Kingdom.<sup>1719</sup>

By 1967, the University administration came to see the expansion and enthusiasm as excessive. Vice-Chancellor Eni Njoku warned the University about “importing the most up-to-date products of modern technology.” They were “so sophisticated that local maintenance techniques are inadequate for them. . . and they only add to our collection of ‘white elephants.’” The University needed to adjust the technology to their local circumstances.”<sup>1720</sup> While the University seemed to open the world to the students of Nsukka, administrators wondered if their university faced the same problem that Ibadan did: a flood of technological irrelevancies, with little utility for communities throughout the Nigerian countryside.

### *Peace Corps at UNN*

In March 1961, two months following the presidential inauguration, President John F. Kennedy signed an executive order funding the “Peace Corps,” a commission of advisors to work in countries with “urgent needs for skilled manpower.”<sup>1721</sup> Azikiwe believed that President Kennedy’s new era of foreign policy had projects like Azikiwe’s UNN in mind.<sup>1722</sup> Nigeria was to be a “new frontier in the field of American foreign relations,” inviting Michigan native G.

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<sup>1716</sup> Walls interview.

<sup>1717</sup> Walls interview.

<sup>1718</sup> Walls interview.

<sup>1719</sup> Andrew Walls, “A Bag of Needments for the Road: Geoffrey Parrinder and the Study of Religion in Britain,” *Religion* 10 (1980): 141-150.

<sup>1720</sup> “A Message from the Vice Chancellor,” *Nsukka Engineer*, vol. 2 (1967): i.

<sup>1721</sup> Press Conference, March 1, 1961, JFKPOF-054-007-p0008, John F. Kennedy Library.

<sup>1722</sup> Nnamdi Azikiwe, *Footprints on the Sands of Time*, Address to UNN, October 2, 1962, 26.

Mennen Williams, then the Assistant Secretary of State to Africa, to visit Nsukka and requested 30 members of Kennedy's Peace Corps program to come to Nigeria.<sup>1723</sup> Azikiwe promised Peace Corps recruits who came to Nsukka a similar salary to regular faculty.<sup>1724</sup> He extolled the Peace Corps as "all visionaries and reformers," some of whom come from "very wealthy homes" who have "families with a rich tradition and historic cultural background."<sup>1725</sup>

Corps members would work either through the United States government or private institutions. Kennedy advised that it "will not be easy" and that the Americans would "speak the same language" and "live at the same level as the citizens of the country in which they are sent."<sup>1726</sup> By the end of 1961, 500-1000 volunteers were to be sent abroad.<sup>1727</sup> Through Michigan State University's partnership with the International Cooperation Agency—now called United States Aid for International Development (USAID)—some two dozen Peace Corps worked at Nsukka.<sup>1728</sup> Over the next few months, invitations trickled, albeit slowly, into Axinn's office. The project faced delays; as of July, the Eastern Premier, Michael Okpara, had yet to convene with the American government over admitting the Peace Corps into the University program.<sup>1729</sup> Axinn expected it may not "crystalize" until the end of July.<sup>1730</sup> Axinn applauded the timidity: "the American public has again showed its good judgment by not swarming in to volunteer."<sup>1731</sup>

The NCNC Assemblyman from Aba South, O. C. Ememe, who chaired the Nigeria-Soviet Friendship society, was critical of the Nsukka university scheme.<sup>1732</sup> Ememe had seen the

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<sup>1723</sup> Nnamdi Azikiwe, *Footprints on the Sands of Time*, Address to UNN, October 2, 1962, 26.

<sup>1724</sup> Nnamdi Azikiwe, *Footprints on the Sands of Time*, Address to UNN, October 2, 1962, 26.

<sup>1725</sup> Nnamdi Azikiwe, *Footprints on the Sands of Time*, Address to UNN, October 2, 1962, 27.

<sup>1726</sup> Press Conference, March 1, 1961, JFKPOF-054-007-p0008, John F. Kennedy Library.

<sup>1727</sup> "President Proposes Legislation for Establishing Peace Corps," Department of State Bulletin, May 30, 1961 (Washington, D.C.: Office of Public Communication, 1961), 980.

<sup>1728</sup> Vincent interview.

<sup>1729</sup> George Axinn, Letter to Marilyn Thompson, July 6, 1961, Box 182, Folder 66, UNN Project Papers.

<sup>1730</sup> George Axinn, Letter to Marilyn Thompson, July 6, 1961, Box 182, Folder 66, UNN Project Papers.

<sup>1731</sup> George Axinn, Letter to Marilyn Thompson, July 6, 1961, Box 182, Folder 66, UNN Project Papers.

<sup>1732</sup> "MP SOS Zik over problem students," *Eastern Nigeria Guardian*, November 9, 1962, 1

NCNC “projects” absorb regional coffers. He had joined the NCNC because of its nationalist bent; at least in rhetoric, it—and its founder, Zik—aspired to something beyond homeland politics. By the public accounting, he had a commanding hold on Aba South, defeating his Action Group and independent competitors, Sunday MacEbh and A.W Emutelay; he won the 1959 election with a 15,580 to 4,219 and 1,806 victory, respectively.<sup>1733</sup> The executive power of the Premier had ballooned, and Parliament “is used here as a rubber stamp.”<sup>1734</sup> They sought only to “presser[v]e” the “authority handed over to them by the imperial British. . . . When the legislature, the executive, and the judiciary come under the control of one and the same person or a group of persons, then the Government is said to be a dictatorship.”<sup>1735</sup>

While a member of Azikiwe’s NCNC party, Ememe condemned Anglo-American education involvement at Nsukka; it “only taught one to cheat his neighbours.”<sup>1736</sup> He applauded employment and housing in Khrushhev’s Soviet Union, claiming all had employment and all were housed.<sup>1737</sup> “There is no smoke without a fire,” he warned, “It is an open secret that the student body in your University detest your policy of encouraging American subversion of our Higher Education.”<sup>1738</sup> Why, he asked, “should American Government control our higher seat of learning when we claim to be independent?”<sup>1739</sup>

Ememe was exploiting the student protest to pivot toward criticism his *bête noire*: the United States Peace Corps. “The students have in many occasions protested against the imposition of the Peace Corps teachers on this Government financed University but without

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<sup>1733</sup> “NCNC Loses Uyo, Calabar, Ikot Ekpene and Abak to AG,” *Eastern Sentinel*, December 15, 1959, 1.

<sup>1734</sup> Nnamdi Azikiwe, “Essentials for Nigerian Survival,” *Foreign Affairs* 43, no. 3 (1964): 450.

<sup>1735</sup> Nnamdi Azikiwe, “Essentials for Nigerian Survival,” *Foreign Affairs* 43, no. 3 (1964): 450.

<sup>1736</sup> “Soviet Films for Nigeria,” *Eastern Nigeria Guardian*, January 22, 1962, 3.

<sup>1737</sup> “No Discrimination in Russia,” *Eastern Nigeria Guardian*, June 19, 1962, 1.

<sup>1738</sup> “MP SOS Zik over problem students,” *Eastern Nigeria Guardian*, November 9, 1962, 1.

<sup>1739</sup> “MP SOS Zik over problem students,” *Eastern Nigeria Guardian*, November 9, 1962, 1.

success.”<sup>1740</sup> The Peace Corps was an American subterfuge for subversion, he told the University authorities.<sup>1741</sup> At 2 a.m. on the morning that Senator Kennedy celebrated Michigan State University’s efforts in the “developing world,” Kennedy asked an audience of 10,000 University of Michigan students: “How many of you, who are going to be doctors, are willing to spend your days in Ghana?” To the engineers, he asked: “How many of you are willing to work in the Foreign Service and spend your lives traveling around the world?”<sup>1742</sup> The Soviets were willing; would they be, too? William Gurdon Saltonstall, a member of the New England educational elite—a twice Harvard graduate and later, president of the New England Association of Schools and Colleges—to head up the Nigerian Peace Corps project.

O. C. Ememe was not the only one to see the Peace Corps and MSU as vehicles for American surveillance.<sup>1743</sup> Vincent looked upon the MSU advisors with a skeptical eye. Not only were they one of the “small agricultural schools” that he looked upon with some disdain; it had facilitated the spread of the American empire. MSU advisers had “all of the . . . innocence of Americans” who were “kind of oblivious to what was going on” with the assumption that MSU was not involved in CIA espionage, even while an April 1966 *Ramparts* essay comes out exposing MSU’s involvement—including the recently-departed UNN Vice Chancellor, Glen Taggart’s—involvement in training South Vietnamese police.<sup>1744</sup>

Was MSU infiltrated with the CIA? In *Ramparts*, MSU officials denied it, but Vincent wouldn’t believe it. “Undoubtedly some were,” Vincent believed, and he “often wonder[ed] like when someone went in the economics department” and “travelled around to all these markets and

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<sup>1740</sup> “MP SOS Zik over problem students,” *Eastern Nigeria Guardian*, November 9, 1962, 1

<sup>1741</sup> “MP SOS Zik over problem students,” *Eastern Nigeria Guardian*, November 9, 1962, 1

<sup>1742</sup> John F. Kennedy, Remarks, October 14, 1960, <https://www.jfklibrary.org/archives/other-resources/john-f-kennedy-speeches/michigan-state-university-19601014> <accessed August 12, 2020>.

<sup>1743</sup> “Soviet Films for Nigeria,” *Eastern Nigeria Guardian*, January 22, 1962, 3.

<sup>1744</sup> Warren Hinckle, Robert Scheer and Sol Stern, “The University on the Make, or how MSU helped arm Madame Nhu,” *Ramparts* (April 1966): 11-22.

did, you know, research. . . ostensibly about economies of markets. . . checking out things , checking out military and what have you.”<sup>1745</sup> Vincent suspected one faculty member (a Fordham Catholic, he took care to note, who looked like an “All-American pro jock”) who “seemed to have another agenda going.” Vincent always said “things that were very pro-American around him” to “provide my cover.”<sup>1746</sup>

Vincent, unwittingly, became complicit in the charges Ememe leveled.<sup>1747</sup> He applied for, and received a grant, to produce tapes of Nigerian poets—many of whom were involved in secessionist politics—reading Nigerian poetry as well as various other Nigerian verbal culture artifacts. After the completion of the reading, he informed the poets that it had been sponsored by Peace Corps funds, they responded with “absolute rage”—the very “identification of the project with the Peace Corps” was “like getting tarred,” particularly so without compensating them.<sup>1748</sup> Many of the poets were also secessionist militants; their poetry was not only art; might it also be intelligence?<sup>1749</sup>

Michael Echeruo, an early and renowned lecturer in UNN’s English department and now, a literary scholar at the University of Syracuse, attempted to extend to express his concerns about Peace Corps subversion more directly.<sup>1750</sup> After speaking with some of the poets in Vincent’s project, Echeruo acknowledged that he had “never held a loyalty to institutions but loyalty to ideals” and that he would have “ask[ed] that my name be dropped from the list were I in the original reading panel.”<sup>1751</sup> Vincent appears to have attributed the grievances to a general atmosphere of disorganization: the lack of a Head of Department and Nigerian governmental

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<sup>1745</sup> Vincent interview.

<sup>1746</sup> Vincent interview.

<sup>1747</sup> Vincent interview.

<sup>1748</sup> Vincent interview.

<sup>1749</sup> Vincent interview.

<sup>1750</sup> Vincent interview.

<sup>1751</sup> Vincent interview.

malfunction.<sup>1752</sup> Echeruo assured him that was not the case.<sup>1753</sup> The problem was, at least on its face, Peace Corps involvement.<sup>1754</sup>



Figure 14: President John F. Kennedy with William Saltonstall, director of the Peace Corps program in Nigeria. Courtesy of the John F. Kennedy Presidential Library

Nigeria was among the first countries Peace Corps volunteers.<sup>1755</sup> The UNN project was among the first Peace Corps projects to be initiated.<sup>1756</sup> That July, in 1961, Smuckler embarked

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<sup>1752</sup> Vincent interview.

<sup>1753</sup> Vincent interview.

<sup>1754</sup> Vincent interview.

<sup>1755</sup> "Peace Corps Reunites Returned Volunteer and Nigerian Student After 37 Years,"

<https://www.peacecorps.gov/news/library/peace-corps-reunites-returned-volunteer-and-nigerian-student-after-37-years/> <accessed August 20, 2020>. Nigeria was the 12<sup>th</sup> country to receive Corps volunteers. "MSU Peace Corps Unit to Nigeria U.," *Muskegon Chronicle*, September 15, 1961, 9.

<sup>1756</sup> "MSU Peace Corps Training to Start, *Jackson Citizen Patriot*, September 14, 1961, 29.

on negotiations with the Washington Peace Corps hands. From the outset, Smuckler regretted the partnership. “The level of naivete and semi-disorganization,” he vented to Axinn, “is extremely disconcerting and perhaps dangerous.”<sup>1757</sup> Smuckler perceived a band of starry-eyed visionaries who considered the program to be a “brave new world in which nothing else has gone on before, and in which only their views can be valid.”<sup>1758</sup> Bill Hintz, the deputy director for the Peace Corps Nigeria was “quite frustrated” by the disorganization, as well.<sup>1759</sup> Smuckler “would have been glad to pull out of the arrangements on behalf of MSU,” were it not for their “firm commitment to assist the University in every way they possibly can.”<sup>1760</sup>

By the end of 1961, approximately 30 students were sent to Nigeria under Peace Corps auspices, many of them to serve as teaching assistants for the University project.<sup>1761</sup> Helen Marie Rupp, a 29-year-old secretary and English instructor who wanted to “do something for the world, attempted to train some 40 government employees on how to run a university; she soon found that most of the employees felt assurance in their capacity to do their jobs, with no need of a Johnny-Come-Lately American younger than most of them.”<sup>1762</sup>

The UNN student body did not take well to the Peace Corps cohort.<sup>1763</sup> Sheldon Cherney corroborates Ememe’s complaint: “The student body was not very acceptant of this group Corps members were an average age of 22-23, compared to the older students of 28, though “lack of full acceptance. . . goes much deeper than this matter of age.”<sup>1764</sup> Azikiwe found it necessary to

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<sup>1757</sup> Ralph Smuckler, Letter to George Axinn, July 21, 1961, Box 182, Folder 66, UNN Project Papers.

<sup>1758</sup> Ralph Smuckler, Letter to George Axinn, July 21, 1961, Box 182, Folder 66, UNN Project Papers.

<sup>1759</sup> Ralph Smuckler, Letter to George Axinn, July 21, 1961, Box 182, Folder 66, UNN Project Papers.

<sup>1760</sup> Ralph Smuckler, Letter to George Axinn, July 21, 1961, Box 182, Folder 66, UNN Project Papers.

<sup>1761</sup> Peace Corps Contract, 1961, Box 205, Folder 85; “Peace Corps Volunteers,” Box 205, Folder 90, both in UNN Project Papers.

<sup>1762</sup> Joseph R.L. Sterne, “Peace Corps Job Pleases,” *The Sun*, February 15, 1962, 8.

<sup>1763</sup> Sheldon Cherney, Letter to Patricia Wisocki, November 8, 1962, Box 182, Folder 74, UNN Project Papers.

<sup>1764</sup> Sheldon Cherney, Letter to Patricia Wisocki, November 8, 1962, Box 182, Folder 74, UNN Project Papers.



urge the students publicly to be “good sports.”<sup>1765</sup> Obi Wali, a Nigerian student who left behind his wife and children in Nigeria to study at Northwestern University and recruited to teach at UNN, criticized the Corps for hindering marriage prospects: “how could members of the Corps have time to fall in love and get married when they were supposed to be devoting all their time and energies to the University of Nigeria?”<sup>1766</sup> As of 1964, Pakistan lacked three positions, India one, and Guatemala one, while Nigeria needed sixteen more staff members.<sup>1767</sup>

MSU administration exhibited similar disdain for the Peace Corps. “There is an element of mistrust of MSU administration developing here,” one worker observed, that “is going to kill the esprit de corps.”<sup>1768</sup> The Peace Corps volunteers’ moral “plummet[ed] from a fairly high level to rock bottom in about a week’s time.”<sup>1769</sup> The MSU hands failed to empathize with “what it is like to live for two years at a ‘bush’ post.”<sup>1770</sup> MSU was “becoming more interested in buildings than in people,” volunteers around Nsukka said among themselves.<sup>1771</sup> MSU had strict standards about who could hold a position on its contracting staff for UNN.<sup>1772</sup> When Walter Banks, a black American graduate, wanted to work with UNN, Axinn told him his lack of experience disqualified him from working for the MSU group but, perhaps he could qualify as a “direct hire” of the university.<sup>1773</sup> Peace Corps volunteers quickly became associated with problems. Two volunteers, Jo Adams and Judith McKay, struck a child with their vehicle *en route* from Onitsha to Nsukka.<sup>1774</sup> A “crowd began to gather and seemed antagonistic,” so

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<sup>1765</sup> Sheldon Cherney, Letter to Patricia Wisocki, November 8, 1962, Box 182, Folder 74, UNN Project Papers.

<sup>1766</sup> Sheldon Cherney, Memo, October 22, 1962, UNN Project Papers.

<sup>1767</sup> “Overseas Project Personnel Situation—1964,” UNN Project Papers.

<sup>1768</sup> Charles Doane, Letter to George Axinn, June 24, 1963, UNN Project Papers.

<sup>1769</sup> Charles Doane, Letter to George Axinn, June 24, 1963, UNN Project Papers.

<sup>1770</sup> Charles Doane, Letter to George Axinn, June 24, 1963, UNN Project Papers.

<sup>1771</sup> Charles Doane, Letter to George Axinn, June 24, 1963, UNN Project Papers.

<sup>1772</sup> George H. Axinn, Letter to Sheldon Cherney, January 17, 1963, UNN Project Papers.

<sup>1773</sup> George H. Axinn, Letter to Sheldon Cherney, January 17, 1963, UNN Project Papers.

<sup>1774</sup> George H. Axinn, Memo for the Record, June 14, 1962, UNN Project Papers.

Adams drove away “for the safety of Miss McKay.”<sup>1775</sup> The incident exacerbated the university’s other legal entanglements. Their insurance had expired, leaving them vulnerable to lawsuits over the accident.<sup>1776</sup>

Stephen Vincent, a Peace Corps volunteer, claimed longstanding Bay roots. He prided himself on his political savvy; while growing up in a political family, “instead of talking about the Bible,” they “talk[ed] about zoning laws.”<sup>1777</sup> As the only “white guy” on the local basketball team, Vincent had been “conscious of race issues from the get-go.”<sup>1778</sup> While at the University of California-Riverside, he supported CORE and “the whole civil rights thing” more generally.<sup>1779</sup> They “turned the town upside down,” and Vincent was involved in the marches as well as the sit-ins.<sup>1780</sup> Vincent was reticent to join the Peace Corps, initially. Stuttering as he remembered, it “was an arm of colonial. . . you were in league with. . . it made it very lively.”<sup>1781</sup> Vincent was “very conscious of race and power.”<sup>1782</sup> When he arrived in Kalamazoo with others from New York City for training, he felt out-of-place, “eccentric, odd.” Their “world views were much larger than people who came from these mall colleges.”<sup>1783</sup> Vincent was fine with that. “That’s just the world.”<sup>1784</sup> When he saw a handful of “preppies” from the State department flying to Nigeria, “it really irritated the hell out of me.”<sup>1785</sup> Vincent taught humanities and creative writing to students. At the department’s behest, he taught the “Angry Young Men” motif of the

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<sup>1775</sup> George H. Axinn, Memo for the Record, June 14, 1962, UNN Project Papers.

<sup>1776</sup> George H. Axinn, Memo for the Record, June 14, 1962, UNN Project Papers.

<sup>1777</sup> Stephen Vincent, Interview with Phyllis Noble, June 2, 2015, audio recording, John F. Kennedy Library, author’s transcript, generated from <https://www.jfklibrary.org/asset-viewer/archives/RPCV/BD2015/RPCV-ACC-2015-031/RPCV-ACC-2015-031> <accessed November 3, 2019>.

<sup>1778</sup> Vincent interview.

<sup>1779</sup> Vincent interview.

<sup>1780</sup> Vincent interview.

<sup>1781</sup> Vincent interview.

<sup>1782</sup> Vincent interview.

<sup>1783</sup> Vincent interview.

<sup>1784</sup> Vincent interview.

<sup>1785</sup> Vincent interview.

literature, such as Achebe's *No Longer at Ease*, and F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby*.<sup>1786</sup> Some of his students and colleagues, Vincent observed, came "right from the Bush" with "very conservative backgrounds," many of whom took umbrage at the sexual exploits of Fitzgerald's character, Daisy.<sup>1787</sup>

As an instructor at the University, Vincent felt "not that much different from having a government appointment in a high office."<sup>1788</sup> He likely was housed at the Continuing Education Center (CEC), a massive complex built in the heart of the University campus in 1964 with funding by the Kellogg corporation."<sup>1789</sup> The University used resources from the Obudu ranch near the Cameroons border such as pork, cattle, and chicken.<sup>1790</sup> They had "the whole thing": food, running water and a flushing toilet."<sup>1791</sup> A nearby farm, one resident recalled, "produced milk, meat, whatever."<sup>1792</sup> There were "water fountains," too: "beautiful [things] everywhere."<sup>1793</sup> They were "treated well, my dear," he told a former Peace Corps colleague."<sup>1794</sup> Yet, the CEC was established with the idea of *bridging* the gap between village and university, between town and gown. "We wanted our faculty to have to face people in the real world," Axinn recalled, "because of the impact it would have on the faculty."<sup>1795</sup> The University faculty resisted the thought: allowing an uncertified villager on campus would be demeaning.<sup>1796</sup> When Margery Michaelmore, a Smith college Corps volunteer, criticized the

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<sup>1786</sup> Vincent interview.

<sup>1787</sup> Vincent interview.

<sup>1788</sup> Nnaemeka Ikpeze, Interview with Russell Stevenson, August 15, 2018, conducted at Senior Staff Club, University of Nigeria, Nsukka, author's transcript.

<sup>1789</sup> Ikpeze interview.

<sup>1790</sup> Vincent interview.

<sup>1791</sup> Ikpeze interview.

<sup>1792</sup> Ikpeze interview.

<sup>1793</sup> Ikpeze interview.

<sup>1794</sup> Ikpeze interview.

<sup>1795</sup> Axinn interview.

<sup>1796</sup> Axinn interview.

Nigerian living conditions on a postcard and dropped it on the ground, the card was found, copied, and distributed. The incident kicked off a furor between U.S. and Nigerian diplomats, prompting the Nigerian ambassador to the United States, Julius Udochi, to publicly criticize her of “gross negligence” for “not put[ting] it in an envelope.”<sup>1797</sup> Udochi attributed her perspective to a “sub-conscious image” she harbored before coming to Nigeria.<sup>1798</sup>

In spring 1963 there were two dozen Peace Corps members with salaries paid by USAID funds.<sup>1799</sup> Azikiwe responded to the criticism: “Surely, none but the most ungrateful person would call his benefactors names. . . a university atmosphere cannot be fertile soil for such sterile seeds of uncharitableness and malevolence.”<sup>1800</sup> The Peace Corps members had their flaws, guilty of “one or two indiscretions” Azikiwe acknowledged, but “they have not come here for any malicious purpose or to encourage subversive activities either against the stability of our Government or the stability of our State.”<sup>1801</sup> UNN students should be “good sports, and let our friends from the land of Uncle Sam realise that we appreciate that ‘A friend in need is a friend in deed.’”<sup>1802</sup>

Western or Western-sponsored institutions provided the intellectual incubators for much of the first generation of UNN’s intelligentsia. Kenneth O. Dike, widely acknowledged for his “brilliance” and, perhaps, his “a-politics,” became one of the vanguard historians, trained at King’s College, London, to produce histories of Nigeria rooted in archival records and oral traditions—and served as a University of Ibadan Vice-Chancellor in the same year as UNN’s

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<sup>1797</sup> “Nigerian Predicts Success for Corps,” *Jackson Citizen Patriot*, October 20, 1961, 10.

<sup>1798</sup> “Nigerian Predicts Success for Corps,” *Jackson Citizen Patriot*, October 20, 1961, 10.

<sup>1799</sup> B.N. Chukwudebe, Address, April 15, 1963, Box 49, Folder 22, Hannah Papers.

<sup>1800</sup> Nnamdi Azikiwe, *Footprints on the Sands of Time, Address to UNN*, October 2, 1962, 28, Nnamdi Azikiwe Library.

<sup>1801</sup> Nnamdi Azikiwe, *Footprints on the Sands of Time, Address to UNN*, October 2, 1962, 28, Nnamdi Azikiwe Library.

<sup>1802</sup> Nnamdi Azikiwe, *Footprints on the Sands of Time, Address to UNN*, October 2, 1962, 28, Nnamdi Azikiwe Library.

founding; he later joined the UNN faculty.<sup>1803</sup> J. F. Ajayi attended University College, Ibadan, to then proceed to University of Leicester for an additional bachelor's degree in history.<sup>1804</sup> He later completed his Ph.D. at the University of London in 1958.<sup>1805</sup> Literary giant Chinua Achebe and mathematician Chike Obi also entered academia through Ibadan's halls.<sup>1806</sup> Professor E. I. Nwogugu received his law degree from the University of Manchester, and Frank Ndili received his Ph.D. in mathematics from Cambridge in Physics.<sup>1807</sup> Eni Njoku, the University of Lagos' first Vice-Chancellor—and UNN's second—received his botany Ph.D. from the University of London in 1954.<sup>1808</sup> A. D. Loving as Dean in Student Affairs had received an Ed.D. from Wayne State, Registrar Peter Strethill Wright with an M.A. from Oxford, as well as Deputy Registrar Vincent Ike and Medical Officer O. L. Ekpechi from London.<sup>1809</sup> History lecturer Modilum Achufusi had received training at Leipzig.<sup>1810</sup>

Others attended American institutions. Economist Nnaemeka Ikpeze attended Columbia University.<sup>1811</sup> Similarly, English professor Michael C. Echeruo received his Ph.D. from Cornell University.<sup>1812</sup> Oleka Udeala, later a Vice-Chancellor, attended the Brooklyn College.<sup>1813</sup> Chike

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<sup>1803</sup> Roland Oliver, *In the Realms of Gold: Pioneering in African History* (New York: Taylor and Francis, 2013), 186. For a full survey, see Gloria Chuku, *The Igbo Intellectual Tradition*.

*Creative Conflict in African and African Diasporic Thought* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), chpt. 5.

<sup>1804</sup> Toyin Falola and Saheed Aderinto, *Nigeria, Natioanlism, and Writing History* (Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 2010), 115.

<sup>1805</sup> Toyin Falola and Saheed Aderinto, *Nigeria, Natioanlism, and Writing History* (Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 2010), 115.

<sup>1806</sup> Livsey, *Nigeria's University Age*, Kindle Locations 782-800.

<sup>1807</sup> Frank Ndili, Interview with Russell Stevenson, December 21-22, 2018; E.I. Nwogugu, interview with Russell Stevenson, October 24, 2018, author's transcripts.

<sup>1808</sup> Martin Kolinsky, "The Growth of Nigerian Universities 1948-1980: The British Share," *Minerva* 23, no. 1 (March 1985): 39 note 35.

<sup>1809</sup> *Exeter College Association*, <https://staging.exeter.ox.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/register-08.pdf> <accessed August 11, 2020>.

<sup>1810</sup> *Report of Progress, January 1-June 30, 1964* (East Lansing, MI: Michigan State University Press, 1964), 66.

<sup>1811</sup> Ikpeze interview.

<sup>1812</sup> For a full treatment of Michael Echeruo, see Obiwu, "Special Focus: Cultural Icon: Michael J.C. Echeruo and the African Academy," in *The Critical Imagination in African Literature: Essays in Honor of Michael J.C. Echeruo*, eds. Maik Nwosu and Obiwu (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2015), 1-25.

<sup>1813</sup> Oleka Udeala, Interview with Russell Stevenson, October 5, 2019.

Obi, one of Nigeria's pioneering mathematicians and a leader of the Dynamic Party, received his Ph.D. from Massachusetts Institute of Technology in 1950, and James Adichie, Nigeria's pioneering statistician, received a Ph.D. at the University of California.<sup>1814</sup> Udeala observed that it may "amaze anybody the way the community wanted to support people who wanted to go to school."<sup>1815</sup> Those running the lottery took leaves, "put something in some of the leaves" and "nothing in the others, and put it in a basket."<sup>1816</sup> But his brother passed his opportunity to Udeala. When he began to consider university education, the community decided that he would become a lawyer and "would make [him] to study," since "being a lawyer was fashionable."<sup>1817</sup>

Jim Buschman, an undergraduate at Michigan State University whose father, Mel Buschman, took a year-long assignment as a faculty economist at UNN, decided to travel with his family to UNN for the year. "Nothing looked, sounded, felt, or smelled the least bit familiar."<sup>1818</sup> Jim took care to join the basketball team, newly established by the American physical education instructors; the university had a women's team, too.<sup>1819</sup> Buschman ventured into the villages via motorcycle, "regularly causing a sensation as we arrived unannounced in a village that had rarely seen a foreigner."<sup>1820</sup> Taggart's International Programs office also invited a flow of foreign students who could teach languages, consultants at high school teacher workshops regarding their area of origin.<sup>1821</sup>

### *Nigerian Academics Abroad*

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<sup>1814</sup> James Adichie, Interview with Russell Stevenson, December 1, 2018.

<sup>1815</sup> Oleka Kelechi Udeala, Interview with author, October 5, 2019, at Novotel, Port Harcourt, transcript in author's possession.

<sup>1816</sup> Udeala Interview.

<sup>1817</sup> Udeala Interview.

<sup>1818</sup> Jim Buschman, "Study Abroad in Africa: A Personal Memoir," *African Issues* 28, nos. 1/2 (200)): 130-132.

<sup>1819</sup> Jim Buschman, "Study Abroad in Africa: A Personal Memoir," *African Issues* 28, nos. 1/2 (200)): 131.

<sup>1820</sup> Jim Buschman, "Study Abroad in Africa: A Personal Memoir," *African Issues* 28, nos. 1/2 (200)): 131.

<sup>1821</sup> Glen L. Taggart, Speech to National Association for Foreign Student Affairs, April 29, 1964, MSS 83, Box 1, Folder 9, Taggart Papers, Merrill-Cazier Special Collections, Utah State University.

Scholars at UNN frequently received their education in the United Kingdom, the United States, or elsewhere. As a child, Paul Akubue, born and raised in Nimo and the founder of UNN's pharmacy department, had a talent for mathematics. He had wanted to become an engineer: "because here in Nigeria we have a lot of winding roads. . . get them all straight."<sup>1822</sup> Shortly after Nigeria's independence, he saw an ad in a newspaper regarding federal scholarships to study pharmacy.<sup>1823</sup> He left Nigeria to pursue his first degree and then his Ph.D. at the University of London. While studying at the University of London, Akubue saw "people from so many nationalities. . . Chinese, Japanese, British people as well. . . Everybody was friendly."<sup>1824</sup> They "had no problem at all. . . with British foreigners." They "were all friends, brothers."<sup>1825</sup>

Nigerian academics studying in America engaged racial constructs as black Americans did. They enjoyed mixed results. An Ibibio student, F. Timothy Essient of Ikot Ekan, became a member of the University of Chicago's student assembly.<sup>1826</sup> Oleka Udeala, while a student at Brooklyn College, took a trip with some American hosts, Charles and Helen McKenna. Udeala's depiction of life in America is reflective. While traveling on Route 40 in West Virginia, they stopped at the Silverline Restaurant for some dinner at the Horseshoe Restaurant.<sup>1827</sup> "This is cemented in my memory," he recalls. "As soon as we stepped through, we heard: 'We don't serve them folks here.'<sup>1828</sup> Udeala was confused. Immediately, some Americans stood up: 'if you won't serve them folks, we won't eat here.' They got up and walked out."<sup>1829</sup> When they tried

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<sup>1822</sup> Paul Akubue, Interview with author, August 28, 2018, in University of Nigeria, Nsukka Pharmacy Building, transcript in author's possession.

<sup>1823</sup> Akubue Interview.

<sup>1824</sup> Akubue Interview.

<sup>1825</sup> Akubue Interview.

<sup>1826</sup> "A Nigerian Scholar Elected to Student Assembly," *Eastern States Express* [Aba] January 17, 1957, 4

<sup>1827</sup> Udeala Interview.

<sup>1828</sup> Udeala Interview.

<sup>1829</sup> Udeala Interview.

again, the “drama repeated itself, as if rehearsed, [at the] Horseshoe Restaurant.”<sup>1830</sup> When they heard, “we don’t serve them folks here,” more people stood up: “If you don’t serve them folks here, we aren’t gonna eat here.”<sup>1831</sup> Udeala took the lesson: “you can trust Americans.”<sup>1832</sup> Udeala did not take note of all American racial constructs. “I didn’t really understand what was going on at the time,” he acknowledges. “I was comfortable. I had plenty of money and time to have adventures.”<sup>1833</sup> Whenever he saw people “cringing,” asking “Who brought this one here,” he had “a tonic for them.”<sup>1834</sup> He would “sing an African, a Nigerian song and tell them what it meant.”<sup>1835</sup> One day in his pharmacy, he wore a white hat resembling Ku Klux Klan garb, not recognizing the racist implications: “We are used to masquerades in Africa. People put on some funny gears. I didn’t know I was dressed like a Ku Klux Klan!”<sup>1836</sup>

James Adichie studied mathematics at Ibadan and then, upon receiving his B.A., took work at Central Bank—but found himself required to be an economist rather than a mathematician.<sup>1837</sup> He wanted to leave: “I didn’t read economics, sir,” he told his supervisor. “I read mathematics.”<sup>1838</sup> His supervisor, angered, urged him to stay—even showing him a pamphlet of Adichie’s paper. “If you are good enough to write this,” he told Adichie, “What are you talking about?”<sup>1839</sup> Committed to the trade he studied, Adichie resigned his post.<sup>1840</sup> He met a similar experience when he applied for work at the University of Nigeria. He found that they would only hire him as a statistician—and if he would not become one, he “had no job”; he had

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<sup>1830</sup> Udeala Interview.

<sup>1831</sup> Udeala Interview.

<sup>1832</sup> Udeala Interview.

<sup>1833</sup> Udeala Interview.

<sup>1834</sup> Udeala Interview.

<sup>1835</sup> Udeala Interview.

<sup>1836</sup> Udeala Interview.

<sup>1837</sup> Akubue Interview.

<sup>1838</sup> Akubue Interview.

<sup>1839</sup> Akubue Interview.

<sup>1840</sup> Akubue Interview.



one day to prepare to begin teaching introductory statistics.<sup>1841</sup> Adichie picked up a statistics volume and began to cram. “Mean, mode—I didn’t know what that meant.”<sup>1842</sup> When he saw his students the next morning, he joked: “You are my guinea pigs.”<sup>1843</sup> Andrew Walls recalled that there were “a number of people. . . recruited from dubious places on dubious grounds,” joking that, at times, they “needed a lecturer in mathematics and here was a large Egyptian with a PhD who said he was a professor in mathematics.”<sup>1844</sup>

Adichie taught statistics for two years before he, with the financial support of the University, left to acquire his Ph.D. at the University of California-Berkeley.<sup>1845</sup> The first day overwhelmed him. “Just imagine after your history degree,” he told the interviewer, “and then asked to go and study biology or chemistry, something like that.”<sup>1846</sup> Surrounded by Indians and Pakistanis far more equipped than he was, he planned to give up.<sup>1847</sup> He approached the Dean that he could not continue the program.<sup>1848</sup> The Dean assured him: “Don’t go anywhere. You’ll make it but you’ll have to work hard.”<sup>1849</sup> And when Adichie called him ‘Sir,’ the professor corrected him. He “told me to stop that,” and instead: “Call me Eric.”<sup>1850</sup> Within three years, Adichie was an “A” student.<sup>1851</sup> He audited several mathematics courses and attended summer classes daily. Adichie returned to become Nigeria’s first professor of statistics.<sup>1852</sup>

### *Indians at Nsukka*

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<sup>1841</sup> Akubue Interview.

<sup>1842</sup> Akubue Interview.

<sup>1843</sup> James Adichie, Interview with author, December 1, 2018, James Adichie Home, Abba, transcript in author’s possession.

<sup>1844</sup> Walls Interview.

<sup>1845</sup> Akubue Interview.

<sup>1846</sup> Akubue Interview.

<sup>1847</sup> Akubue Interview.

<sup>1848</sup> Akubue Interview.

<sup>1849</sup> Akubue Interview.

<sup>1850</sup> Akubue Interview.

<sup>1851</sup> Akubue Interview.

<sup>1852</sup> Adichie Interview.

The University of Nigeria, Nsukka tapped into the talent of another recently independent country, India. Wright was also instrumental in facilitating a cohort of Indian scholars, particularly mathematicians, into the Nigeria scene. Zoologist H. L. Sharma from Birla college served on the Nsukka staff; Walls reported that he kept a “house of raccoons” for student examination.<sup>1853</sup> By early 1961, an Indian mathematician served as the mathematics HOD, and several more mathematicians taught classes throughout the campus—presenting a visible Indian presence in the University’s ethno-intellectual life.<sup>1854</sup> Historians Joseph W. Dauben and Rohit Parikh have argued that the rise of Indian mathematics at the turn-of-the-twentieth century reveals the “collective efforts of an entire nation to pursue excellence,” not only for its own sake but also, training the “next generation to be even better mathematicians than their predecessors.”<sup>1855</sup> By spring 1961, MSU had expanded operations to India, where it, in cooperation with the University of Illinois and the University of Wisconsin, provided advisory assistance for two colleges of engineering.<sup>1856</sup> The following spring, MSU hosted S. K. Dey, India’s Minister of Community Development, who visited the MSU campus for 2-3 weeks to support the Centennial program for the Association of Land-Grant Colleges.<sup>1857</sup>

In 1962, Wright, now tasked as being the “organizer” of the geography department, also recruited Manjusri and Parbati Sircar.<sup>1858</sup> Wright knew the Sircars while he taught at the University of Delhi’s School of African Studies, which he had founded.<sup>1859</sup> The Sircars were an

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<sup>1853</sup> Walls interview.

<sup>1854</sup> “News About the University of Nigeria, Nsukka for the Months of February and March, 1961,” Box 49, Folder 17, Hannah Papers.

<sup>1855</sup> Joseph W. Dauben and Rohit Parikh, “Beginnings of Modern Mathematics in India,” *Current Science* 99, no. 3 (August 10, 2010): 15-16.

<sup>1856</sup> “Report on Inspection Trip of India Project,” April 30, 1961, Box 42, Folder 8, Hannah Papers.

<sup>1857</sup> “Report of the Meeting of Overseas Project Coordinators,” December 13, 1961, UNN Project Papers; “MSU Lecturer,” *Detroit News*, May 18, 1962, 13.

<sup>1858</sup> *Indian Journal of African Studies*, vols. 5-7 (1992): 120.

<sup>1859</sup> Niranjana Desai, “India and Africa: A New Engagement,” *India Quarterly* 65, no. 4 (Oct.-Dec. 2009): 416, note 2.

unusual pair. Born in Berhampur, West Bengal, Manjusri Chaki Sircar loved poetry.<sup>1860</sup> As a child, the heterodox rhythm of the Nobel Prize winning poet, Rabindranath Tagore, inspired her to cut an independent path as a dance artist.<sup>1861</sup> Born in 1934 to family of well-to-do intellectuals and writers in Pabna (now Bangladesh), she grew up surrounded by literature, music, dance, and the arts. On nights of the full moon, Chaki-Sircar performed free style dances in costumes designed by her siblings.<sup>1862</sup>

Following the India partition in 1948, Sircar's family left Pabna for Calcutta, where she trained in *bharata nāṭyam* as well as Manipuri and Odissi dance.<sup>1863</sup> Her father supported her dance lessons provided she keep her grades up; her father's greatest wish to raise a family—sons and daughters—of academics.<sup>1864</sup> Her father's support for female education—let alone, for *all* of his daughters—challenged the customs of Calcutta, where she trained at Presidency College of Calcutta—a school for the neo-colonial elite—receiving a B.A. in Bengali literature.<sup>1865</sup> She married Parbati, ten years her senior, after courting for two years.<sup>1866</sup> Sircar, who had a disability making him incapable of carrying large loads, joked that he married her for her *shakti* [strength] so that someone could lift their luggage. She played the lead role in *Pujarini* opposite Shri Balakrishna Menon.<sup>1867</sup> Parbati had taught African geography under Wright's supervision, while Manjusri taught Bengali language at Ram Jas College and continued to study dance.<sup>1868</sup> In 1963,

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<sup>1860</sup> Trevor Montague Wade, "Choreography as Feminist Strategy: Three Approaches to Hindu Feminism in the Dance of Chandralekha, Manjusri Chaki-Sircar, and Daksha Sheth," Ph.D. dissertation, University of Chicago, 2001, 34.

<sup>1861</sup> Wade, "Choreography as Feminist Strategy," 34.

<sup>1862</sup> Wade, "Choreography as Feminist Strategy," 187.

<sup>1863</sup> Wade, "Choreography as Feminist Strategy," 187.

<sup>1864</sup> Wade, "Choreography as Feminist Strategy," 188.

<sup>1865</sup> Wade, "Choreography as Feminist Strategy," 188.

<sup>1866</sup> Wade, "Choreography as Feminist Strategy," 189.

<sup>1867</sup> Manjusri Sircar, Letter to State University College, December 25, 1966, Taggart Papers, Box 1, Folder 1, Merrill Cazier.

<sup>1868</sup> Wade, "Choreography as Feminist Strategy," 190.

Sircar gave birth to a daughter, Ranjabati Sircar, in Nsukka. Ranjabati became a world-renowned dancer, pioneering a *navanritya*—a “new dance”—intended to be reflective of Indian diasporic identity.<sup>1869</sup>

At Nsukka, Manjusri taught a variety of dances, including classical *bharata natyam*: the Temple Dance of Southern India.<sup>1870</sup> A conventional *bharata nāṭyam* consists of a concert that commences with an offering to a deity and then a series of dances that are either *nritta* (“pure dance”) or *nritya* (“story-telling dance”).<sup>1871</sup> Manjusri taught Elaine Taggart, Glen Taggart’s daughter, as well as numerous other UNN students the *bharata natyam* with a “special emphasis on body position, co-ordination of hand and foot-work, hand symbols and gestures, exercises of the eyes, neck, limbs, [and] fingers.”<sup>1872</sup> She later highlighted her experience with Ijaw dance associations in her decision to become a cultural anthropologist.<sup>1873</sup>

The India-Nigeria-Kenya-MSU linkage showed the strength of international institutional relationships among newly decolonizing regimes. As vanguards of cultural renaissance in India or as Gikuyu advocates in Kenya, the figures shaping the UNN navigated a network of nationalist channels that promoted autonomy at the same time as they promoted inter-cultural admixtures. The Sircars, Peter Wright, and Glen Taggart highlighted the strength of certain institutional commitments to promoting a fully nationalistic and richly diverse Nsukka milieu.

### *The Dutch*

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<sup>1869</sup> Wade, “Choreography as Feminist Strategy,” 116.

<sup>1870</sup> Manjusri Sircar, Letter to State University College, December 25, 1966, Taggart Papers, Box 1, Folder 1, Merrill-Cazier.

<sup>1871</sup> Diane Mickevičienė, “Ritual Dance as a form of Worship - a Case of Bharata Nāṭyam,” *Acta Orientalia Vilnensia* 5 (December 2004): 228-241.

<sup>1872</sup> Manjusri Sircar, Letter to State University College, December 25, 1966, Glen L. Taggart Papers, Utah State University.

<sup>1873</sup> Leela Venkataraman, “An Interview with Manjusri Chaki Sircar,” [https://sruti.com/index.php?route=archives/interview\\_details&intId=40](https://sruti.com/index.php?route=archives/interview_details&intId=40) <accessed October 31, 2019>.

UNN attracted an additional cohort of external experts. The Netherlands University Foundation for International Cooperation (NUFFIC) had been active, committed to the cultivation and “development” of international university partnerships.<sup>1874</sup> H. G. Quik, then director of NUFFIC, noticed that Dutch universities were failing to attract students and that their “active policy directed at attracting foreigners for normal study at our universities was not justified.”<sup>1875</sup> The Dutch had learned their limitations first and foremost on the campus of Nsukka.

In October 1960, Quik conducted a tour of universities throughout West Africa, paying close attention for potential recruits.<sup>1876</sup> He wanted to not only recruit Nigerian students to come to Dutch universities; he hoped to provide a team of advisors to “assist generally in planning,” with potential for advisors serving on “longer term contracts.”<sup>1877</sup> But Quik was sensitive to British ambitions to preserve their education in the post-empire era, emphasizing to one British educator that NUFFIC “in no way wish[ed] to cut across the work that the I.U.C. is doing for these colleges.”<sup>1878</sup> The Dutch saw little interest in the Nigeria project for foreign policy purposes: they would receive “no profit from carrying out the project,” one expert observed, “except perhaps that those who carry it out gain the uplifting experience of working in a developing country.”<sup>1879</sup>

In spring 1963, Hannah celebrated the “classrooms, laboratories, librarians, and

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<sup>1874</sup> *Internationalization of European Higher Education: An EU/ACA Handbook*, eds. Michael Gaebel, Lewis Purser, Bernd Wächter, Lesley Wilson (Berlin: Raabe academic publishers, 2008), 9.

<sup>1875</sup> Hans de Wit, *Internationalization of Higher Education: A Historical, Comparative, and Conceptual Analysis* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2002), 185.

<sup>1876</sup> “Netherlands University Foundation for International Co-operation,” Note, October 18, 1961, BW 90/608, National Archives-Kew.

<sup>1877</sup> “Netherlands University Foundation for International Co-operation,” Note, October 18, 1961, BW 90/608, National Archives-Kew.

<sup>1878</sup> “Netherlands University Foundation for International Co-operation,” Note, October 18, 1961, BW 90/608, National Archives-Kew.

<sup>1879</sup> Letter, Netherlands National Archives.

dormitories,” in addition to the “athletic fields, the roadways, the water system, [and] the electric system.”<sup>1880</sup> More, a “curriculum has been developed,” a “faculty is established, and a research program designed.”<sup>1881</sup> Hannah considered it “almost a miracle.”<sup>1882</sup> By the following summer, the University had expanded to include the Enugu campus and had constructed the Nnamdi Azikiwe library which contained 72,102 books, largely acquired through individual donors—including Azikiwe himself. These books were borrowed just under 250,000 times since the library’s opening.<sup>1883</sup> Only a few years earlier, an early history student recalled, the “library was scanty,” totaling less than 10,000 books.<sup>1884</sup> The MSU team celebrated UNN as a success story. Hannah directed Axinn to prepare two films on Nigeria projects, one entitled: “Hope to a Frustrated People,” which shows two convocations as well as “general documentary footage.”<sup>1885</sup> Hannah loved it: “films are excellent,” he wrote on Axinn’s memo.<sup>1886</sup> Hannah encouraged University Council chair, Okechukwu Ikejiani, and the Nigerian Railway Corporation chair to watch: it “depicts so well” UNN’s significance, and “will be extremely useful. . . in preparing our own staff for service at Nsukka, and for bringing to others here in America some idea of the progress at the University of Nigeria.”<sup>1887</sup>

Axinn was also pleased to see a change of posture during re-negotiations with the Corps. They seemed “much more understanding of the nature of a university” than the 1961 officials he met.<sup>1888</sup> Prominent scholars were lecturing on a variety of subjects: historian John D. Fage on

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<sup>1880</sup> John A. Hannah, “University of Nigeria Revisited,” Box 49, Folder 22, Hannah Papers.

<sup>1881</sup> John A. Hannah, “University of Nigeria Revisited,” Box 49, Folder 22, Hannah Papers.

<sup>1882</sup> John Hannah, Letter to Nnamdi Azikiwe, March 21, 1963, Box 177A, Folder 48, UNN Project Papers.

<sup>1883</sup> Annual Report, 1963-1964, 12.

<sup>1884</sup> J.B.C. Anyake, Interview with Wineth Ekechi Obi, 81.

<sup>1885</sup> George Axinn, Letter to John Hannah, July 15, 1964, Box 177A, Folder 54, UNN Project Papers.

<sup>1886</sup> George Axinn, Letter to John Hannah, July 15, 1964, Box 177A, Folder 54, UNN Project Papers.

<sup>1887</sup> John A. Hannah, Letter to Okechukwu Ikejiani, August 4, 1964; George H. Axinn, Letter to John A. Hannah, July 15, 1964, both in Box 177A, Folder 54, UNN Project Papers.

<sup>1888</sup> George H. Axinn, Letter to John A. Hannah, June 29, 1964, Box 177A, Folder 54, UNN Project Papers.

African historiography and literary critic Donatus Nwoga on Shakespeare's relevance to Nigeria.<sup>1889</sup> British biologist A. J. Birch lectured on biosynthesis.<sup>1890</sup> The staff had become diversified, with direct-hire senior administration (60) hailing from Nigeria (32), Great Britain (7), United States (8), India (4), Sierra Leone (2), "West Indies" (2)—and then individuals scattered among the Philippines, Ireland, Ghana, Pakistan, and Italy.<sup>1891</sup> Walls recalls teaching a "Filipino, a Luxembourger, and a Burmese," all at the same time.<sup>1892</sup> The University attracted a host of guests: dignitaries such as Senegal's Leopold Senghor and Prime Minister Eric Williams.<sup>1893</sup>

UNN also legitimized the notion of educational accessibility throughout Nigeria. When the University of Lagos was founded in 1962, it styled itself directly after the Nsukka model; Dr. Nathaniel Opubor argued that the Lagos University catered its coursework to an urban working populace, largely incapable of taking regularly scheduled degree courses during the day.<sup>1894</sup> When Eni Njoku, the University of Lagos Vice-Chancellor, spoke at the Medical School opening in October 1962, he spoke of "broadening the students' education" and adopting, in some form or another, American-style education.<sup>1895</sup> Given Nsukka's remoteness, its pedagogical relevance was unable to reach a large population; however, its model inspired University of Lagos to "do the things that Nsukka could have done if it was located in a different place."<sup>1896</sup>

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<sup>1889</sup> Annual Report, 1963-1964, 16, 18.

<sup>1890</sup> Annual Report, 1963-1964, 16, 18.

<sup>1891</sup> Annual Report, 1963-1964, 37.

<sup>1892</sup> Walls interview.

<sup>1893</sup> *Report of Progress, January 1-June 30, 1964* (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1964), 2.

<sup>1894</sup> Nathaniel Opubor, Interview with Ezeocha, 185.

<sup>1895</sup> Eni Njoku, "General Education in the University," October 2, 1962, Speech Delivered at University of Lagos, pamphlet at University of Lagos Special Collections.

<sup>1896</sup> Nathaniel Opubor, Interview with Ezeocha, 185.

UNN worked closely with the village. Dr. E.O. Odokara credited UNN for collaborating with multiple government agencies to “make available its resources to whole communities.”<sup>1897</sup> In the early years of the university, George Axinn’s wife, Nancy, helped to establish a “Home Economics” department which, according to Nancy, “didn’t exist on the continent.”<sup>1898</sup> Maria Onyeuwalu Ahunanya, who had received her master’s degree at MSU in Institute of Extension Personnel Development, implemented a nutrition program in the villages, dividing up Nigerian foods into food groups, borrowing from American nutritional models.<sup>1899</sup> When she entered a village, she placed yams, cassava, and other foods on a log and thus, and incorporated the university teaching into the daily life of village farmers.<sup>1900</sup> Three times per week, women, children in tow, stopped by the CEC early in the morning where Ahunanya taught them about food science.<sup>1901</sup> Ahunanya studied both in London and at Michigan State University for family life training.<sup>1902</sup> Ahunanya became the sterling representative of “What UNN Can Do For Nigerian Families” among Michigan State University organizers; Ahunanya spoke to the Lansing Area Home Economists association in October 1962.<sup>1903</sup> In 1964, she completed an Nsukka-based study through Michigan State University on “women’s opinions about fertility, infant, and child mortality,” and she graduated with a master’s degree in Cooperative Extension Education.<sup>1904</sup> UNN was to draw its “community planning” and “land use allocation” resources

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<sup>1897</sup> Dr. E.O. Odokara, “The Partnership of Universities in Continuing Education of Adults in Rural Nigeria,” *Canadian Journal of African Studies* 4, no. 3 (Autumn 1970): 395.

<sup>1898</sup> Axinn interview.

<sup>1899</sup> Axinn interview.

<sup>1900</sup> Axinn interview.

<sup>1901</sup> Axinn interview.

<sup>1902</sup> “Family Life in the U.S.” *Lansing State Journal*, September 23, 1962, D-14; “Home Economists to Hear Two Speakers,” *Lansing State Journal*, October 5, 1962, B-5.

<sup>1903</sup> “Home Economists to Hear Two Speakers,” *Lansing State Journal*, October 5, 1962, B-5.

<sup>1904</sup> Maria Onyeuwalu Ahunanya, “Women’s Opinions About Fertility, Infant, and Child Mortality in Nsukka, Nigeria,” M.A. Thesis, Michigan State University, January 1965; *Commencement 1964: Michigan State University*, 33, [http://spartanhistory.kora.matrix.msu.edu/files/1/4/1-4-139D-54-S201\\_1964F.pdf](http://spartanhistory.kora.matrix.msu.edu/files/1/4/1-4-139D-54-S201_1964F.pdf) <accessed August 21, 2020>.



through villagers, which would then be incorporated into the curriculum of the Faculty of Agriculture.<sup>1905</sup>

Ahuannya had reasons to be concerned over mortality rates. Over the course of the 1963/1964 academic year, nearly 27,000 cases and 86 surgery cases came through the medical



Figure 15: Women taking an early morning class at the Continuing Education Center, ca. 1964-1966. Courtesy of Merrill-Cazier Library, Utah State University.

center's doors—averaging just over 73 cases/daily in a 365-day year.<sup>1906</sup> 383 senior and junior staff/families needed hospitalization.<sup>1907</sup> Dean W. W. Armistead complained about spreading laundry on the ground that could be contaminated by Tumbu fly larvae, about meat slaughtering by dusty roads in the Nsukka town center—a practice “difficult indeed to justify for an institution. . . dedicated to the enlightenment of people.”<sup>1908</sup>

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<sup>1905</sup> Howard R. Neville, “Report to the Principal on the Continuing Education Program at the University of Nigeria,” October 20, 1961, Box 49, Folder 18, Hannah Papers.

<sup>1906</sup> Annual Report, 1963-1964, 37.

<sup>1907</sup> Annual Report, 1963-1964, 37.

<sup>1908</sup> W.W. Armistead, Letter to George Johnson, January 31, 1963, Box 49, Folder 22, Hannah Papers.

### *Struggling for Indigenization*

For all of Aba representative O.C. Ememe's complaints, Michigan State University desperately hoped to indigenize UNN leadership.<sup>1909</sup> Johnson had been slated to stay from October 1960 through October 1962. For two years, Johnson was convinced to stay "one more year."<sup>1910</sup> In October 1962, Axinn warned Taggart about over-hiring expatriates, urging the university to refuse a contract to any expatriate for longer than three years or to any expatriate who does not have a permanent position in a foreign university.<sup>1911</sup> More, Axinn anticipated that the next Vice Chancellor may need to come from Michigan State University.<sup>1912</sup> Axinn urged Hannah that if MSU provided the Vice Chancellor, "it is important to press that a Nigerian counterpart be found as early as possible so that he may be groomed for the assignment."<sup>1913</sup> As of June 1963, George Johnson was still "looking for a Nigerian provost," though one "promising prospect" proved "politically unacceptable" for Azikiwe—a phenomenon typical in academia.<sup>1914</sup> Hannah pushed Azikiwe too: they needed to locate a handful of "promising young Nigerians with Ph.D. degrees" to be "develop[ed] into a fully adequate candidate as a possible Vice-Chancellor."<sup>1915</sup> He urged Azikiwe to "look askance" at foreigners who sought full-time work at the University; it could produce a "discouraging influence" on Nigerians if the senior posts continued to be *oyibo* heavy. And above all, Hannah insisted that the agriculture program be enhanced in its research, expanded in its scope, and deepened in its relationship with the

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<sup>1909</sup> George Axinn, Letter to Glen L. Taggart, October 30, 1962, UNN Project Papers, Box 177A, Folder 43, Hannah Papers.

<sup>1910</sup> John A. Hannah, Letter to Clark Kerr, April 5, 1963, Box 49, Folder 22, Hannah Papers.

<sup>1911</sup> George Axinn, Letter to Glen L. Taggart, October 30, 1962, UNN Project Papers, Box 177A, Folder 43, Hannah Papers.

<sup>1912</sup> George Axinn, Draft Letter to John A. Hannah, November 30, 1962, Box 177A, Folder 42, UNN Project Papers.

<sup>1913</sup> George Axinn, Draft Letter to John A. Hannah, November 30, 1962, Box 177A, Folder 42, UNN Project Papers.

<sup>1914</sup> George M. Johnson, Letter to John A. Hannah, June 8, 1963, Box 49, Folder 22, Hannah Papers.

<sup>1915</sup> John A. Hannah, Letter to Nnamdi Azikiwe, March 21, 1963 (see also handwritten copy), Box 49, Folder 22, Hannah Papers.

community.<sup>1916</sup>

Hannah lobbied for Bede Okigbo, who had worked alongside Johnson, to be the Vice-Chancellor.<sup>1917</sup> Perhaps, Azikiwe responded, he could be sent to East Lansing to work alongside Hannah for “some practical experience in university administration and also acquire strategy in handling people, particularly through the means of communication.”<sup>1918</sup> In March 1964, Azikiwe gave Hannah the bad news: Okigbo’s name received universal disapproval from the all-African Finance and General Purposes Committee. Johnson reported that Azikiwe “did not push it very hard.”<sup>1919</sup> The Committee felt he was “too young and inexperienced,” and the ongoing criticism of the University suggested this was no job for an intern. The Committee wanted an “experienced administrator cum scholar.”<sup>1920</sup> The Committee requested Glen Taggart and if not him, then Leeds’ Donald G. Burns or University of London’s Noonan to serve as “Acting Vice Chancellor for a short duration.”<sup>1921</sup> Hannah refused to countenance Burns or Noonan. “I certainly do not want to spare you from your present duties here,” he told Taggart, “but if it becomes absolutely necessary, intolerable as this possibility is, it might be better than having a Britisher.”<sup>1922</sup> Hannah hoped that they could find an alternative they could “sell Azikiwe and his group,” since “It would be very difficult to make Taggart available for any extended period.”<sup>1923</sup> They failed, and Hannah relented; Taggart was approved by the Council on May 16.<sup>1924</sup>

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<sup>1916</sup> John A. Hannah, Letter to Nnamdi Azikiwe, March 21, 1963 (see also handwritten copy), Box 49, Folder 22, Hannah Papers.

<sup>1917</sup> John A. Hannah, Letter to Nnamdi Azikiwe, March 21, 1963 (see also handwritten copy), Box 49, Folder 22, Hannah Papers.

<sup>1918</sup> Nnamdi Azikiwe, Letter to John A. Hannah, March 6, 1964, Box 177A, Folder 51, UNN Project Papers.

<sup>1919</sup> TelCom, George Johnson and George Axinn, March 15, 1964, 6:15 A.M. Box 177A, Folder 51, UNN Project Papers.

<sup>1920</sup> Nnamdi Azikiwe, cable to John A. Hannah, ca. March 1964, Box 177A, Folder 51, UNN Project Papers.

<sup>1921</sup> Nnamdi Azikiwe, cable to John A. Hannah, ca. March 1964, Box 177A, Folder 51, UNN Project Papers.

<sup>1922</sup> John A. Hannah, Letter to Glen L. Taggart, March 13, 1964, Box 177A, Folder 51, UNN Project Papers.

<sup>1923</sup> John A. Hannah, Cable, April 6, 1964, Box 177A, Folder 51, UNN Project Papers.

<sup>1924</sup> John A. Hannah, Letter to Nnamdi Azikiwe, May 25, 1964, Box 177A, Folder 53, UNN Project Papers.

Hannah wanted to emphasize that Americans *should not* be the norm. The University should “identify a promising Nigerian and begin to give him the experience that might fit him to eventually be designated as the vice chancellor of the University of Nigeria.” out of personal preference but “because of the confidence that many people seem to have in him.”<sup>1925</sup> Perhaps, Okigbo could be given the title of Provost or an Assistant to the Vice Chancellor?<sup>1926</sup> MSU hands congratulated Taggart. MSU Comptroller Paul V. Rumpsa felt that the Taggart appointment would give a “big boost” to the University and that “a better or more capable person could not be found.”<sup>1927</sup>

Initially, Taggart felt overwhelmed. He wrote a daughter: “I find myself in a role where I am literally the supreme commander of a big eating facility, a big housing facility, a big business, plus,” he added cheekily, “an academic enterprise.”<sup>1928</sup> 22 organizations reported directly to his office, with a total staff of 450 and a total class of 800 incoming students in fall 1964.<sup>1929</sup> As Vice-Chancellor, Taggart wanted more linkages, not fewer. UNN’s struggles were rooted in its provinciality, its isolation—from funding, from partnerships, and above all, from the West. Taggart lifted the University’s refusal to engage external examiners, a demand that institutions ranging from the University of London to Nigeria’s National Universities Commission had been placing on UNN—and one at which Azikiwe had likely bristled; the move strengthened the University’s bargaining position in relation to federal monies.<sup>1930</sup> Taggart also persuaded Azikiwe to contribute Azikiwe Foundation funds to support student housing.<sup>1931</sup> The University’s expansion also generated an elevation in land prices surrounding the University;

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<sup>1925</sup> John A. Hannah, Letter to B.C. Chukwudebe, June 4, 1964, Box 177A, Folder 53, UNN Project Papers.

<sup>1926</sup> Paul V. Rumpsa, Letter to Glen L. Taggart, June 8, 1964, Taggart Papers, Merrill-Cazier.

<sup>1927</sup> Paul V. Rumpsa, Letter to Glen L. Taggart, June 8, 1964, Taggart papers, Merrill-Cazier.

<sup>1928</sup> Glen Taggart, Letter to Elizabeth Taggart, September 9, 1964, Taggart Papers, Merrill-Cazier.

<sup>1929</sup> Glen Taggart, Letter to Elizabeth Taggart, September 9, 1964, Taggart Papers, Merrill-Cazier.

<sup>1930</sup> Glen Taggart, Letter to Elizabeth Taggart, September 9, 1964, Taggart Papers, Merrill-Cazier.

<sup>1931</sup> Glen Taggart, Letter to Elizabeth Taggart, September 9, 1964, Taggart Papers, Merrill-Cazier.

Taggart mused that if he were to be a long-term resident “and were Nigerian,” he would purchase some.<sup>1932</sup> It was “sure to be a good investment”—a point that had not been lost on State Department observers who noticed Azikiwe’s land holdings near the university.<sup>1933</sup>

The President General of *Oha n’eze Ndigbo*, John Nnia Nwodo, remembers Taggart’s tenure. “White people taught me English. They taught me physics,” and “they taught me chemistry.”<sup>1934</sup> When he arrived at the University, the Taggart’s greeted him, bought him a hot dog, and sat with them.<sup>1935</sup> When he contracted malaria, they gave him cornflakes and an omelet for breakfast, and he could read any magazine he wanted. “The floor was cleaned four times a day,” and the “sheets were changed twice a day.”<sup>1936</sup> Children of faculty members recall watching films, reading comic books, and eating fine dining at the Continuing Education Center.<sup>1937</sup>

At Michigan State University, Taggart’s office promoted an “international dimension which will permeate throughout all relevant segments of the university” in a way “unforeseen five years ago.”<sup>1938</sup> His Office prompted the survey social science course to be re-imagined with an “international dimension as a meaningful, integral” aspect of the course.<sup>1939</sup> Taggart ordered that the first Africa survey course be established.<sup>1940</sup> He had further supported a series of international exchange centers for promoting the “cross cultural exchange of ideas,” the

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<sup>1932</sup> Glen Taggart, Letter to Elizabeth Taggart, September 9, 1964, Taggart Papers, Merrill-Cazier.

<sup>1933</sup> Glen Taggart, Letter to Elizabeth Taggart, September 9, 1964, Taggart Papers, Merrill-Cazier.

<sup>1934</sup> Speech Delivered by Chief John Nnia Nwodo, September 7, 2018 at the Enugu Sports Club, notes by author.

<sup>1935</sup> Speech Delivered by Chief John Nnia Nwodo, September 7, 2018 at the Enugu Sports Club, notes by author.

<sup>1936</sup> Speech Delivered by Chief John Nnia Nwodo, September 7, 2018, at the Enugu Sports Club, notes by author.

<sup>1937</sup> Speech Delivered by Chief John Nnia Nwodo, September 7, 2018, at the Enugu Sports Club, notes by author.

<sup>1938</sup> Glen L. Taggart, Speech to National Association for Foreign Student Affairs, April 29, 1964, MSS 83, Box 1, Folder 9, Taggart Papers, Merrill-Cazier.

<sup>1939</sup> Glen L. Taggart, Speech to National Association for Foreign Student Affairs, April 29, 1964, MSS 83, Box 1, Folder 9, Taggart Papers, Merrill-Cazier.

<sup>1940</sup> Glen L. Taggart, Speech to National Association for Foreign Student Affairs, April 29, 1964, MSS 83, Box 1, Folder 9, Taggart Papers, Merrill-Cazier.

“diffusion of technology within developing countries,” comparative education, international agriculture, and international social organization.”<sup>1941</sup> Finally, Taggart established three area studies programs: one on Central America, another on South Asia (especially Pakistan), and then another on West Africa.”<sup>1942</sup> To adapt to the “international dimension,” MSU needed to become a bureaucratically pluralistic environment, with “centers of authority” and “decisions made close to the points of participation and action.”<sup>1943</sup> The “international dimension,” Taggart argued, is the direct offspring of the American Revolution. American institutions and universities generally have lagged behind the actual involvement of our country, our agriculture, and our business enterprise in international affairs.”<sup>1944</sup> In engaging the “developing world” more broadly, MSU, through UNN, represented the height of American confidence in their own institutions capacity to shape events and create nations.

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<sup>1941</sup> Glen L. Taggart, Speech to National Association for Foreign Student Affairs, April 29, 1964, MSS 83, Box 1, Folder 9, Taggart Papers, Merrill-Cazier.

<sup>1942</sup> Glen L. Taggart, Speech to National Association for Foreign Student Affairs, April 29, 1964, MSS 83, Box 1, Folder 9, Taggart Papers, Merrill-Cazier.

<sup>1943</sup> Glen L. Taggart, Speech to National Association for Foreign Student Affairs, April 29, 1964, Taggart Papers, Merrill MSS 83, Box 1, Folder 9, Taggart Papers, Merrill-Cazier.

<sup>1944</sup> Glen L. Taggart, Speech to National Association for Foreign Student Affairs, April 29, 1964, Taggart Papers Merrill MSS 83, Box 1, Folder 9, Taggart Papers, Merrill-Cazier.



Figure 16: Vice-Chancellor Glenn Taggart with President Nnamdi Azikiwe at the 1965 Convocation. Courtesy of Merrill-Cazier Library, Utah State University.

### *UNN and the Arts*

Student resilience seemed to challenge the reality of the struggles to launch the University. Some students coped through poetry. Students congregated on campus from throughout Nigeria, even as most of them were from the East. Nsukka seemed to signify a rebirth of hope, a vision for education that was both indigenous and expansive—one that could be Igbo, while inclusive of knowledge from the English-speaking, Dutch-speaking, and German-speaking

worlds. *Ani* blessed them with *amamihe* in its purest form: the sense of knowing and the sense of awareness of their lack of knowledge. Nsukka students did more than cope through poetry—they became renowned for it. In the spirit of Igbo connection with the land, Nsukka literati spoke of their poetry as a “harvest”—*aku na uba* in words, if not in wealth. Articulating the resplendent hope of UNN required many voices, or, as the Igbo proverb holds, *Ike di n’awaja n’awaja* (power exists in many avenues).<sup>1945</sup>

That Nsukka would flourish with poetry resonated with its local history. *Na-atu ilu* (tossing proverbs) is a fine art among the *ndi ishi* of Nsukka. As Nwando Achebe observes of Nsukka proverbs, they “reflect the sensibilities of a people.”<sup>1946</sup> Proverbs were to be shared as a collective experience: to explain, to provoke, to entertain, or to invoke deity. Welch poet Peter Thomas, then a visiting scholar, observed the new birth of artistry. An Oxford graduate and a C.S. Lewis student, Thomas appreciated the power of mythos, the capacity of the *narrative* to represent this historical moment in Nigerian history.<sup>1947</sup> On Fulton street, Thomas held seminars on John Milton, the romantics, and Beowulf. A young librarian, Christopher Okigbo, sat in on the lectures. He was a “slim, trim, round faced” man—and he wanted to be a poet.<sup>1948</sup> Okigbo had struggled. While a student at Ibadan, he slipped deeply into a sense of hopelessness. Nsukka instilled in him the hope for a new life. “Thundering drums and cannons,” he wrote, “in palmgrove: the spirit is in ascent.”<sup>1949</sup> Nigeria seemed to be, too.

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<sup>1945</sup> Obiora Udechukwu, “Notes from the Field,” *The Art Bulletin* (2013): 519.

<sup>1946</sup> Nwando Achebe, *Farmers, Traders, Warriors, and Kings*, 53.

<sup>1947</sup> Nwakanma, *Christopher Okigbo*, 148.

<sup>1948</sup> Nwakanma, *Christopher Okigbo*, 157.

<sup>1949</sup> Nwakanma, *Christopher Okigbo*, 148.



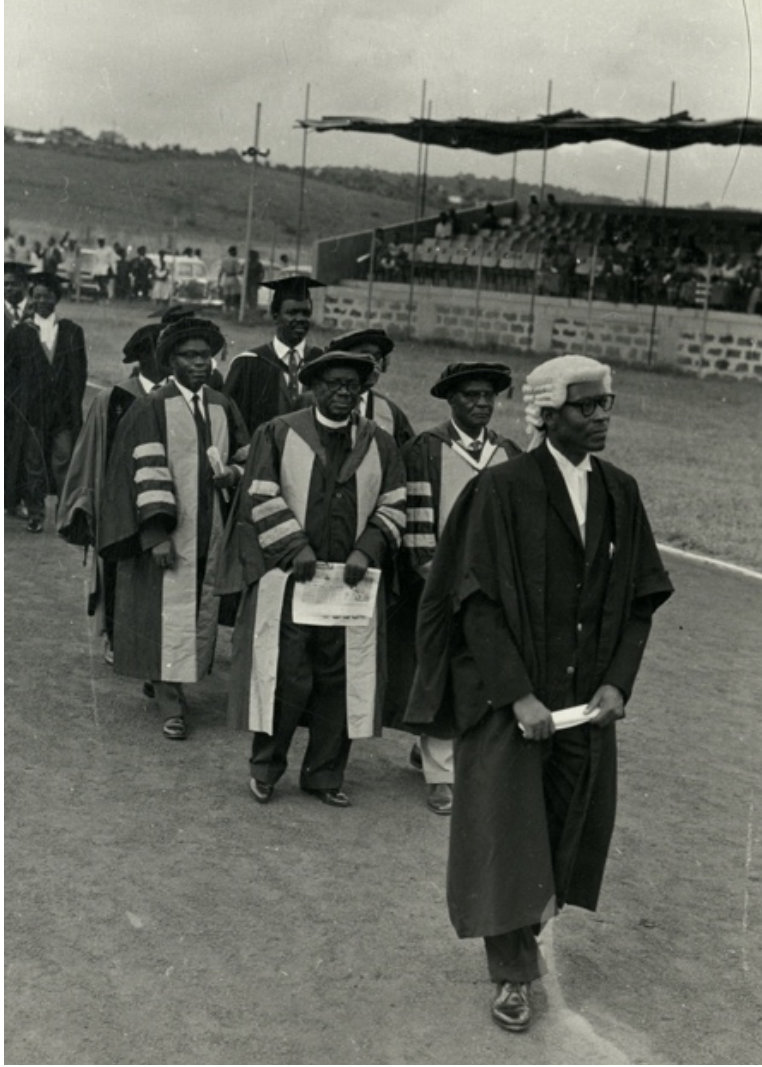


Figure 17: Law faculty at UNN commencement ceremonies, ca. 1965.  
Courtesy of Merrill-Cazier Library, Utah State University.

Thomas and Okigbo hit it off; Okigbo said that Thomas was his “kindred spirit.” Vincent Chukwuemeka Ike, then Deputy University Registrar and author, was thrilled with the prospects: Nsukka “offered us a challenge, something like a reason to prove our abilities.” UNN’s opening in October 1960 “endowed it with a remarkably romantic significance.”<sup>1950</sup> Okigbo embraced the *mythos* of independence, that *this*—of all the opportunities—would symbolize Nigeria’s rise into independence.<sup>1951</sup>

<sup>1950</sup> Nwakanma, *Christopher Okigbo*, 148.

<sup>1951</sup> Nwakanma, *Christopher Okigbo*, 148.

But Okigbo had known nothing of university administration. When a position for a librarian opened up at UNN, he purchased a book on librarianship and read it while in transit.<sup>1952</sup> It did not hurt that his brother, Pius, was a prominent economic consultant to the Eastern Regional Government who had chummed with the newly-installed Eastern Premier, Michael Okpara.<sup>1953</sup> Okigbo had struggled in what he called a “cruel past” of professional ineptitude. As a civil servant in Ibadan, he had been an abject failure. As an adult, he seemed to be foundering. Nsukka reconciled. Nsukka revived. Okigbo wrote the poem, *Heavensgate*, to celebrate this feeling of reconciliation. Okigbo imagined to be a kind of “Easter Sequence” as well as an “offering to Idoto”—the water spirit from the river of his youth.<sup>1954</sup> Okigbo’s synthesis of traditional Igbo religion with Christianity reflected the kind of blending space of Nsukka.

Okigbo became the bard of Nsukka. Obi Wali, a Northwestern University-trained Igbo who moved from Onitsha to Nsukka to teach Romanticism, had argued at a Kampala conference that African literature could only thrive if produced in indigenous languages.<sup>1955</sup> Okigbo questioned his own competence, his readiness to be a muse of Nsukka; he “want[ed] to write,” Thomas recalled, but he kept “feeling unready or unable.”<sup>1956</sup> Could the master’s tools be used to take down the master’s house?<sup>1957</sup> An undergraduate writer, Sunday Anozie, later took credit for conceptualizing Wali’s argument.<sup>1958</sup> “Nothing could compare with th[is] charged atmosphere,” Anozie said, when Okigbo, Wali, music professor William Echezona, and Vincent Chukwuemeka Ike met and “argued literature. . . through the night.”<sup>1959</sup> Times with Okigbo were

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<sup>1952</sup> Nwakanma, *Christopher Okigbo*, 148.

<sup>1953</sup> Nwakanma, *Christopher Okigbo*, 148.

<sup>1954</sup> Nwakanma, *Christopher Okigbo*, 152.

<sup>1955</sup> Nwakanma, *Christopher Okigbo*, 155.

<sup>1956</sup> Peter Thomas, “A Memorial to Christopher Okigbo,” *African Arts* 1, no. 4 (Summer 1968): 69.

<sup>1957</sup> Audra Lorde. *Sister Outsider: Essays and Speeches* (New York: Penguin, 2020), 102.

<sup>1958</sup> Nwakanma, *Christopher Okigbo*, 155.

<sup>1959</sup> Nwakanma, *Christopher Okigbo*, 155.

“beautiful and innocent. . . lawless.” Okigbo had “no time for the orthodox or for boundaries.”<sup>1960</sup> Okigbo was volatile: laughing one minute and exploding with rage the next.<sup>1961</sup> He also became known for his sexual cavorting, including an open relationship with an undergraduate and his affair with the wife of one of the American professors; Sunday Anozie believed that she “fell hopelessly in love” with the dashing, fragile poet.<sup>1962</sup> Both felt particular affinity to the affair’s danger and unconventionality.<sup>1963</sup> Rumors held that they copulated in the room next door while Evelyn’s husband took an afternoon nap upstairs.<sup>1964</sup> Sunday Anozie sometimes accompanied Okigbo and witnessed much of the affair, watching on until Okigbo and Evelyn took their lovemaking to the bedroom.<sup>1965</sup> It is likely Christopher’s experiences from which Vincent Chukwuemeka Ike would later draw in his satire of UNN, *The Naked Gods*.<sup>1966</sup>

Joining Christopher in conversation were other gifted local writers and artists: Michael J.C. Echeruo, Vincent Ike, Donatus I. Nwoga, William Echezona, and Obi Wali. They launched a writers journal, *The African Writer* and became renowned as the “Nsukka School”: a group committed to celebrating truly indigenous forms of expression.<sup>1967</sup> Okigbo urged Echezona and Ike to support him in “provid[ing] a platform for crystallizing these ideas.”<sup>1968</sup> Okigbo suggested the name of *Kulchur*, but Chinua Achebe suggested instead that they adopt the name, *Mbari*, reflective of the indigenous art houses in *ala Igboland*: a “celebration, through art, of the world and the life lived in it.”<sup>1969</sup> The University was becoming an eclectic conglomerate of talent.

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<sup>1960</sup> Nwakanma, *Christopher Okigbo*, 156.

<sup>1961</sup> Nwakanma, *Christopher Okigbo*, 163.

<sup>1962</sup> Nwakanma, *Christopher Okigbo*, 165.

<sup>1963</sup> Nwakanma, *Christopher Okigbo*, 165.

<sup>1964</sup> Nwakanma, *Christopher Okigbo*, 165.

<sup>1965</sup> Nwakanma, *Christopher Okigbo*, 165.

<sup>1966</sup> Nwakanma, *Christopher Okigbo*, 165.

<sup>1967</sup> Obi Nwakanma, “MJC Echeruo: Occidentalism, Diaspora, Nationalist, and Transnationalist Trajectories of his African Modernism,” *Research in African Literatures* 47, no. 3 (Fall 2016): 118.

<sup>1968</sup> Nwakanma, *Christopher Okigbo*, 154-155.

<sup>1969</sup> Nwakanma, *Christopher Okigbo*, 179.

With Ike, Nwoga, and Okigbo, they forged the African Authors Association of Nigeria, kicked off by Education Minister, Aja Nwachukwu.<sup>1970</sup> Meanwhile, the German ethnographer Uli Beier, founder of the German literary journal *Black Orpheus*, moved about from Nsukka to Ibadan and back to produce a coherent, nation-wide writers group of *Mbari* artists.<sup>1971</sup>

Not every Igbo scholar considered the Nsukka flourishing to be a positive development for Nigerian art. Onwuchekwa Chinweizu and Ihechukwu Madubuike scorned the Nsukka poets for their “failure of craft”: “old-fashioned, craggy, unmusical language; obscure and inaccessible diction; a plethora of imported imagery; a divorce from African oral poetic tradition, tempered only by lifeless attempts at revivalism.”<sup>1972</sup> Chinweizu and Madubuike laughed at Okigbo, “one of the more accomplished practitioners of all the vices of the school” and his poem, “Distances,” which read: “the only way to go/ through the marble archway/to the catatonic pingpong/of the evanescent halo.” They write in UNN’s magazine, *Okike*, the literary magazine founded by Achebe following the war, that Okigbo’s work “reads well, it is smooth, it has music, its images are striking, it is pleasurable. Nonsense perhaps, but pleasurable nonsense.”<sup>1973</sup> Nsukka’s writers represented something. “Whatever the shortcomings of our present effort,” editors of the student literary periodical, *The Muse*, founded in 1963 wrote, “the launching of the magazine is a historic step in the right direction.”<sup>1974</sup> Edited and founded by Peter Thomas, *The Muse* aspired to be the “nurse for the production of a new breed of literary men and women for our young country.”<sup>1975</sup>

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<sup>1970</sup> Nwakanma, *Christopher Okigbo*, 155.

<sup>1971</sup> James Currey, “Literary Publishing After Nigerian Independence: Mbari as Celebration,” *Research in African Literatures* 44, no. 2 (Summer 2013): 10.

<sup>1972</sup> Onwuchekwa Chinweizu and Ihechukwu Madubuike “Towards the Decolonization of African Literature,” *Okike* 6 (December 1974): 11.

<sup>1973</sup> Chinweizu and Madubuike “Towards the Decolonization of African Literature,” *Okike* 6 (December 1974): 13.

<sup>1974</sup> Introduction, *The Muse* 1 (May 1963): 3.

<sup>1975</sup> Introduction, *The Muse* 1 (May 1963): 3.

*The Muse* provided an avenue for national self-exploration; students from across the disciplines tried their hand at poetry, stories, and literary analysis. It offered a space for syncretism and expansion. One writer explored the ever-pressing role of English language: should it become the lingua franca? “After all, we are now free.” The writer imagined a “national language” that “live[s] and grow[s].”<sup>1976</sup> It “should interpret[e] the soul of Nigeria” and “has to express what is dear to the people.”<sup>1977</sup> Students of English could “translat[e]. . . lofty ideas into literature, drama, poetry, philosophy, and so forth.”<sup>1978</sup> The *Muse* celebrated cultural life in the East: students traveled to Enugu to see the Nottingham Play Company put on a production of *Macbeth*.<sup>1979</sup> Things seemed to be changing, another writer observed: “In villages the story telling habit is beginning to diminish. In towns, it is practically impossible. People do not choose their neighbors and children do not mix so freely.”<sup>1980</sup> The only solution for protecting against “total cultural and imaginative decadence” was written literacy: “the acquisition of the reading habit.” Literacy—born of university education—could save Nigeria from cultural demise.<sup>1981</sup>

By 1962, over 270 groups of both domestic and international groups had visited the university.<sup>1982</sup> The University could boast a 150, 000-gallon water reserve on nearby land.<sup>1983</sup> It

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<sup>1976</sup> *The Muse* 1 (May 1963): 3.

<sup>1977</sup> *The Muse* 1 (May 1963): 3.

<sup>1978</sup> *The Muse* 1 (May 1963): 3.

<sup>1979</sup> *The Muse* 1 (May 1963): 22.

<sup>1980</sup> “Nigerian Literature and the Educated Nigerian,” *Muse* nos. 2, no. 2 (1965): 14.

<sup>1981</sup> “Nigerian Literature and the Educated Nigerian,” *Muse* nos. 2, no. 2 (1965): 14.

<sup>1982</sup> “University of Nigeria, Nsukka, Annual Report, 1961-1962,” Rough Draft No. 2, 13, Box 50, Folder 2, Hannah Papers.

<sup>1983</sup> “University of Nigeria, Nsukka, Annual Report, 1961-1962,” Rough Draft No. 2, 11, Box 50, Folder 2, Hannah Papers.



Figure 18: Students graduating at the 1965 UNN convocation.  
Courtesy of Merrill-Cazier Library, Utah State University.

claimed a health center with 10 beds and several nurses.<sup>1984</sup> And Michigan State University could claim a total of over two dozen advisors on the ground, as they trained UNN faculty members in East Lansing.<sup>1985</sup> Nsukka seemed to offer “hope to a frustrated people”—but not because of the University administration or Michigan State University. UNN’s resources were less in its administration and more in its students and faculty. Awash with commitment to blending, intellectual cross-germination, and “Afro-politan” exchange, UNN’s students enjoyed intellectual vibrancy in spite of the structural problems it faced.

### *Conclusion*

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<sup>1984</sup> “University of Nigeria, Nsukka, Annual Report, 1961-1962,” Rough Draft No. 2, 10, Box 50, Folder 2, Hannah Papers.

<sup>1985</sup> “University of Nigeria, Nsukka, Annual Report, 1961-1962,” Rough Draft No. 2, 8, Box 50, Folder 2, Hannah Papers.

By 1966, the University had attracted global attention. American dignitaries and celebrities visited Nsukka; MSU billed it as the very best that American technology and organization had to offer. British advisors, while present, had been incorporated under a fully streamlined, but American-administered structure. With booming enrollment, expanding facilities, and a lush backdrop, American educational officials felt that they had transformed a Nigerian wilderness into a paradise of American beauty. Its occasional obstacles aside, the Americans believed they were living out a success story. Although the University had become defined by its Eastern-ness, its aspirations were grand—believing itself to assume the burden of educating a continent, of binding peoples fragmented by colonial rule into whole people anew. The act of education, the Nsukka project held, could recover lost identities, rejuvenate stale discourse, increase access and decrease intellectual rigidity. Nsukka was freedom—a liberated university for a liberated people.

That new nation faced rifts, however—rifts that lay deep within the sinews of Nigerian life. And UNN would soon be rent asunder as ethnic and economic tensions grew in the years leading to the Nigeria-Biafra war. As the next chapter will show, the same university aspiring to bind together Nigeria became a war zone, devastated by violence, displacement, and wartime trauma. Its reconstruction relied upon a network as vibrant as those who first gave the University its life.

## CHAPTER 6

Blackened walls. “Wanton destruction. . . [and] utter chaos.” USAID worker Mike Nwachukwu wandered through the ruins of the campus. To his right, he saw the Princess Alexandria Auditorium—once a grand overture to Nigeria’s continuing membership in the Commonwealth—now demolished.<sup>1986</sup> To his left, he saw the Continuing Education Center, a monument to Midwestern philanthropy, funded as it was by the Kellogg Foundation.<sup>1987</sup> “The entire first floor,” Nwachukwu reported, “was gutted by fire,” with “twisted steel and blackened walls.”<sup>1988</sup> The Music Building was “utter chaos”; someone had cut the piano asunder, hauling one half of it to a room on the other side of the building.<sup>1989</sup> The whole campus was an “ungodly mess,” some American observers reported, with fires proliferating in buildings throughout the campus.<sup>1990</sup>

The University of Nigeria, Nsukka had, in spite of its status as a provincial institution, come to represent Azikiwe’s version of a united Nigeria. Now, it had become the nerve center for a cadre of men and women committed to producing a nation-state separate and sovereign from Nigeria: “Biafra.” UNN, the very institution established to *represent* independence had now come to embody its separation.

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<sup>1986</sup> “Report of Visit to University of Nigeria, Nsukka” [authored by Mike Nwachukwu], Box 49, Folder 3, Hannah Papers.

<sup>1987</sup> “Report of Visit to University of Nigeria, Nsukka” [authored by Mike Nwachukwu], Box 49, Folder 3, Hannah Papers.

<sup>1988</sup> “Report of Visit to University of Nigeria, Nsukka” [authored by Mike Nwachukwu], Box 49, Folder 3, Hannah Papers.

<sup>1989</sup> “Report of Visit to University of Nigeria, Nsukka” [authored by Mike Nwachukwu], Box 49, Folder 3, Hannah Papers.

<sup>1990</sup> “Report of Visit to University of Nigeria, Nsukka” [authored by Mike Nwachukwu], Box 49, Folder 3, Hannah Papers.



Meanwhile, Bede Okigbo, the would-be administrator snubbed in favor of the bespectacled American, wandered the streets of Umudike, his home of refuge from the war-ravaged Nsukka. Okigbo saw little of his beloved dreams but mostly destruction.<sup>1991</sup> Bombed schools, burnt markets, exorbitant prices—all reflected his homeland at war.<sup>1992</sup> Okigbo hoped “by God’s help” to “rebuild what has been destroyed by the war.”<sup>1993</sup> The war, Okigbo reported to his American friends, had instilled a sense of grim determination in him: “We have no choice but to continue to the end until we either win or are all killed off.”<sup>1994</sup>

This chapter situates Nsukka at the center of the action: as an intellectual nerve center for Nigerian separatism, it produced not only an outpouring of printed work highlighting the Biafra cause but also, served as a rumor center at which people spoke—in hushed tones—about the eventual demise of the Nigerian state and the rise of a new national identity: Biafra. Drawing on oral history accounts collected from scholar-participants in the war as well as local publications, this chapter illustrates how the University both served as the marrow and sinews binding together as war for the intelligentsia as well as for the countryside.

### *The Coups and UNN*

In January 1966, a military coup led General Chukwuma Kaduna Nzeogwu ousted the federal regime and called for the forcible unification of the Nigerian government, conjoining each region under a single federal sovereignty.<sup>1995</sup> The coup plotters assassinated Nigerian Prime Minister Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa and Northern premier, Ahmadu Bello.<sup>1996</sup> British media framed the coup as an “Igbo coup—the British government had oil interests to protect—but the

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<sup>1991</sup> Bede Okigbo, Letter to Kenyon T. Payne, December 4, 1968, Box 49, Folder 3, Hannah Papers.

<sup>1992</sup> Bede Okigbo, Letter to Kenyon T. Payne, December 4, 1968, Box 49, Folder 3, Hannah Papers.

<sup>1993</sup> Bede Okigbo, Letter to Kenyon T. Payne, December 4, 1968, Box 49, Folder 3, Hannah Papers.

<sup>1994</sup> Bede Okigbo, Letter to Kenyon T. Payne, December 4, 1968, Box 49, Folder 3, Hannah Papers.

<sup>1995</sup> Chinua Achebe, *There Was A Country*, 79.

<sup>1996</sup> Achebe, *There Was A Country*, 79.

coup represented a cross-section of Nigeria's diversity; Nzeogwu, in particular, had few connections to Igboland, spoke virtually no Igbo, and donned the attire of Hausa northerners.<sup>1997</sup> General Aguiyi-Ironsi, known for his minority sympathies, assumed federal power in May; he never executed the officers, all of whom were sentenced extended prison terms.<sup>1998</sup>

When news of the coup reached the Nsukka campus, many students celebrated, as did much of the country.<sup>1999</sup> But word soon spread that the coup had ethnic overtones; with the killings of Northern and Western premiers, Ahmadu Bello and Ladoke Akintola—all while Nnamdi Azikiwe continued to live—students at the University of Ibadan suspected regionalism and perhaps “ethnicism” played a role.<sup>2000</sup> Meanwhile, the University of Ibadan, its British administrators took a jab at UNN's pretensions to Nigerian-ness; University of Ibadan, they proclaimed, “remains what it has always been, a University of and for Nigeria. Others may claim the name but we maintain the reality.”<sup>2001</sup>

Stephen Vincent, the Peace Corps poetry instructor at UNN, considered many of the students “romantic”; the coup, surely, would usher in an era of reform: “if they killed the leaders,” then “the people would follow, and everything would be fine. . . everyone at the campus was in heaven.”<sup>2002</sup> While Njoku celebrated the January coup as an anti-corruption measure, he condemned the Northern counter-coup as “simply revenge.”<sup>2003</sup> Njoku had felt assured that the Army sought only to “remove corrupt politicians and unify the country.”<sup>2004</sup> The

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<sup>1997</sup> Achebe, *There Was A Country*, 79. On British oil interests in the war, see also Chibuike Uche, “Oil, British Interests, and the Nigerian Civil War,” *The Journal of African History* 49, no. 1 (2008): 113.

<sup>1998</sup> Chinua Achebe, *There Was a Country: A Personal History of Biafra* (New York: Penguin, 2012), 80.

<sup>1999</sup> A. Adegboyega Adedire, “Civil Wars and the African Universities: The University of Ibadan Example, 1967–1970,” *Ufahamu* 40, no. 2 (Summer 2018): 118.

<sup>2000</sup> Adedire, “Civil Wars and the African Universities: The University of Ibadan Example, 1967–1970,” 118.

<sup>2001</sup> Adedire, “Civil Wars and the African Universities: The University of Ibadan Example, 1967–1970,” 118.

<sup>2002</sup> Vincent interview.

<sup>2003</sup> Eni Njoku, Letter to John A. Hannah, August 23, 1966, Box 49, Folder 3, Hannah Papers.

<sup>2004</sup> Eni Njoku, Letter to John A. Hannah, August 23, 1966, Box 49, Folder 3, Hannah Papers.

civilian population remained “on edge.”<sup>2005</sup> Njoku predicted that “revenge so often boomerangs that the ‘victors’ are just as scared about as everybody else. . . but efforts continue.”<sup>2006</sup> Grace Adichie, James’ wife, also navigated the logistical difficulties the war imposed. She gave birth during the war to her eldest, Okechukwu. Shortly after Okechukwu “chuks” was born, she anticipated a doctor’s appointment in Aba—but then it fell. “There were roadblocks at the time, so we couldn’t get to Orlu. We were stopped on the way, and we slept in the car.”<sup>2007</sup> Following the war, Grace assumed a post at the war-stricken university.<sup>2008</sup>

Federal wisdom held that Nsukka had been an intellectual center of separatist sentiment. Law professor Edwin Nwogugu remembers how the war produced rumors: “there are all sorts stories floating around.”<sup>2009</sup> Former British colonial officer, James Leech, who assisted with Peace Corps training at Michigan State University, noticed the ongoing tensions: “one feels that trouble may blow up at any minute” and “wonders how patient or accepting the southerners can continue to be on forbearing the Northerners!”<sup>2010</sup> Leech felt confident that Nigerians generally supported unity, but “one is always a little nervous of a rush of blood to the head.”<sup>2011</sup> Fueled by long-standing grievances with the federal regime and accentuated by MSU officials support, UNN intellectuals articulated a vision for Igbo autonomy and mutually shared grievance.

On May 20, General Aguiyi Ironsi issued a decree implementing the unification of civil service and, functionally, dissolved the federal republic regime, which signaled to NPC elites

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<sup>2005</sup> Eni Njoku, Letter to John A. Hannah, August 23, 1966, Box 49, Folder 3, Hannah Papers.

<sup>2006</sup> Eni Njoku, Letter to John A. Hannah, August 23, 1966, Box 49, Folder 3, Hannah Papers.

<sup>2007</sup> “Chimamanda’s Mum Speaks On: Life as the First Female Registrar of UNN,” <https://www.newsfetchers.com/2014/01/chimamandas-mum-speaks-on-life-as-first.html> <accessed September 4, 2020>.

<sup>2008</sup> J.O.C. Ezeilo, Letter to Grace Adichie, November 29, 1975, VC/PF/A 149; J.O.C. Ezeilo, Letter to Grace Adichie, February 12, 1976, VC/PF/A 149, both in Administration Building, Room 103, University of Nigeria, Nsukka.

<sup>2009</sup> Nwogugu interview.

<sup>2010</sup> James Leech, Letter to Margery Perham, August 28, 1965, Perham Papers, Rhodes House.

<sup>2011</sup> James Leech, Letter to Margery Perham, August 28, 1965, Perham Papers, Rhodes House.

that Igbo were plotting to transform Nigeria into an Igbo unified nation-state.<sup>2012</sup> A band of Kano students took note that these political objectives aligned perfectly with NCNC aims of dissolving regionalist influence and thus, functioned as an Igbo-driven agenda for eventual Igbo dominance of the whole of Nigeria.<sup>2013</sup> Northern native authorities threatened secession if the federal regime were not re-instated.<sup>2014</sup> Ojukwu accused British officials still affiliated with the North of inciting the government to both resisting the unification efforts but also inciting the riots.<sup>2015</sup> On May 24, 1966, the federal military government issued a Unification Decree permitting Nigerians to work in any region, regardless of their place of origin. Northerners, leery of Igbo economic aspirations, took the Decree to be a pernicious mechanism for allowing economic expansion throughout the Country.<sup>2016</sup> The decree convinced Northerners that the Ironsi regime was seeking to bolster Igbo standing at the cost of other Nigerians.<sup>2017</sup>

### *Murders Throughout the Land*

In June 1966, former Nigerian federal officials carried out a counter-coup in 1966, not only to preserve the regionalist quality of Nigeria but also, to preserve clear access to British influence that the Igbo coup had undermined.<sup>2018</sup> The NCNC considered full political unity to be a check against ongoing British influence; the British enjoyed linkages with Northern officials, and the longer that Nigeria remained regionalized, the longer the British could enjoy particular

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<sup>2012</sup> Kano Citizens, Letter to Lt. Col, Hassan Katsina, May 27, 1966, Box 2529, Pol 23-8, Folder 3, National Archives II, College Park, Maryland.

<sup>2013</sup> Kano Citizens, Letter to Lt. Col, Hassan Katsina, May 27, 1966, Box 2529, Pol 23-8, Folder 3, National Archives II, College Park, Maryland.

<sup>2014</sup> Department of State, Aigram, June 12, 1966, Box 2529, Pol 23-8, Folder 3, National Archives II, College Park, Maryland.

<sup>2015</sup> Amconsul Enugu, Aigram, June 15, 1966, Box 2529, Pol 23-8, Folder 3, National Archives II, College Park, Maryland.

<sup>2016</sup> Mba Uzoukwu, "The Viewpoint of Biafran Representation," Lecture given at Michigan State University, 1968, audio available at <https://onthebanks.msu.edu/Object/162-565-2341/biafranigeria-viewpoints-1968/>.

<sup>2017</sup> Mba Uzoukwu, "The Viewpoint of Biafran Representation," Lecture given at Michigan State University, 1968, audio available at <https://onthebanks.msu.edu/Object/162-565-2341/biafranigeria-viewpoints-1968/>.

<sup>2018</sup> Chibuike Uche, "Oil, British Interests, and the Nigerian Civil War," *Journal of African History* 49, no. 1 (2008): 111-135.

influence among Northern regional politicians and, given the North-heavy makeup of the Federal Parliament, Nigeria *writ large*.<sup>2019</sup> In mid-June, word circulated that British officials in the North were urging Northerners to resist Ironsi's national unification efforts.<sup>2020</sup> Elbert Mathews at the American consulate argued, too, that the British High Commission and the Embassy was 'trying to maintain the status quo with regard to their personnel and operations in the Northern Region.'<sup>2021</sup> Ojukwu blamed the attacks on "those who had found themselves comfortable chairs and now fear they may lose their positions."<sup>2022</sup>

Nnaemeka Ikpeze, then at University of Ibadan, worked at the bank while living with his uncle. He left in the morning and when he returned, saw that:

soldiers were all around the barracks where he lived. Combat ready. I got to his house. I didn't see him. I didn't see anyone around. You know? But the maid came out. He had a maid. The wife had travelled with the kids. It was just a maid in the house helping with cooking and all that. She said she doesn't understand what is going on either. It was much later that I got to know that it was a counter coup. Some officers were being killed.<sup>2023</sup>

Ikpeze returned to his home village in the East, "running for dear life."<sup>2024</sup>

In summer 1966, a wave of anti-Igbo murders swept across the North; the United States Department of State estimated the death count to be 3,000-4,000.<sup>2025</sup> In Zonkwa, near Kaduna, locals invaded a hospital and expelled the Igbo nurses.<sup>2026</sup> At Gombe, a mob chased 3,000 Igbo from the city, and the Igbo refugees set up camp at a local train station. An emir came to the

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<sup>2019</sup> American Consulate, Airgram, June 15, 1966, Box 2529, Pol 23-8, Folder 3, .

<sup>2020</sup> State Department Telegram, June 15, 1966, Box 2529, Pol 23-8, Folder 3, National Archives, College Park-Maryland.

<sup>2021</sup> American Embassy Lagos, June 12, 1966, Box 2529, Pol 23-8, Folder 3, National Archives, College Park-Maryland.

<sup>2022</sup> AmConsulate Enugu, Telegram, June 9, 1966, Box 2529, Pol 23-8, Folder 3, National Archives, College Park-Maryland.

<sup>2023</sup> Ikpeze interview.

<sup>2024</sup> Ikpeze interview.

<sup>2025</sup> American Embassy, Airgram, October 20, 1966, Box 2529, Pol 23-8, Folder 3, National Archives II, College Park, Maryland.

<sup>2026</sup> "Report from Jos," September 29, 1966, A/5/2/1, Ireland National Archives, Dublin, Ireland.

camp to assure them that the troubles were over; the refugees listened and returned to their homes.<sup>2027</sup> The following day, the mob violence renewed. The church and mission were set on fire, and 14 died in the attacks. Mobile local police guarded the Igbo encampment near the train station; one mother gave birth in the open at the train station.<sup>2028</sup> Rumors flit from house to house about next actions: in Jos, would Igbo launch an attack on the central mosque, or would Hausa burn the church as Gombe Hausa had done days earlier?<sup>2029</sup> In Kano, the Emir urged residents to cease “rumor mongering” and that those who spread “false rumors” would be “severely dealt with.”<sup>2030</sup>

Pharmacist Paul Akubue had seen no violence in Ibadan but while home over a break, he heard word: “Because of the tension in the country, none of us went back after the holiday. . . We were afraid. I was afraid.”<sup>2031</sup> With “coaches and trucks packed as full as subway trains at rush hour,” onlookers saw “orphaned children; the injured and the ragged” and “bereaved women recounting to angry or tearful listeners horrific stories of murder and pillage.”<sup>2032</sup> Authorities whisked the refugees away to their home villages to prevent the scene from becoming an *ad hoc* anti-Northern rally.<sup>2033</sup> By June 9, nearly 1,000 refugees had arrived in Enugu.<sup>2034</sup> A Michigan State University coordinator observed fifteen lorries per hour traveling

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<sup>2027</sup> American Embassy, Airgram June 12, 1966, Box 2529, Pol 23-8, Folder 3, National Archives II, College Park, Maryland, Maryland; Memo of Conversation, June 9, 1966, Box 2529, Pol 23-8, Folder 3, National Archives II, College Park, Maryland.

<sup>2028</sup> American Embassy, Airgram, June 12, 1966, Box 2529, Pol 23-8, Folder 3, National Archives II, College Park, Maryland; Memo of Conversation, June 9, 1966, Box 2529, Pol 23-8, Folder 3, National Archives II, College Park, Maryland.

<sup>2029</sup> Memo of Conversation, June 9, 1966, Box 2529, Pol 23-8, Folder 3, National Archives II, College Park, Maryland.

<sup>2029</sup> Akubue interview.

<sup>2030</sup> AmEmbassy Lagos, June 11, 1966, Box 2529, Pol 23-8, Folder 3, National Archives II, College Park, Maryland.

<sup>2031</sup> Akubue interview.

<sup>2032</sup> Akubue interview.

<sup>2033</sup> Akubue interview.

<sup>2034</sup> AmConsulate Enugu, June 19, 1966, Box 2529, Pol 23-8, Folder 3, National Archives II, College Park, Maryland.

on the Nsukka-Enugu road each filled with household effects and refugees.<sup>2035</sup> One historian described the scene in apocalyptic terms:

Every day at the railway station in Enugu, there were gory spectacles: disemboweled women; beheaded corpses; people with eyes gouged from their sockets; children maimed forever by the poisonous anger of their generation; mothers wailing for their dead children; men relapsing into the restless embrace of madness, unable to withstand the devastation of their homes.<sup>2036</sup>

Oleka Udeala, then a lecturer at UNN, escaped Nsukka in a Fiat 1100, driving past hosts of escaping Igbo: “no Igbo was wanted anywhere. A lot of them were killed and all that.”<sup>2037</sup> When in Port Harcourt, Udeala saw “corpses lining the streets in retaliation for what happened to Igbo in the north” and “not even [of] the right people, assuming there could be any right people . . . it’s not that I read. I saw it.”<sup>2038</sup> Train convoys to Enugu produced vivid, and “explosive” gatherings of locals waiting for Northern relatives to arrive.

Kevin Echeruo, a University student, poet, and artist who died during the war, reflected on the scene, observing in poetry:

*Screaming groups of maidens  
along the streets  
where the sand is wet  
and red  
under heaps of human dust  
After the torrential waves  
Of red-hot lead*

*Our spirits hum a dirge over these silenced heaps of dust*

*They have signed the big Books  
of temporal honour  
and fertilized the land  
with their blood  
leaving their fractured walls  
to those chapters*

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<sup>2035</sup> Irving R. Wyeth, September 6, 1966, Box 49, Folder 3, Hannah Papers.

<sup>2036</sup> Obi Nwakanma, *Christopher Okigbo, 1930-1967: Thirsting for Sunlight* (London: James Currey, 2010), 229.

<sup>2037</sup> Udeala interview.

<sup>2038</sup> Udeala interview.

*that will remind the young ones  
of this day*

*They have left those rumpled heaps  
to scavengers  
and flown on eagle-wings  
to the limits of the sky.<sup>2039</sup>*

Over the summer and fall, a wave of Igbo out-migration from Lagos drove car and truck rental prices to “outrageous limits” as they feared that the events of the North would be repeated elsewhere.<sup>2040</sup> Rumors reinforced student realities; by the end of July, of the 99,638 estimated Igbo living in Lagos as of 1963, approximately 65,000 Igbo had left Lagos for the East.<sup>2041</sup> By mid-June, Katsina had reportedly been cleared of Igbo residents.<sup>2042</sup> In some areas, the anti-Igbo riots gave space to other rationales for violence; in Ndiebule, Isiejgbu, and Ozoitem, an inter-village grievance over a “20-year-old dispute” exploded into a “free for all” that led to the destruction of the Uzoitem primary market as well as 10,000 pounds worth of property.<sup>2043</sup> Umuahia law enforcement “brought the outbreaks under control.”<sup>2044</sup>

The violence unleashed by war spread as in a centrifuge, producing an environment of moral breakdown throughout the country. MSU official Charles Doane expressed his gratitude to UNN driver, Laurence Nnaji, for handling an attack from local banditti “in a heroic manner” and expressed gratitude that his “MSU people” had Nnaji as their driver.<sup>2045</sup> Meanwhile, near Nsukka

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<sup>2039</sup> Kevin Echeruo, “Heaps of Human Dust,” *Omabe* (January 1974): 25.

<sup>2040</sup> American Embassy Lagos Airgram, November 29, 1966, Box 2429, Pol 23-8, Folder 3, National Archives II, College Park, Maryland.

<sup>2041</sup> American Embassy Lagos Airgram, November 29, 1966, Box 2429, Pol 23-8, Folder 3, National Archives II, College Park, Maryland.

<sup>2042</sup> American Embassy Lagos Airgram, June 15, 1966, Box 2429, Pol 23-8, Folder 3, National Archives II, College Park, Maryland.

<sup>2043</sup> Mathews, American Embassy Lagos Airgram, November 24, 1966. Box 2529, Pol 23-8, Folder 3, National Archives II, College Park, Maryland.

<sup>2044</sup> Mathews, American Embassy Lagos Airgram, November 24, 1966. Box 2529, Pol 23-8, Folder 3, National Archives II, College Park, Maryland.

<sup>2045</sup> Charles F. Doane, Letter to Lawrence Nnaji, August 18, 1966, UNN Project Papers, Box 182, Folder 9, .



proper, Steven Ezeanya, a member of the Catholic Holy Ghost Fathers' staff, was observed packing up playing records, broken radios, knives and forks to cram inside the tight spaces of their cars while mothers and children fled along the roadside from Nsukka.<sup>2046</sup> Holy Ghost Father official noted that the men and women traveled separately. Rodgers complained that Ezeanya "had fled four days before that and came creeping back to remove properties."<sup>2047</sup> More, it left him flummoxed that the men would "leave helpless mothers and children fleeing for their lives stranded on the road."<sup>2048</sup> Families often traveled separately to maximize space in their vehicles for their belongings.

A Catholic mission school in Jos provides a front-line account of the human cost of the attacks.<sup>2049</sup> The missionaries looked on the ten-tank convoy with horror, as the military "had brought nothing but trouble in its wake" since the July attacks.<sup>2050</sup> Officers established road-blocks surrounding Jos, and every Igbo identified by "tribal marks" was "beaten or maltreated."<sup>2051</sup> From his visit to the North, C. E. Dymond heard that Northern officials were stopping cars with Igbo and smashing in the windscreens with their rifles.<sup>2052</sup>

When the missionaries' Hausa driver conveyed them out of Jos, the authorities asked if he had any Igbo; he lied and gave them an "emphatic no."<sup>2053</sup> Over the course of a week, the school managed to send away approximately 1/3 of their school's population: 52 out of 150.<sup>2054</sup>

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<sup>2046</sup> Denis Rodgers, Letter to Fr. Provincial, June 29, 1968, Biafra Papers, Holy Ghost Fathers Archive, Dublin, Ireland.

<sup>2047</sup> Denis Rodgers, Letter to Fr. Provincial, June 29, 1968, Biafra Papers, Holy Ghost Fathers Archive, Dublin, Ireland.

<sup>2048</sup> Denis Rodgers, Letter to Fr. Provincial, June 29, 1968, Biafra Papers, Holy Ghost Fathers Archive, Dublin, Ireland.

<sup>2049</sup> "Report from Jos," September 29, 1966, A/5/2/1, Ireland National Archives, Dublin, Ireland.

<sup>2050</sup> C. E. Dymond, "Tour of Northern Nigeria," October 14, 1966, Enclosure, Pol 23-8, Folder 3, National Archives II, College Park, Maryland.

<sup>2051</sup> "Report from Jos," September 29, 1966, A/5/2/1, Ireland National Archives, Dublin, Ireland.

<sup>2052</sup> C. E. Dymond, "Tour of Northern Nigeria," October 14, 1966, Enclosure, Pol 23-8, Folder 3, National Archives II, College Park, Maryland.

<sup>2053</sup> "Report from Jos," September 29, 1966, A/5/2/1, Ireland National Archives, Dublin, Ireland.

<sup>2054</sup> "Report from Jos," September 29, 1966, A/5/2/1, Ireland National Archives, Dublin, Ireland.

The unrest endured. A group of angry men gathered outside the mission school, shouting with increasing fervor. The missionaries gathered the students in the mission chapel and uttered a prayer in Igbo to St. Michael: “Holy Archangel Michael, defend us in battle.”<sup>2055</sup>

Dawn broke, and a wave of frightened and injured refugees began to stream through the Church’s compound, many of them bleeding. They requested sanctuary, but the missionaries felt obliged to decline: “it was a hard thing . . . but we felt that our first duty was to the children.”<sup>2056</sup> If they invited the refugees inside the compound, the missionaries feared that they would attract further attention from the mob.<sup>2057</sup> The British authorities had advised that no British expatriate house Igbo refugees under any circumstance, as it could make them a target for mob action—and potentially undermine British relations with the Northern government.<sup>2058</sup> The missionaries determined that the students would be safest at the local police station; their Hausa driver helped to serve, watch, and deflect marauding mobs. “We owe our safety in great part to these Moslems who were very loyal to us and held guard all day . . . There are, thank God several cases of Moslems giving shelter to co-workers and sad to say, many others who informed.”<sup>2059</sup>

Nsukka poet Pol Ndu, who had studied alongside Christopher Okigbo and under Peter Thomas, reflected on the horrors of the scene. In two of his signature works, “Golgotha” and “Golgotha Revisited,” Ndu highlights the desolation of the summer murders. From “Golgotha”:

*For several endless days  
Bitterness and hatred  
Through cascading muskets of destruction  
The sun shone  
The wind played  
And night came*

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<sup>2055</sup> “Report from Jos,” September 29, 1966, A/5/2/1, Ireland National Archives, Dublin, Ireland.

<sup>2056</sup> “Report from Jos,” September 29, 1966, A/5/2/1, Ireland National Archives, Dublin, Ireland.

<sup>2057</sup> “Report from Jos,” September 29, 1966, A/5/2/1, Ireland National Archives, Dublin, Ireland.

<sup>2058</sup> American Embassy Lagos, June 12, 1966, Box 2529, Pol 23-8, Folder 3, National Archives II, College Park, Maryland.

<sup>2059</sup> “Report from Jos,” September 29, 1966, A/5/2/1, Ireland National Archives, Dublin, Ireland.

*As gods grinned through the groaning rustling mortals  
Through the biting bitterness  
Devouring our kind*

*Why cannot silence  
Come on all mis-makes  
And leave nothing made*<sup>2060</sup>

The Americans felt hopeful. Stephen Vincent felt that the Michigan State University staff had “all the innocence of Americans, kind of oblivious to what’s going on.”<sup>2061</sup> By the end of August, MSU official Irving Wyeth saw “less indications of emotionalism” and that generally, “the situation was improving.”<sup>2062</sup> But he acknowledged that the situation on the ground had changed: most Nigerian faculty members left the campus for their home village, essentially abandoning the American faculty.<sup>2063</sup> The University continued to function as per typical. Njoku, his registrar, Vincent Chukwuemeka Ike, and the admissions team anticipated a full enrollment load for the 1966-1967 academic year, totaling 4,000.<sup>2064</sup> Hannah anticipated that governmental changes had “potential for much good,” provided the military officers returned governance to duly elected officers.”<sup>2065</sup>

The University’s administration was now changing hands. Taggart left UNN in summer 1966, and renowned botanist Eni Njoku, who had enjoyed all the privileges of Nigeria’s elite officials, took lead.<sup>2066</sup> With a Ph.D. from the University of London and a ministerial position in Nigeria’s Council of Ministers and as a Senator, he was on track to become a leading figure in Nigeria’s post-independence milieu. Celebrated by his supporters as the “best brain in the

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<sup>2060</sup> Pol Ndu, “Golgotha,” in *Golgotha* (Ife: Pan-African Pocket Books, 1971), 24.

<sup>2061</sup> Vincent interview, June 2, 2015.

<sup>2062</sup> Irving Wyeth, Letter to John A. Hannah, September 6, 1966, Box 49, Folder 3, Hannah Papers.

<sup>2063</sup> Irving Wyeth, Letter to John A. Hannah, September 6, 1966, Box 49, Folder 3, Hannah Papers.

<sup>2064</sup> *Reconstructing the University* (May 1970), 7, Institute of African Studies Library, University of Nigeria, Nsukka.

<sup>2065</sup> John A. Hannah, Letter to Glen L. Taggart, January 27, 1966, Hannah Papers, Box 49, Folder 3, Hannah Papers,

<sup>2066</sup> John D. Hargreaves, “British Policy and African Universities: Sierra Leone Revisited,” *African Affairs* 84, No. 336 (July 1985): 323. See also “Professor Eni Njoku,” *The Times* [London], January 4, 1975, 14.

English-speaking world,” he could command a room well enough—but navigating the Lagosian political scene as an Igbo required a *savoir faire* that Njoku could not muster.<sup>2067</sup>

When the Education Minister, Aja Nwachukwu, appointed him to be the University of Lagos’ Vice-Chancellor in 1962, he faced a challenging task.<sup>2068</sup> Njoku needed to demonstrate his commitment to university sovereignty while, simultaneously, providing an amicable recruitment site for expatriates.<sup>2069</sup> Njoku excelled, in many regards. Njoku had secured external funding from a host of Western philanthropies, and he had built up his expatriate faculty.<sup>2070</sup> Njoku envisioned a bold new vision for the modern Nigerian intellectual: “The modern university scholar is an entirely new type of person in Nigeria, not identified with any traditional role.”<sup>2071</sup> He celebrated Western liberality and academic freedom: Nigerians need “a university as good as those existing anywhere else in the world. If academic freedom is a necessary element in such universities, then it must exist in the Nigerian universities, too.”<sup>2072</sup>

In spring 1965, the University Provision Council removed Njoku with a vote of 7-3 office in favor of Yoruba scholar S. O. Biobaku, in spite of the Faculty Senate’s support for Njoku’s retention; agitators attributed the sacking to Njoku’s Igbo ethnicity.<sup>2073</sup> Provisional Council Chairman E. N. O. Sodiende was compelled to respond publicly: “I can say categorically that

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<sup>2067</sup> *The Inspired Crisis over the Appointment of Vice-Chancellor of the University of Lagos* (Lagos: University of Lagos, 1965), 3.

<sup>2068</sup> *The Inspired Crisis over the Appointment of Vice-Chancellor of the University of Lagos* (Lagos: University of Lagos, 1965), *passim*.

<sup>2069</sup> *The Inspired Crisis over the Appointment of Vice-Chancellor of the University of Lagos* (Lagos: University of Lagos, 1965), 19.

<sup>2070</sup> Larry Diamond, *Class, Ethnicity, and Democracy in Nigeria: The Failure of the First Republic* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1988), 249.

<sup>2071</sup> Joseph Agbowuro, “Nigerianization and the Nigerian Universities,” *Comparative Education* 12, no. 3 (1976): 246-247.

<sup>2072</sup> Joseph Agbowuro, “Nigerianization and the Nigerian Universities,” *Comparative Education* 12, no. 3 (1976): 246-247.

<sup>2073</sup> *The Inspired Crisis over the Appointment of Vice-Chancellor of the University of Lagos* (Lagos: University of Lagos, 1965), 8, University of Lagos Archives.

members of the [Provisional] Council were in no way actuated by tribal or political consideration in voting for anew Vice-Chancellor on February 26, 1965.”<sup>2074</sup>

A University of Lagos cabal of students mounted a rebellion to advocate for Njoku’s appointment to be a Vice-Chancellor for life, occupying the Idi-Araba campus to advocate for Eni Njoku’s lifetime appointment to Vice Chancellorship.<sup>2075</sup> Other students mounted a counter petition, denouncing the actions of this “minority group” supported by “certain political and cultural groups.”<sup>2076</sup> They claimed that the activists “mercilessly attacked, stoned, [beat], and seriously wounded” peaceable students; Njoku himself was stabbed by a Yoruba student.<sup>2077</sup> Many of the faculty protested by resigning, too.<sup>2078</sup> Edwin Nwogugu, a Manchester-trained barrister teaching at the University of Lagos, left for the University of Nigeria.<sup>2079</sup> When Njoku was tapped to replace Taggart, he again postured to secure his position to be for “an indefinite period,” rather than limited to the 2-year terms as Johnson and Taggart had received.<sup>2080</sup> He assured Hannah that the University Council would, of course, enjoy the right to terminate him at any time “for cause.”<sup>2081</sup>

When Eni Njoku arrived at the campus in late summer 1966, fresh from his ethnicity-tinged ouster at the University of Lagos, he orchestrated the arrests of professors deemed

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<sup>2074</sup> *Change in Vice Chancellorship*, June 16, 1965, pamphlet, 1, University of Lagos Archives.

<sup>2075</sup> *The Inspired Crisis over the Appointment of Vice-Chancellor of the University of Lagos* (Lagos: University of Lagos, 1965), 8, University of Lagos Archives.

<sup>2076</sup> *The Inspired Crisis over the Appointment of Vice-Chancellor of the University of Lagos* (Lagos: University of Lagos, 1965), 9, University of Lagos Archives.

<sup>2077</sup> *The Inspired Crisis over the Appointment of Vice-Chancellor of the University of Lagos* (Lagos: University of Lagos, 1965), 9, University of Lagos Archives.

*The Inspired Crisis over the Appointment of Vice-Chancellor of the University of Lagos* (Lagos: University of Lagos, 1965), 9, University of Lagos Archives.

Thomas J. Davis and Azubike Kalu-Nwiwu,” Education, Ethnicity and National Integration in the History of Nigeria: Continuing Problems of Africa’s Colonial Legacy,” *The Journal of Negro History* 86, No. 1 (Winter, 2001), 7.

<sup>2079</sup> Nwogugu interview.

<sup>2080</sup> John A. Hannah, Letter to Glen L. Taggart, January 27, 1966, Box 49, Folder 3, Hannah Papers.

<sup>2081</sup> John A. Hannah, Letter to Glen L. Taggart, January 27, 1966, Box 49, Folder 3, Hannah Papers.

subversive.<sup>2082</sup> Njoku felt disinclined to be objective.<sup>2083</sup> In August, Njoku, along with delegations from the other regions, was commissioned to be a part of an investigative team to assess the causes for the summer violence against Igbo in the North.<sup>2084</sup> The commission “was a complete surprise,” as he had not been previously notified.<sup>2085</sup> Some of Njoku’s family had been killed in the anti-Igbo attacks; when the federal regime appointed him to a commission to investigate them, he tried to beg off: he “could not bring a judicious mind to bear.”<sup>2086</sup> More, Njoku could not spare the six months leave from administrative work at UNN.<sup>2087</sup> He convinced General Ironsi to dismiss him from the committee.<sup>2088</sup> Axinn felt that “things are looking up.”<sup>2089</sup> Back at Michigan State University, the recently-returned Taggart felt that in spite of the murders, “things seem to be settling down.”<sup>2090</sup> Indeed, UNN could boast the largest enrollment of any Nigerian university, with some 3,000 students.<sup>2091</sup> The Njoku purge served as boon to UNN, ever hungry for more Nigerian talent. By December 1966, 1,056 of the University’s 3,027 students were refugees from other universities; the University’s faculty increased by a net of 42%.<sup>2092</sup> The science faculty topped the total, adding over 20 new faculty members.<sup>2093</sup> And the University had exactly no source of funding available for the 1966-1967 academic year.<sup>2094</sup>

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<sup>2082</sup> Eni Njoku, Letter to John Hannah, August 23, 1966, Box 49, Folder 3, Hannah Papers.

<sup>2083</sup> Eni Njoku, Letter to John Hannah, August 23, 1966, Box 49, Folder 3, Hannah Papers.

<sup>2084</sup> Eni Njoku, Letter to John Hannah, August 23, 1966, Box 49, Folder 3, Hannah Papers.

<sup>2085</sup> Eni Njoku, Letter to John Hannah, August 23, 1966, Box 49, Folder 3, Hannah Papers.

<sup>2086</sup> Eni Njoku, Letter to John Hannah, August 23, 1966, Box 49, Folder 3, Hannah Papers.

<sup>2087</sup> Eni Njoku, Letter to John Hannah, August 23, 1966, Box 49, Folder 3, Hannah Papers.

<sup>2088</sup> Eni Njoku, Letter to John Hannah, August 23, 1966, Box 49, Folder 3, Hannah Papers.

<sup>2089</sup> Irving R. Wyeth, Letter to John A. Hannah, October 31, 1966, Box 49, Folder 3, Hannah Papers.

<sup>2090</sup> Glen L. Taggart, Letter to Secretary to Rolf van Scorebrand, November 9, 1966, Taggart Papers, Box 2, Folder 4, Merrill-Cazier.

<sup>2091</sup> S.C. Nwoye and J.C. Anafulu, “Instructing University Students in Library Use: The Nsukka Experiment,” *Libri* 23 (January 1, 1973): 252; Glen L. Taggart, Letter to Secretary to the Vice-Chancellor, Mr. Nnoyelu, November 9, 1966, Box 2, Folder 4, Taggart Papers.

<sup>2092</sup> “Changes in Senior Staff University of Nigeria as of 28 November 1966,” Box 49, Folder 3, UNN Project Papers.

<sup>2093</sup> “Changes in Senior Staff University of Nigeria as of 28 November 1966,” Box 49, Folder 3, UNN Project Papers.

<sup>2094</sup> Irving B. Wyeth, Letter to John A. Hannah, September 26, 1966, Box 49, Folder 3, Hannah Papers.

MSU continued to send new advisors throughout the summer, and they appeared to be earnest and enthused. MSU official Irving Wyeth applauded their “expression of positive attitudes and mature behavior,” their “enthusiasm and resoluteness.”<sup>2095</sup> When new advisors arrived in August, they “immediately embark[ed] upon the work at hand in their respective faculties.”<sup>2096</sup> Many of the new recruits “refused to accept the UNN system,” James Adichie recalled.<sup>2097</sup> One professor “would argue and argue and scatter everything,” blasting the general studies model in favor of producing “real” university education: a “real Faculty of Medicine,” for instance—rather than attempting to cater to the general population.<sup>2098</sup> Edwin Nwogugu credited the influx of refugees with the establishment of the medical school, which “just materialized overnight.”<sup>2099</sup>

As of March 1966, one State Department observer felt that “no problems have arisen at this point which are sufficiently great either to deal the project or to change the direction.”<sup>2100</sup> Njoku, too, felt secure: the difficulties were not “likely to affect [the University’s] future development adversely.” While they would face a strain on financial and infrastructural resources, “our problems will be relatively minor compared to the major issues facing the country.”<sup>2101</sup> Assistant Director of Continuing Education Melvin Buschman felt convinced that the “University had been accepted by Nigerians as their university and they are truly proud of it.”<sup>2102</sup>

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<sup>2095</sup> Irving Wyeth, Letter to John A. Hannah, September 6, 1966, Box 49, Folder 3, Hannah Papers.

<sup>2096</sup> Irving Wyeth, Letter to John A. Hannah, September 6, 1966, Box 49, Folder 3, Hannah Papers.

<sup>2097</sup> Adichie interview.

<sup>2098</sup> Adichie interview.

<sup>2099</sup> Nwogugu interview.

<sup>2100</sup> Department of State Performance Review of MSU, March 24, 1966, Box 49, Folder 3, Hannah Papers. Hannah Papers, MSU.

<sup>2101</sup> Eni Eni Njoku, Letter to John Hannah, August 23, 1966, Box 49, Folder 3, Hannah Papers.

<sup>2102</sup> Melvin C. Buschman, Letter to John A. Hannah, September 1, 1966, Box 49, Folder 3, Hannah Papers.

Axinn was a bit more candid, calling 1966 “a year of achievement, of change, of consolidation, of crisis, of condemnation, of frustration, of survival, of commendation—and, in retrospect, of significant progress.”<sup>2103</sup> The anti-Igbo activities were but one of many “crises,” including student disaffection over food, the worker’s union demonstration, and the incorporation of Lagosian students.”<sup>2104</sup> The military government had expelled the students from the University hostels, prompting a campus-wide housing crisis.<sup>2105</sup> Water access was still limited, and the electrical system spotty; the large capacity transformer had been struck by lightning that spring.”<sup>2106</sup> And a spate of public criticism from former UNN faculty had compelled MSU to prepare a formal response, alienating them from many of the Eastern Region’s political leadership.”<sup>2107</sup> Axinn celebrated UNN’s vision of a university that would produce graduates committed to “serving those who have not had the benefit of a higher education, rather than being served by them.”<sup>2108</sup> Hannah floated the possibility of finding “an opportunity or an excuse” to visit the Eastern Region the next spring—to become acquainted with villages and towns outside of Nsukka and Enugu.<sup>2109</sup> Yet, Axinn, too, cast the situation in an optimistic light—he felt that “things are looking up at Nsukka and the national situation seems to be calm.”<sup>2110</sup> Ambassador Elbert G. Mathews, too, believed the chances for “immediate further violence” appeared to “have decreased.”<sup>2111</sup> The University’s primary concerns were not the threats of violence but rather, the unreliability of the next fiscal year’s operating budget.<sup>2112</sup>

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<sup>2103</sup> George Axinn, Letter to John A. Hannah, July 21, 1966, Box 49, Folder 3, Hannah Papers.

<sup>2104</sup> George Axinn, Letter to John A. Hannah, July 21, 1966, Box 49, Folder 3, Hannah Papers.

<sup>2105</sup> George Axinn, Letter to John A. Hannah, July 21, 1966, Box 49, Folder 3, Hannah Papers.

<sup>2106</sup> George Axinn, Letter to John A. Hannah, July 21, 1966, Box 49, Folder 3, Hannah Papers.

<sup>2107</sup> George Axinn, Letter to John A. Hannah, July 21, 1966, Box 49, Folder 3, Hannah Papers.

<sup>2108</sup> George Axinn, Letter to John A. Hannah, July 21, 1966, Box 49, Folder 3, Hannah Papers.

<sup>2109</sup> John A. Hannah, Letter to Eni Njoku, October 21, 1966, Box 49, Folder 3, Hannah Papers.

<sup>2110</sup> George Axinn, Letter to John A. Hannah, July 21, 1966, Box 49, Folder 3, Hannah Papers.

<sup>2111</sup> Axinn, Disc, October 31, 1966, Transcript, Box 49, Folder 3, Hannah Papers.

<sup>2112</sup> Irving R. Wyeth, September 26, 1966, Box 49, Folder 3, Hannah Papers.



## *Population Transfers*

The lineup of refugee and repatriated scholars was impressive. Novelists Chinua Achebe and Cyprian Ekwensi left their respective posts at the Nigerian Broadcasting Corporation and the Federal Ministry of Education for UNN.<sup>2113</sup> Pius Okigbo, who had inspired Ikpeze to pursue economics, left his post as Nigeria's ambassador to the European Economic Community in Brussels for his home in the East, too.<sup>2114</sup> James Ezeilo returned from Ibadan, Gordan Ezekwe, from Zaria, and Michael Echeruo from the United States.<sup>2115</sup> Paul Akubue and Nnaemeka Ikpeze received new appointments upon their arrival from Ibadan.<sup>2116</sup>

Non-Igbo were now perceived as informants and potential University traitors.<sup>2117</sup> Law professor Edwin Nwogugu recalled that the uncertainty created an environment ripe for the cultivation of wartime mythology: "once you are in a state of uncertainty, it generates rumors."<sup>2118</sup> Stephen Vincent, too, recalled that "the people on the faculty among minorities had to remain quiet."<sup>2119</sup> Talk of secession hovered over the Americans' "gin and tonic clubs," which became "important zones to talk, or eventually not to talk, if you were opposed to the secession."<sup>2120</sup> Colonel Ojukwu used the campus as a site for political spectacle, descending in a helicopter onto the football field at Francis Ibiam field. Ojukwu "wanted to be relevant," Ikpeze recalled. "It was something to behold."<sup>2121</sup>

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<sup>2113</sup> Wendy Griswold, *Bearing Witness: Readers, Writers, and the Novel in Nigeria* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), 235.

<sup>2114</sup> Gloria Chuku, *The Igbo Intellectual Tradition: Creative Conflict in African and African Diasporic Thought* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), 195.

<sup>2115</sup> Obi Nwakanma, *Christopher Okigbo: Thirsting for Sunlight, 1930-1967* (London: James Currey, 2010), 232

<sup>2116</sup> Akubue interview; Ikpeze interview.

<sup>2117</sup> Vincent interview.

<sup>2118</sup> Nwogugu interview.

<sup>2119</sup> Vincent interview.

<sup>2120</sup> Vincent interview.

<sup>2121</sup> Ikpeze interview.

Substantive discussions with knowledgeable Eastern officials became harder to hold for any but the most connected; the American Consulate found a tight-lipped Eastern elite: “discussion of any but non-sensitive “technical” matters” became “very difficult to hold” with Eastern officials.<sup>2122</sup> Ojukwu issued a decree ordering the “evacuation” of non-Easterners from the region: a “temporary” measure, he promised, “to allow tempers to cool down.”<sup>2123</sup> He attributed the attacks to “ill-considered actions of certain people trying to set the hands of the clock back.”<sup>2124</sup> Whether the people inciting the riots were British or Egyptian diplomats depended on whose explanation one wanted to believe.<sup>2125</sup> An estimated 500-1000 staff and students were removed from the University property.<sup>2126</sup> Soldiers were repatriated to their home region in order to, as Vice-Chancellor Njoku noted, “avoid further trouble.”<sup>2127</sup> Colonel Ojukwu imposed the population transfer measure as a “temporary expedient to allow tempers to cool down.”<sup>2128</sup> 400 students were relocated to the University of Lagos, Ife, and Ibadan.<sup>2129</sup> The noted education scholar, A. Babs Fafunwa, was compelled to take a visiting professorship at the University of Ife.<sup>2130</sup> From East Lansing, Taggart bemoaned the loss of such “key and competent individuals.”<sup>2131</sup>

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<sup>2122</sup> American Consulate, Airgram, June 15, 1966, Box 2529, Pol 23-8, Folder 3, National Archives II, College Park, Maryland.

<sup>2123</sup> American Consulate, Airgram, June 15, 1966, Box 2529, Pol 23-8, Folder 3, National Archives II, College Park, Maryland.

<sup>2124</sup> American Consulate, Airgram, June 15, 1966, Box 2529, Pol 23-8, Folder 3, National Archives II, College Park, Maryland.

<sup>2125</sup> American Consulate, Airgram, June 15, 1966, Box 2529, Pol 23-8, Folder 3, National Archives II, College Park, Maryland.

<sup>2126</sup> Irving R. Wyeth, Letter to John A. Hannah, October 19, 1966, Box 49, Folder 3, Hannah Papers.

<sup>2127</sup> Eni Njoku, Letter to John A. Hannah, August 23, 1966, Box 49, Folder 3, Hannah Papers. Hannah Papers, .

<sup>2128</sup> Irving R. Wyeth, Letter to John A. Hannah, October 19, 1966, Hannah Papers, Box 49, Folder 3, National Archives II, College Park, Maryland. 2.

<sup>2129</sup> A. Babs Fafunwa, Letter to Glen L. Taggart, October 31, 1966, Box 1, Folder 1, Taggart Papers, Merrill-Cazier.

<sup>2130</sup> A. Babs Fafunwa, Letter to Glen L. Taggart, October 31, 1966, Box 1, Folder 1, Taggart Papers, Merrill-Cazier.

<sup>2131</sup> Glen L. Taggart, Letter to Tony Milton, Taggart Papers, October 25, 1966, Box 1, Folder 1, Merrill-Cazier.

At the University of Lagos, housing facilities were ill-equipped to handle the “influx of students . . . forced to leave the University of Nigeria.”<sup>2132</sup> The Vice-Chancellor, S. O. Biobaku, who had succeeded Eni Njoku, blamed the “influx” for their difficulties in housing.<sup>2133</sup> The troubles continued when the soldiers returned home; from Calabar, reports flowed that they were carrying out “depredations” against house servants. The police simply acknowledged that they were a “common occurrence,” and they “bemoaned [that] nobody able to do anything about it.”<sup>2134</sup> Professor Nnaemeka Ikpeze felt that “it wasn’t democracy anymore”—with no clear sense of “rights.”<sup>2135</sup> As of 1968, MSU International Programs Official Charles Doane noted that Michigan State University was functioning as an informal place of refuge for all Eastern Nigerians—non-Easterners complained that MSU was favoring Easterners. Doane acknowledged “maybe so—they have something close to political asylum at this time.”<sup>2136</sup>

MSU’s influence had never gone unquestioned—Aba Assembly representative O. C. Ememe had targeted them in order to gain favor with Soviets years before—but against the backdrop of the political tumult, an American university’s close relationship with an Igbo-dominant university unsettled even some university faculty members.<sup>2137</sup> Dr. Charles Oyolu, an economics professor, complained in a public letter to the East’s Military Governor that MSU should be considered potential sites of Igbo subversion and a party to the January coup:<sup>2138</sup> Who was paying their salaries? Why had the Europeans departed so abruptly? How were Nigerian tax dollars being used?<sup>2139</sup> Oyolu was allied with Premier Michael Okpara’s political opposition, and

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<sup>2132</sup> Vice-Chancellor S.O. Biobaku, Speech to Senate, April 23, 1970, University of Lagos Archives.

<sup>2133</sup> Vice-Chancellor S.O. Biobaku, Speech to Senate, April 23, 1970, University of Lagos Archives.

<sup>2134</sup> Department of State, Telegram, September 12, 1966, Box 2529, Pol 23-8, Folder 3, National Archives II, College Park, Maryland.

<sup>2135</sup> Ikpeze interview.

<sup>2136</sup> Charles F. Doane, Jr., Letter to Glen L. Taggart, October 2, 1968, Merrill-Cazier Library, Utah State University.

<sup>2137</sup> “Taggart Welcomes Probe,” *Nigerian Outlook*, February 23, 1966, 1,3.

<sup>2138</sup> “Taggart Welcomes Probe,” *Nigerian Outlook*, February 23, 1966, 1,3.

<sup>2139</sup> “Taggart Welcomes Probe,” *Nigerian Outlook*, February 23, 1966, 1,3.

he sensed an opportunity to curry favor with the Ironsi government<sup>2140</sup> Oyolu found the departure of the Brits, such as Wright and Merchant, to be suspect.<sup>2141</sup> Keen to UNN's status as an "Igbo University," the *Nigerian Outlook* did not hesitate to report the federals' increased scrutiny on this university so closely associated with the Americans.<sup>2142</sup>

In January 1967, Northern, Eastern, Western, and Midwestern regional delegations met in Aburi, Ghana to forge an agreement of mutually-recognized sovereignties.<sup>2143</sup> In May 1967, Lt. General Chukwuemeka Ojukwu declared the independence of the Republic of Biafra, and the University of Nigeria was declared to be the University of Biafra.<sup>2144</sup> Nsukka came to be seen as tantamount to separatist fervor.<sup>2145</sup> K.K. Tsaro-Wiwa, then a teaching assistant, wrote in April 1967 of the silence demanded of persecuted Igbo:

*Silence*  
*The vows of silence*  
*They must be kept.*

*For you cannot speak*  
*While the guns roar*  
*And you cannot cry*  
*Where you'll not be heard*  
*For the loud resonance*  
*Of one-sided truth.*

*Silence.*  
*And the vows of silence*  
*Must be kept*  
*Or else...*  
*Where will silence be kept*<sup>2146</sup>

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<sup>2140</sup> Lewis and Margaret Zerby, *If I Die Before I Wake: The Nsukka Dream*, 246.

<sup>2141</sup> "Taggart Welcomes Probe," *Nigerian Outlook*, February 23, 1966, 1,3.

<sup>2142</sup> "Taggart Welcomes Probe," *Nigerian Outlook*, February 23, 1966, 1,3.

<sup>2143</sup> Chinua Achebe, *There Was A Country*, 85-86.

<sup>2144</sup> For a discussion of the political developments leading to the outbreak of the war, see Ugbana Okupu, "The Politics of State Creation and the Outbreak of the Nigerian Civil War," *Transafrican Journal of History* 11 (1982): 147-166.

<sup>2145</sup> For instance, see Stephen Vincent (poet), Interview with Phyllis Noble, June 2, 2015, John F. Kennedy Library.

<sup>2146</sup> Wilfried F. Feuser, "Nigeria's Civil War in Literature," *Présence Africaine* 1<sup>st</sup> et 2<sup>nd</sup> Trimester, nos. 137/138 (1986): 131.

Students and faculty embraced the Biafran cause. In 1967, the Vice-Chancellor enjoined the Engineering faculty to become “the Biafran engineer” who “must maintain the questioning spirit, the skill to select and adapt, and to invent the technology appropriate to the development of his country.”<sup>2147</sup> Federal forces considered Nsukka to become the primary target—not only among the closest site to the Nigeria border but also, the intellectual embodiment of the Biafran aspirations.<sup>2148</sup> They planned an artillery attack against Ogoja, hoping to attract Ojukwu into a pitch battle while taking the Nsukka site.<sup>2149</sup> While lobbing a few shells, six battalions stood ready to lay siege to Nsukka.<sup>2150</sup> By contrast, professor James Adichie had a rifle and a couple of cartridges: “that’s what you have, and you go to the front.”<sup>2151</sup>

#### *Evacuation from Nsukka*

Meanwhile, MSU faculty fared on their own. They waited. They used single sideband “clandestine” shortwave radio from the United States government—although the system was poorly secured.<sup>2152</sup> A large red wire extended across the campus indicating the radio’s presence, and most of the Nigerians could listen.<sup>2153</sup> The State Department issued an order for a convoy of cars to take all the women and children down to Port Harcourt, and the women/children evacuated to Amsterdam on June 3.<sup>2154</sup> The following month, an Italian ship picked up 500

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<sup>2147</sup> “A Message from the Vice Chancellor,” *Nsukka Engineer* Vol. 2 (1967): i.

<sup>2148</sup> For a discussion of the political developments leading to the outbreak of the war, see Ugbana Okupu, “The Politics of State Creation and the Outbreak of the Nigerian Civil War,” *Transafrican Journal of History* 11 (1982): 147-166.

<sup>2149</sup> Anthony Clayton, *Frontiersmen: Warfare in Africa Since 1950* (New York: Taylor and Francis, 2002), 93.

<sup>2150</sup> Frederick Forsyth, *The Biafra Story: The Making of an African Legend*, 114.

<sup>2151</sup> Adichie interview.

<sup>2152</sup> Axinn interview. See also Excerpts from Dr. Axinn’s Disc dated October 22, 1966, Box 49, Folder 3, Hannah Papers.

<sup>2153</sup> Axinn interview.

<sup>2154</sup> Axinn interview; Irving Wyeth, Letter to Louis Doyle, August 8, 1967, University of Nigeria, Nsukka Project Papers, Box 208, Folder 44, .

British, 200 Americans, 80 Dutch, 20 Swiss, 17 Israelis, 15 Germans, 10 Italians, and 3 Japanese.<sup>2155</sup> By the end of the summer, USAID had “tipped [MSU] off of the possible phase down in positions.”<sup>2156</sup> By October, a handful of British professors had fled Nsukka. IUC Secretary I. C. M. Maxwell worked secretly to find other employment for the professors, since they were “technically” employed by the University of Biafra.; MSU officials considered similar measures.<sup>2157</sup> Nevertheless, MSU planned to bring in a new crop of scholars to replace the evacuees “to still serve, hopefully, on long-term assignments, as planned”—or as short-term employees “as a last resort” as soon as possible.<sup>2158</sup> But the State Department warned them that this would not be possible for “some months to come.”<sup>2159</sup>

The MSU male staff evacuated the campus to Enugu on July 6, the day the first shells hit the Princess Alexandria Auditorium.<sup>2160</sup> One American instructor had to catch the ferry over the Niger River to escape.<sup>2161</sup> When the security guard, a hobbled fellow who “hop[ped] on one foot and drag[gged] the other” stopped him, he saw that Vincent was carrying a book of poetry that he had written.<sup>2162</sup> Vincent told him, “I’m a poet,” and the guard told him: “Read me one.”<sup>2163</sup> Vincent read a poem titled “On My Way to Take out an American Negro Girl,” and the guard

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<sup>2155</sup> “Nigeria Approves Evacuation of Foreigners in East,” *New York Times*, July 18, 1967, 10.

<sup>2156</sup> Irving Wyeth, Letter to Louis Doyle, August 27, 1967, University of Nigeria, Nsukka Project Papers, Box 208, Folder 44, .

<sup>2157</sup> I.C.M. Maxwell, Note for File, October 23, 1967, BW 90/610, National Archives-Kew; Robert S. Smith, Letter to Irving R. Wyeth, July 31, 1967, University of Nigeria, Nsukka Project Papers, Box 208, Folder 44, .

<sup>2158</sup> Irving Wyeth, Letter to Louis Doyle, July 7, 1967, University of Nigeria, Nsukka Project Papers, Box 208, Folder 44, .

<sup>2159</sup> Michael H.B. Adler, Newsletter No. 2, August 7, 1967, University of Nigeria, Nsukka Project Papers, Box 208, Folder 44, .

<sup>2160</sup> Axinn interview.

<sup>2161</sup> Vincent interview.

<sup>2162</sup> Vincent interview.

<sup>2163</sup> Vincent interview.

allowed him to board the ferry.<sup>2164</sup> Four days later, Njoku called for an evacuation of the campus. Ill-planned and under-predicted, they left virtually all the records at the Nsukka campus.<sup>2165</sup>

### *Guerrilla Academics*

UNN became a University-in-exile, with a temporary headquarters established at the University's satellite campus in Enugu.<sup>2166</sup> Okigbo's first task was the recovery of University resources.<sup>2167</sup> The campus evacuation was assumed to be brief—mistakenly, as federal troops were not of a mind to cede it back to separatist hands.<sup>2168</sup> In their rush to escape—and their belief that the University would soon be functional again—they left most of the University's resources: records, farm animals, books, and equipment.<sup>2169</sup> After an unsuccessful attempt to organize the return of farm animals from Enugu, Okigbo returned to Nsukka with a trailer and retrieved 14 cattle head, 4,000 eggs, and a handful of research files.<sup>2170</sup> A half hour after his departure, Okigbo could hear the shelling of the campus in the distance.<sup>2171</sup>

Nsukka was among the first to fall to federal troops; sited along the border with the North, it formed—as it long had—a gateway through the Udi hills and into the heart of Biafra. Nsukka militiamen attempted to prevent federal incursions, but their weapons faced the overwhelming might of the internationally-backed federal regime: rifles and a few machine guns against armored vehicles and heavy artillery.<sup>2172</sup> After a two-day pitched back-and-forth battle, Nsukka fell to the federal troops, with a body of Nsukka resistance fighters organizing to take it

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<sup>2164</sup> Vincent interview.

<sup>2165</sup> Bede Okigbo, Letter to Kenyon T. Payne, December 4, 1968, Box 49, Folder 3, Hannah Papers.

<sup>2166</sup> Bede Okigbo, Letter to Kenyon T. Payne, December 4, 1968, Box 49, Folder 3, Hannah Papers.

<sup>2167</sup> Bede Okigbo, Letter to Kenyon T. Payne, December 4, 1968, Box 49, Folder 3, Hannah Papers.

<sup>2168</sup> Bede Okigbo, Letter to Kenyon T. Payne, December 4, 1968, Box 49, Folder 3, Hannah Papers.

<sup>2169</sup> Bede Okigbo, Letter to Kenyon T. Payne, December 4, 1968, Box 49, Folder 3, Hannah Papers.

<sup>2170</sup> Bede Okigbo, Letter to Kenyon T. Payne, December 4, 1968, Box 49, Folder 3, Hannah Papers.

<sup>2171</sup> Bede Okigbo, Letter to Kenyon T. Payne, December 4, 1968, Box 49, Folder 3, Hannah Papers.

<sup>2172</sup> Bede Okigbo, Letter to Kenyon T. Payne, December 4, 1968, Box 49, Folder 3, Hannah Papers.

back.<sup>2173</sup> British support made dominance possible: “The true value of the British support to the Federal government cannot be overestimated,” political scientist Oye Ogunbadejo observes.<sup>2174</sup>

James Adichie recalls the frenzy: “I was in my house that evening, and people were moving their families out of the campus.”<sup>2175</sup> The wartime environment produced the occasional reversal of fortunes. Two Indian mathematicians evacuated Nigeria, leaving Adichie with their vehicles.<sup>2176</sup> “When this thing was heating up, I decided to send my own family home.”<sup>2177</sup> Escaping Nsukka was frenzied, with several security checkpoints manned by “angry-looking, blood-shot-eyed fellows” ordering them to “go back” or the Adichies would be shot.<sup>2178</sup> Adichie returned the next day to an empty campus.<sup>2179</sup> He stayed with a boy from the community named Amara (“Grace”). A university official searched for “anywhere he found life and sa[id], ‘Get out! Everybody move. . . don’t stay!’” in a shrill voice.<sup>2180</sup> He and Amara “jumped into my car,” left behind his Berkeley doctoral robe and packed his books and food before fleeing.<sup>2181</sup> Bede Okigbo attempted to repel the attacks initially, but the pressure increased to such an extent that it soon became clear that “our troops armed with only rifles and submachine guns were no match for the Federal troops.”<sup>2182</sup> The Nigerian army’s fixation on holding Nsukka provided the Biafran military another route.<sup>2183</sup> On August 9, Ojukwu deployed a 3,000-strong squadron, under the command of Brigadier Victor Banjo, in a night attack over the Niger Bridge into Onitsha; within

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<sup>2173</sup> Lloyd Garrison, “Rebels Claim Nsukka,” *New York Times*, July 18, 1967, 10; Bede Okigbo, Letter to Kenyon T. Payne, December 4, 1968, Box 49, Folder 3, Hannah Papers.

<sup>2174</sup> Oye Ogunbadejo, “Nigeria and the Great Powers: The Impact of the Civil War on Nigerian Foreign Relations,” *African Affairs* (January 1976): 15.

<sup>2175</sup> Adichie interview.

<sup>2176</sup> Adichie interview.

<sup>2177</sup> Adichie interview.

<sup>2178</sup> Adichie interview.

<sup>2179</sup> Adichie interview.

<sup>2180</sup> Adichie interview.

<sup>2181</sup> Adichie interview.

<sup>2182</sup> Bede Okigbo, Letter to Kenyon T. Payne, December 4, 1968, Box 49, Folder 3, Hannah Papers.

<sup>2183</sup> Adichie interview.



a day, the Biafrans commanded the Midwestern oil regions while the Nigerian military burned books on the Nsukka campus.<sup>2184</sup>

UNN's lettered academics translated their skills for wartime resistance. R. C. Nwamefor, formerly a librarian at Ibadan and then, Nsukka, became a cataloguer for the propaganda division.<sup>2185</sup> Edwin Nwogugu served as counsel to the Biafran ministry of justice, helping to author Biafra's petition to the United Nations.<sup>2186</sup> Nnaemeka Ikpeze became a reporting officer throughout the battlefronts as "part of the direct effort for propaganda outfit."<sup>2187</sup> Proficient in reading and writing, Ikpeze could convey a sense of unity and community support throughout the Eastern villages for the wartime effort.<sup>2188</sup> He "cover[ed] local things . . . The community. How the people supported the war effort."<sup>2189</sup> If he saw "a group of farmers or traders do something, you have to report it."<sup>2190</sup> He traveled from village to village noting what people did to "survive for the war effort. The farmers did whatever they could to provide food. . . . Traders' forums, farmers' forums, womens' forum."<sup>2191</sup> Educational institutions in the East did not always shut down; they adapted. An Irish mission reported that in many locations, schools were "well-attended and in full swing."<sup>2192</sup> School buildings were transformed into refugee camps, and school teachers developed "private compounds" where they drew on pre-existing materials: "making do" with "what they had before."<sup>2193</sup> Vincent, too, became an advocate for the struggle

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<sup>2184</sup> S. Elizabeth Bird and Fraser M. Ottanelli, *The Asaba Massacre: Trauma, Memory, and the Nigerian Civil War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 12.

<sup>2185</sup> R.C. Nwamefor, Letter to Eugene de Benko, November 15, 1971, Africana Library Correspondence Series 9.11, Herskovitz Library, Northwestern University.

<sup>2186</sup> Nwogugu interview.

<sup>2187</sup> Ikpeze interview.

<sup>2188</sup> Ikpeze interview.

<sup>2189</sup> Ikpeze interview.

<sup>2190</sup> Ikpeze interview.

<sup>2191</sup> Ikpeze interview.

<sup>2192</sup> Denis Roberts, January 26, 1969, Biafra Papers, Holy Ghost Fathers Archives.

<sup>2193</sup> Denis Roberts, January 26, 1969, Biafra Papers, Holy Ghost Fathers Archives.

of Easterners, arguing that Igbo “legitimate grievances” would “have to be recognized” if the “concept of Nigeria” were to endure.<sup>2194</sup>

The wave of murders spurred Okigbo to orchestrate plans for retaliation. He must “chase the vandals out of the university,” he fumed—a soon-to-be slogan for the guerilla campaigns.<sup>2195</sup> Okigbo was as much a high-drama guerrilla as poet-savant. Trained in Nsukka’s early days under Welch poet, Peter Thomas, Okigbo had as much flair for artistry as he did for warfare.<sup>2196</sup> Okigbo had little regard for military authority—preferring instead to orchestrate independently-run gun-running raids between Opi and Nsukka. and at times, from abroad.<sup>2197</sup> During one incident, Okigbo traveled to Amsterdam where he liaised with an American pilot, Hank Wharton, to smuggle guns to eastern Nigeria.<sup>2198</sup> Okigbo traveled to Birmingham to await Wharton’s arrival.<sup>2199</sup> Wharton was to fly the guns to Birmingham, receive Okigbo, and then fly on to Nigeria.<sup>2200</sup> Overweight from the weaponry, the plane crashed in Cameroon; both pilot and co-pilot were arrested.<sup>2201</sup> When some of Okigbo’s materials were found, word spread that Okigbo had either escaped or died in the crash.<sup>2202</sup> Okigbo embraced the tale, repeating it to friends in various forms over the coming months.<sup>2203</sup> While Okigbo subsequently fabricated stories about his escape, in actuality, he had been living a quiet life in Birmingham.<sup>2204</sup>

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<sup>2194</sup> Stephen Vincent, “Should Biafra Survive?” *Transitions* 32 (Aug-Sep. 1967): 57.

<sup>2195</sup> Nwakanma, *Christopher Okigbo*, 234-235.

<sup>2196</sup> For Okigbo’s training under Thomas, see Hezzy Maduakor, “Peter Thomas and the Development of Modern Nigerian Poetry,” *Research in African Literatures* 11, no. 1 (Spring 1980): 86.

<sup>2197</sup> Nwakanma, *Christopher Okigbo*, 236.

<sup>2198</sup> Nwakanma, *Christopher Okigbo*, 236.

<sup>2199</sup> Nwakanma, *Christopher Okigbo*, 236.

<sup>2200</sup> Nwakanma, *Christopher Okigbo*, 236.

<sup>2201</sup> Nwakanma, *Christopher Okigbo*, 237.

<sup>2202</sup> Nwakanma, *Christopher Okigbo*, 237.

<sup>2203</sup> Nwakanma, *Christopher Okigbo*, 237.

<sup>2204</sup> Nwakanma, *Christopher Okigbo*, 237.

For Okigbo, war was an adventure of the soul, an exploration of the human spirit. He called himself a “Major” to ensure that he would be obeyed; one colleague recalled that “he just cut the pips one day and sewed it to his shoulder.”<sup>2205</sup> All knew he was more of a gallant poet in search of himself; biographer Obi Nwakanma observed that he “had all the marks of Okigbo’s love for play, for intrigue and subterfuge.”<sup>2206</sup> Okigbo biographer Nkem Nwankwo writes that Okigbo “had this Byzantine streak: a keen eye and ear for anything that sounded like plotting. Mostly his plots centered on hoodwinking and luring women to bed, but during Biafra, his scheming focused on protecting land, country, and above all, his university.”<sup>2207</sup> He did not even exist under a command structure; he played “pick-up” guerrilla warfare.<sup>2208</sup> Of his plans, Okigbo waxed effervescent:

*BRIGHT*

*with the armpit-dazzle of a lioness,  
she answers,*

*wearing white light about her;*

*and the waves escort her,  
my lioness,  
crowned with moonlight.*

*So brief her presence—match-flare in wind's breath—  
so brief with mirrors around me.*<sup>2209</sup>

Okigbo’s penchant for romance now met headlong with the looming forces of the apocalypse; his muse now shared with him the rhythms of homeland, of defense, and University pride.

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<sup>2205</sup> Nwakanma, *Christopher Okigbo*, 245.

<sup>2206</sup> Nwakanma, *Christopher Okigbo*, 234.

<sup>2207</sup> Nwakanma, *Christopher Okigbo*, 234-235.

<sup>2208</sup> Nwakanma, *Christopher Okigbo*, 244.

<sup>2209</sup> Maduakor, “Peter Thomas and the Development of Modern Nigerian Poetry,” *Research in African Literatures* 11, no. 1 (Spring 1980): 88.

Now in control of Nsukka, the Nigerian Federal troops inched closer to the Biafran capital in Enugu.<sup>2210</sup> Ojukwu ordered Biafra Brigadier Hillary Njoku to organize an operation to expel the Federal troops from Nsukka.<sup>2211</sup> On September 14, Njoku called a conference at Ukehe to plot a full-offensive against Federal troops in Nsukka.<sup>2212</sup> OPERATION: TORCH, Njoku promised, would be a full-court press: including the deployment of Major Kevin Megwa's storied "Red Devils" squadron.<sup>2213</sup> Megwa was an old friend of Okigbo's and had personal connections to the University.<sup>2214</sup> Two days later, the shelling of Federal positions commenced, with plans for Tim Onwuaturuegwu's 15<sup>th</sup> battalion to take the Opi-Eha Alumona Road. The Federals expected them, and they unleashed anti-tank fire, killing Megwa.<sup>2215</sup>

The Biafrans sent two battalions in the 51st and 53rd brigades closer to Nsukka, while Okigbo received direct orders to hold the Opi base on the rear.<sup>2216</sup> As Okigbo and another commander, Gaius Anoka, held a bunker—eating Quaker oats and *akara*.<sup>2217</sup> The sounds of shelling elevated, until Paul Ene, their batman, unleashed a round of ammo while screaming: "Enemies! Enemies!" while men throughout the camp scrambled for cover.<sup>2218</sup>

The Federals had launched a two-pronged attack from Ede-Obala and Eha-Alumona.<sup>2219</sup> The bunker was no place for security; with only one exit facing Ede-Obala, it was an "obvious deathtrap."<sup>2220</sup> One commander at Nsukka, Alex Madiebo, recalls: "The situation at Nsukka was getting out of hand . . . the enemy was bull-doing his way on two axes from Nsukka through

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<sup>2210</sup> Nwakanma, *Christopher Okigbo*, 253.

<sup>2211</sup> Nwakanma, *Christopher Okigbo*, 253.

<sup>2212</sup> Nwakanma, *Christopher Okigbo*, 254.

<sup>2213</sup> Nwakanma, *Christopher Okigbo*, 254.

<sup>2214</sup> Nwakanma, *Christopher Okigbo*, 254.

<sup>2215</sup> Nwakanma, *Christopher Okigbo*, 254.

<sup>2216</sup> Nwakanma, *Christopher Okigbo*, 254.

<sup>2217</sup> Nwakanma, *Christopher Okigbo*, 255.

<sup>2218</sup> Nwakanma, *Christopher Okigbo*, 255.

<sup>2219</sup> Nwakanma, *Christopher Okigbo*, 255.

<sup>2220</sup> Nwakanma, *Christopher Okigbo*, 255.

Ekwegbe and Ukehe,” while the 53<sup>rd</sup> brigade faltered under enemy fire. Meanwhile, Colonel Okon withdrew the 16<sup>th</sup> Battalion from Ede-Obala, where Federal Troops had set the market aflame—thus removing the last barrier before reaching Okigbo’s site in Opi.<sup>2221</sup> Situated on the lowland, Opi’s strategic access was more than outweighed by its vulnerability to shelling from the highland. But Okigbo urged men not to leave; he told one friend, Ben Gbulie, “we will die here. Let us finish it here!”<sup>2222</sup>

The poet was despondent; having seen the death of friends such as Chukwuma Kaduna Nzeogwu and Kevin Megwa, Okigbo had been unstable: feeling the weight of war, loss, and trauma. Okigbo died in the bunker.<sup>2223</sup> James Adichie responded differently. He “had to run” from Nsukka.”<sup>2224</sup> He loaded up his family, and he left. Adichie recalled: “while you were moving, you didn’t know where you were going. The idea was to get out of danger.”<sup>2225</sup> He moved from site to site, finally settling on the office of the Assistant Bursar: “There was no sign of war there, so we stayed there for about a week.”<sup>2226</sup> Meanwhile, mercenary “blood donors” sold their blood outside the University of Nigeria’s teaching hospital in Enugu.<sup>2227</sup>

One Catholic father near Nsukka, Denis Rodgers, recalled seeing “helpless mothers and children fleeing for their lives stranded on the road,” shortly after he was captured by federal troops.<sup>2228</sup> Adichie saw a similar site of concourses of people “streaming out” with “women carrying their children. One here. One there. They were struggling.”<sup>2229</sup> At Enugu-Otu further

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<sup>2221</sup> Nwakanma, *Christopher Okigbo*, 255.

<sup>2222</sup> Nwakanma, *Christopher Okigbo*, 255.

<sup>2223</sup> Nwakanma, *Christopher Okigbo*, 229.

<sup>2224</sup> Adichie interview.

<sup>2225</sup> Adichie interview.

<sup>2226</sup> Adichie interview.

<sup>2227</sup> Samuel Fury Childs Daly, *A History of the Republic of Biafra: Law, Crime, and the Nigerian Civil War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020), 201-202.

<sup>2228</sup> Denis Rodgers, Letter to Father Provincial, June 29, 1968, Holy Ghost Fathers Archive, Dublin, Ireland.

<sup>2229</sup> Adichie interview.

south, Father Rodgers saw “hundreds of people crowded into a small space,” with “just a few pots, some clothes” and occasionally, a sewing machine.<sup>2230</sup> The refugees busily engaged in rat-trap, fish-trap, and rope-making activities hoping to earn “a few pence.”<sup>2231</sup> Rodgers interpreted their actions as a can-do-ism spirit: “everybody is up and doing,” because they knew that “unless you are prepared to put your back into it, you haven’t a chance.”<sup>2232</sup> Night air raids haunted refugee life, and the death rate held steady: three per day, with men at the ready to dig small graves.<sup>2233</sup> Irish agriculture researcher Anita Whitney called the whole scene “pretty ghostly.”<sup>2234</sup> Chinua Achebe recalled that there were “many Biafran refugee camps dotting the landscape, from Enugu in the North to Owerri in the South.”<sup>2235</sup> The population had dropped to about 5% of the prewar levels; the road connecting Enugu to Nsukka, an hour-long drive, had fifteen military checkpoints, with “skulls dangling overhead.”<sup>2236</sup> Even in Lagos, shopping was difficult, but Whitney could easily buy Star Beer.<sup>2237</sup> The population at Enugu was not so low as the father suggested; two American observers noted that Enugu had 5,000 residents, but “only about 500 of them were Ibos.” The remainder were other groups who had “followed the army to trade.”<sup>2238</sup> Education continued at Oguta Lake, too, where one teacher believed that the goddess *uhamiri* served as their protectors, with a cohort of women devotees.<sup>2239</sup>

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<sup>2230</sup> Denis Rodgers, Letter to Father Provincial, November 7, 1968, Holy Ghost Fathers Archive, Dublin, Ireland.

<sup>2231</sup> Denis Rodgers, Letter to Father Provincial, November 7, 1968, Holy Ghost Fathers Archive, Dublin, Ireland.

<sup>2232</sup> Denis Rodgers, Letter to Father Provincial, November 7, 1968, Holy Ghost Fathers Archive, Dublin, Ireland.

<sup>2233</sup> Denis Rodgers, Letter to Father Provincial, November 7, 1968, Holy Ghost Fathers Archive, Dublin, Ireland.

<sup>2234</sup> Anita Whitney, Memo to Advisors, December 12, 1968, Box 49, Folder 3, Hannah Papers.

<sup>2235</sup> Chinua Achebe, *There Was A Country*, 169.

<sup>2236</sup> Anita Whitney, Memo to Advisors, December 12, 1968, Box 49, Folder 3, Hannah Papers.

<sup>2237</sup> Anita Whitney, Memo to Advisors, December 12, 1968, Box 49, Folder 3, Hannah Papers.

<sup>2238</sup> Don Hartle, Memo to Advisors, December 12, 1968, Box 49, Folder 3, Hannah Papers.

<sup>2239</sup> Christie Achebe, “Igbo Women in the Nigerian-Biafran War 1967–1970: An Interplay of Control,” *Journal of Black Studies* 40, no. 5 (May 2010): 799.

Bede Okigbo attributed much of their losses to internal subversion—a plot by the British High Commission to overthrow the Biafran military.<sup>2240</sup> Their retreat was temporary, the Biafra army spokesperson assured; only because of a “mysterious order from the army high command” did the Biafra army find themselves vulnerable to federal advances. Some saboteur from within—and at a high level—had undermined their position.<sup>2241</sup> Collaborators were “arrested, court martialed, and executed.”<sup>2242</sup>

Bede Okigbo accused them of distracting Biafran troops from their posts in the Midwest and more, of facilitating Federal forces’ entrance into Enugu.<sup>2243</sup> “There was so much confusion, and no one could tell the saboteurs apart from loyal Biafran troops,” Adichie recalled, that “Igbo killed many of the Biafrans.”<sup>2244</sup> The community organized bands of militia to hunt down—and summarily execute—internal elements that had launched shell attacks from within Enugu, whether in the coal mines or in the bushes.<sup>2245</sup> On a local level, at least one student, Isaac Boro, whom Okigbo identified as a “student rabble rouser” had once led a rebellion against General Ironsi; now, he served as part of the invasion and capture of Port Harcourt.<sup>2246</sup>

#### *Nigerian Takeover of the Nsukka Campus*

Within a few months of the initial July siege, the Nigerians took over Enugu in October 1967, now bringing the totality of the UNN’s infrastructure under federal control; the fall also mobilized undecided Igbo in the Biafra region.<sup>2247</sup> R. W. McColl in his classic article, “The Insurgent State: Territorial Bases of Revolution,” has argued that insurgencies are rooted in a

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<sup>2240</sup> Bede Okigbo, Letter to Kenyon T. Payne, December 4, 1968, Box 49, Folder 3, Hannah Papers. See also “Rebels Claim Nsukka,” *New York Times*, July 18, 1967, 10.

<sup>2241</sup> Alfred Friendly, “Nigerian Secessionists Concede Retreat at Nsukka,” *New York Times*, July 17, 1967, 10.

<sup>2242</sup> Bede Okigbo, Letter to Kenyon T. Payne, December 4, 1968, Box 49, Folder 3, Hannah Papers.

<sup>2243</sup> Bede Okigbo, Letter to Kenyon T. Payne, December 4, 1968, Box 49, Folder 3, Hannah Papers.

<sup>2244</sup> Adichie interview.

<sup>2245</sup> Bede Okigbo, Letter to Kenyon T. Payne, December 4, 1968, Box 49, Folder 3, Hannah Papers.

<sup>2246</sup> Bede Okigbo, Letter to Kenyon T. Payne, December 4, 1968, Box 49, Folder 3, Hannah Papers.

<sup>2247</sup> Stanley Diamond, “Who Killed Biafra?” *Dialectical Anthropology* 31, no. 1/3 (2007): 351.

“territorial imperative.”<sup>2248</sup> Not only was Biafra an “insurgent state”; UNN had become an insurgency-based university.<sup>2249</sup> As McColl observes, the insurgency mirrors nation-statehood in all of its institutions: through judicial and law enforcement structures, through military regimes, and through, in this instance, educational institutions.<sup>2250</sup> In this vein, Bede Okigbo migrated the university headquarters to Umuahia in what Adichie recalls as a “big forest” where the academics designed weapons, devised pharmaceuticals, and planned operations.<sup>2251</sup> All wives and children were moved to other areas; Bede’s lived in Atta, where she gave birth to a son, Ndubisi.<sup>2252</sup> “It is debatable,” he confided in a friend, “whether it is wise or an aspect of good family planning to have babies in war time.”<sup>2253</sup> However, he rationalized, it “may be that those who are dying in the battlefield or of starvation must have to be replaced sooner or later.”<sup>2254</sup>

Professor and later, Vice-Chancellor Oleka Udeala served on a reconnaissance mission to locate federal soldiers attempting to procure armaments (mines called “Ojukwu Rockets” or the *o gbu n’igwe*: killer of masses) in his local village.<sup>2255</sup> The Ojukwu bucket was a rather rudimentary form of a mine intended to target federal convoys traveling throughout the villages; with shrapnel reaching a large spread, it “[found] everybody” and “needed guidance.”<sup>2256</sup> He and his colleagues attempted to produce mustard gas through a makeshift laboratory made in the forest—and remembers the British Royal Air Force bombing it.<sup>2257</sup> Horrified by violence, Udeala eventually took up volunteering with Quakers seeking to provide humanitarian assistance to the

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<sup>2248</sup> R.W. McColl, “The Insurgent State: Territorial Bases of Revolution,” 59, no. 4 (December 1969): 613.

<sup>2249</sup> R.W. McColl, “The Insurgent State: Territorial Bases of Revolution,” 59, no. 4 (December 1969): 613.

<sup>2250</sup> R.W. McColl, “The Insurgent State: Territorial Bases of Revolution,” 59, no. 4 (December 1969): 614.

<sup>2251</sup> Bede Okigbo, Letter to Kenyon T. Payne, December 4, 1968, Box 49, Folder 3, Hannah Papers.

<sup>2252</sup> Bede Okigbo, Letter to Kenyon T. Payne, December 4, 1968, Box 49, Folder 3, Hannah Papers.

<sup>2253</sup> Bede Okigbo, Letter to Kenyon T. Payne, December 4, 1968, Box 49, Folder 3, Hannah Papers.

<sup>2254</sup> Bede Okigbo, Letter to Kenyon T. Payne, December 4, 1968, Box 49, Folder 3, Hannah Papers.

<sup>2255</sup> Udeala interview.

<sup>2256</sup> Udeala interview.

<sup>2257</sup> Udeala interview.



injured: “this malnutrition—no food, no protein and all that. I saw all that.”<sup>2258</sup> Adichie relocated to join with the University-in-exile in Umuahia.<sup>2259</sup> Adichie worked for what he called the Manpower Directorate where he was directed to “collect, fish out names of people in different directorates, various ministries . . . and find out where they were in the war-related activities.”<sup>2260</sup> UNN had shape-shifted to become a mechanism of the insurgent university. Poet Bons Nwabiani laughed sardonically at the grotesque comicality of the scenes:

*Let the lecherous love-starved lieutenant  
bring his latest catch*

*The shouting staff-sergeant numbed from  
the abandoned trench*

*The tattered militia-major scratching  
inside his pocket  
The rank and file heavy with loot  
saluting every pip*

*As for the idle civilian, let him bring  
those secret rumor files*

*They may all buzz in screw-faced  
like a squad of hungry flies*

*To this august assembly  
To plan the final invasion  
On a heap of shit<sup>2261</sup>*

Federal military actions targeted all infrastructure—not only the military: schools, hospitals, and residences alike. “The Nigerians came,” Adichie remembered.<sup>2262</sup> “They wanted to finish Biafra. They were there almost every day. The war planes of Nigeria would come. About

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<sup>2258</sup> Udeala interview.

<sup>2259</sup> Adichie interview.

<sup>2260</sup> Adichie interview.

<sup>2261</sup> “War Cabinet Assembly,” *Nsukka Harvest: Poetry from Nsukka, 1966-1972* (Nsukka: Odunke Publications 1972), 22.

<sup>2262</sup> Adichie interview.

four of them. Sometimes six . . . We pray every day to escape what is happening.”<sup>2263</sup> Gabriel Okara, another student poet, captured the vividness of the war violence: “Suddenly the air cracks/ with striking cracking rockets” while “Jets diving shooting glasses dropping/Breaking from lips people diving/Under beds nothing bullets flashing fire/Striking writhing bodies and walls.”<sup>2264</sup> One Nsukka youth told MSU anthropology professor Don Hartle that Nigerian soldiers “beat them up saying they were Biafran soldiers until they produce a pound or two.”<sup>2265</sup>

Umuahia, like Enugu, soon fell—Adichie loaded up his family and left the village with his host. “We are moving. We move today,” he remembered telling him. “Bring your bag. Bring your box. Bring your things. This man . . . he had lost hope.”<sup>2266</sup> Adichie called out to him, saying; “Look, Victor, Victor Let us go. There’s the car!” Victor responded, sadly: “*Anyi na-egwe. Anyi na-egwe*” [“We are roasting. We are roasting.”].<sup>2267</sup> Victor had given up. Adichie dragged Victor into the car and escaped.<sup>2268</sup> Once Umuahia fell, the University-in-exile disappeared into “a small village.”<sup>2269</sup> Aside from the occasional requisitions from a local Christian mission, they “did not talk of what to eat.”<sup>2270</sup> Paul Akubue attempted to provide pharmaceuticals for wounded militants.<sup>2271</sup> The Nigerian blockade sealed off Biafra from resources, preventing both Red Cross and the smaller humanitarian organization such as Caritas

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<sup>2263</sup> Adichie interview.

<sup>2264</sup> Wilfried F. Feuser, “Nigeria’s Civil War in Literature,” 132. .

<sup>2265</sup> Don Hartle, Memo to Advisors, December 12, 1968, Box 49, Folder 3, Hannah Papers.

<sup>2266</sup> Adichie interview.

<sup>2267</sup> Adichie interview.

<sup>2268</sup> Adichie interview.

<sup>2269</sup> Adichie interview.

<sup>2270</sup> Adichie interview.

<sup>2271</sup> Akubue interview.

from accessing Biafra.<sup>2272</sup> Akubue credited the “daredevil pilots” who defied the federal blockade to provide aid to the Biafra military.<sup>2273</sup>

### *Library Rumors*

With the University under federal control, rumors swirled about what had become of the library. “I had been led to believe,” Mike Nwachukwu reported in 1968, that soldiers had “sent [the books] to the North.”<sup>2274</sup> Ikpeze knew that the library had been bombed, and that the “books were used for firewood.”<sup>2275</sup> According to some American observers, the University of Nigeria-Enugu Campus library, the holdings remained largely intact; open windows had prevented moisture from developing in the stacks.<sup>2276</sup> K. Mahmud, the university librarian at the University of Ibadan, visited the Nsukka library and reported that he was “pleasantly surprised . . . to note that the Library was perfectly intact.”<sup>2277</sup> Mahmud assured MSU officials that the books remained on the shelves, and Mahmud took steps to “clean and preserve” the holdings “so that it may be utilized by the students as soon as the University is re-opened.”<sup>2278</sup> But James Adichie thought that Nigerian soldiers “burned some of [his books]” and “used some of them as a toilet thing.”<sup>2279</sup>

Mahmud’s observations accord with the observations made by both the Americans and to a lesser extent, Nwachukwu. But the social reality and significance is relevant: the destruction of the UNN represented something more than one more act of war. It represented an attack on the

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<sup>2272</sup> Jacinta C. Nwaka, “When Neutrality Loses Its Value: Caritas Airlift to Biafra, 1968-1970,” *Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria* 22 (2013): 63-81.

<sup>2273</sup> Akubue interview.

<sup>2274</sup> “Report of Visit to University of Nigeria, Nsukka” [authored by Mike Nwachukwu], Box 49, Folder 3, Hannah Papers.

<sup>2275</sup> Ikpeze interview.

<sup>2276</sup> Miriam and Turner Isoun, Memo, December 12, 1968, Box 49, Folder 3, Hannah Papers.

<sup>2277</sup> K. Mahmud, Letter to Irving Wyeth, December 12, 1968, Box 49, Folder 3, Hannah Papers.

<sup>2278</sup> K. Mahmud, Letter to Irving Wyeth, December 12, 1968, Box 49, Folder 3, Hannah Papers.

<sup>2279</sup> Adichie interview.

intellectual core of Biafran life and evidence that the Nigerian federal government not only sought to destroy Igbo militarily but also, intellectually. Victims of conquest frequently circulate rumors of grotesque violence carried out against cultural monuments. For the conquerors, monument destruction serves an important symbolic purpose: an indication of the bankruptcy and hollowness of the victims' cause. Not only can they destroy their bodies; they can destroy their intellectual life force, too.

English professor Emmanuel Obiechina found himself targeted by Biafran military authorities when the government deposited salary from his prior civil service work eleven months too late.<sup>2280</sup> When Obiechina resigned his civil service appointment in summer 1968 from the Biafran military regime, they alleged that he could not resign his appointment without immediately paying back a motor vehicle advance he had taken; angered, Obiechina assured them that the University of Biafra would reimburse them.<sup>2281</sup>

But university personnel still sought out and engaged academic opportunities. Meanwhile, mathematician James Ezeilo accepted a 12-month National Science Foundation fellowship at the University of Michigan.<sup>2282</sup> Sam Nwabara, an applicant for the post-war institute of African Studies, made book requests from Herskovitz librarian, Gwendolen M. Carter in order to replace their "substantial losses."<sup>2283</sup> Nwabara "fe[lt] shy to mention" his "personal needs," but in situations "such as we find ourselves, it becomes very difficult to repress one's

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<sup>2280</sup> Emmanuel Obiechina, Letter to the Chief Secretary to the Government, September 28, 1968, Emmanuel Obiechina File, Administration Building, Room 103, University of Nigeria, Nsukka.

<sup>2281</sup> Emmanuel Obiechina, Letter to the Chief Secretary to the Government, September 28, 1968, Emmanuel Obiechina File, Administration Building, Room 103, University of Nigeria, Nsukka.

<sup>2282</sup> Louis Levin, Letter to James O.C. Ezeilo, June 12, 1969, Administration Building, Room 103, University of Nigeria, Nsukka.

<sup>2283</sup> Memo from Gwendolen M. Carter, September 2[illeg.], 1970, Africana Library Correspondence Library Series, Meville Herskovitz Library, Northwestern University.

feelings.”<sup>2284</sup> Eme Awa, a faculty member in social studies, lost his public administration textbook manuscript in the war.<sup>2285</sup> Nwabara lost the totality of his private library, “all books on Africa that I had struggled to accumulate all my life.”<sup>2286</sup> Nwabara and other university staff were wholly reliant on the federal regime; their operations could proceed solely based on “how much the Federal Government may be disposed to give.”<sup>2287</sup> Yet, drawing on State department intelligence reports, International Programs office Jack Miller from Michigan State University reported, based on his intelligence collection, that “there appears to be much less destruction to the physical facilities than original rumor had reported to us.”<sup>2288</sup> Don Hartle saw that the library and administration building had received a howitzer blow, but “didn’t seem too bad aside from that.”<sup>2289</sup>

Other buildings received considerable damage. The social studies building lost its roof, with rains pouring throughout since the 1967 rainy season.<sup>2290</sup> The CEC sustained fires throughout, with the entire ground floor being burned.<sup>2291</sup> the federal troops continued to surveil the buildings well into 1968 and were “still building open fires in all buildings and around them too.”<sup>2292</sup> Meanwhile, the Nsukka market had been overtaken by non-Eastern traders—500 Igbo compared to several thousand non-Igbo—even as the Biafran populace was being starved out through a region-wide blockade.<sup>2293</sup> Meanwhile, British historian Margery Perham toed the

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<sup>2284</sup> Samuel Nwabara, Letter to Gwendolen M. Carter, June 15, 1970, Africana Library Correspondence Series 9.11, Herskovitz Library.

<sup>2285</sup> Gwendolen M. Carter, Letter to Dr. Eme Awa, May 5, 1979, Africana Library Correspondence Series 9.11, Herskovitz Library.

<sup>2286</sup> Samuel Nwabara, Letter to Gwendolen M. Carter, June 15, 1970, Africana Library Correspondence Series 9.11, Herskovitz Library.

<sup>2287</sup> Samuel Nwabara, Letter to Gwendolen M. Carter, June 15, 1970, Africana Library Correspondence Series 9.11, Herskovitz Library.

<sup>2288</sup> Jack R. Miller, Memo, December 12, 1968, Box 49, Folder 3, Hannah Papers.

<sup>2289</sup> Don Hartle, Memo to Advisors, December 12, 1968, Box 49, Folder 3, Hannah Papers.

<sup>2290</sup> Don Hartle, Memo to Advisors, December 12, 1968, Box 49, Folder 3, Hannah Papers.

<sup>2291</sup> Don Hartle, Memo to Advisors, December 12, 1968, Box 49, Folder 3, Hannah Papers.

<sup>2292</sup> Don Hartle, Memo to Advisors, December 12, 1968, Box 49, Folder 3, Hannah Papers.

<sup>2293</sup> Don Hartle, Memo to Advisors, December 12, 1968, Box 49, Folder 3, Hannah Papers.

Nigerian (and thus, British) line that “markets [had] reopened with Ibos starting to trade alongside the Hausa and Federal soldiers,” while “Ibo women strolled peaceably about the market.”<sup>2294</sup> Whatever scenes of peace Perham evoked, the UNN campus had been ravaged, a scene of relics and artifacts to a recent past that now appeared to be ancient ruins.

*Do Not Cover Up the Scars: The University After the War*

“Do not cover up the scars,” Wole Soyinka wrote in “Après la guerre” in a 1971 issue of the literary journal, *Okike*. “In the quick distillery of blood/I have smelt/Seepage from familiar opiates./Do not cover up the scars.”<sup>2295</sup> Scars abounded throughout the University campus.

Written after the war, Pol Ndu’s “Golgotha Revisited,” evokes a Nigeria of healing, of mending, and of fraternal connection “as brothers with brother”:

*Let us pull ourselves together  
Each to each, here  
As brothers with brother, pooled  
Take past events as the  
Repentant woman’s past  
Always forgotten and always retold*

*Take our flesh lost  
With the traditional Christian resignation  
Stored in God’s vast vault  
Take these sacked cities  
As they-kingdom-gone  
Bulls horn broken  
In hot red-riddle*

*Homeless bones await your hoes  
And payment of the fare  
For this trip, round from where you are, to here, where you are,  
Your new-built city in brick  
With its power sump  
The supreme executive trick*

*We are married here,  
Staring skulls amid burnt bricks*

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<sup>2294</sup> Margery Perham, “Why Biafran Leaders Should Surrender,” *The Times* [London], September 11, 1968, 9.

<sup>2295</sup> Wole Soyinka, “Après La Guerre,” *Okike* 1 (1971): 3.

*In the plain of all past-present-future pain  
In the magnificent mangle  
And battery mast*

*So, what printers mint  
From what thinkers eke  
Out are dirges, lip-deep sobs  
On the shattering of the barest crop of skulls  
At Golgotha<sup>2296</sup>*

Not long after, Pol Ndu died in a car crash in July 1976.<sup>2297</sup>

The University registrar, Vincent Chukwuemeka Ike, provided a detailed report of the war damage in his brochure, *Reconstructing the University*, as a means of soliciting funds from external entities to provide for the University.<sup>2298</sup> The University administration building, currently across the square from the Nnamdi Azikiwe Library, “deteriorated during 30 months of neglect”; not only did it demand upkeep from neglect but also, restoration of the entirety of its furnishings, such as office equipment, safes, filing cabinets, typewriters.<sup>2299</sup> The library lost 80% of its furnishings, some 45% of its books., 60-70% of its humanities periodicals in the humanities, and 30-40% of its science periodicals.<sup>2300</sup> Similarly, the General Studies departmental library suffered a total loss of its books, projectors, and technical equipment.<sup>2301</sup> The Engineer’s Office, the product of Nigerian, American, West German, Dutch, and British collaboration, lost most of its equipment.<sup>2302</sup> The Agricultural Department suffered a total loss; the Agriculture Department was “one of the worst hit,” with all equipment and supplies

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<sup>2296</sup> ““Golgotha Revisited,” *Okike* 1 (April 1971): 37. This poem was quoted in a January 10, 1972 *Time* magazine piece on post-war recovery. See “Recovery After Biafra,” *Time* 99, no. 2 (January 10, 1972): 40.

<sup>2297</sup> *Omabe* 21 (July 1976): 5.

<sup>2298</sup> *Reconstructing the University* (Nsukka: Office of the Registrar, 1970), Institute of African Studies Library, University of Nigeria, Nsukka.

<sup>2299</sup> *Reconstructing the University* (May 1970), 10.

<sup>2300</sup> *Reconstructing the University* (May 1970), 10.

<sup>2301</sup> *Reconstructing the University* (May 1970), 11.

<sup>2302</sup> *Reconstructing the University* (May 1970), 14.

demolished.<sup>2303</sup> Most of the Archaeology Department's collection of antiquities went missing, some of which may have been stolen by Western faculty members.<sup>2304</sup> The Drama Department lost its Mobil Theater, and Fine Arts lost most of its "valuable property."<sup>2305</sup> The CEC was "now in ruins."<sup>2306</sup> The Medical Center was stripped of all furnishings and badly damaged.<sup>2307</sup> Ike calculated the total reconstruction needs to be over 13.4 million pounds.<sup>2308</sup> "Help the University," Ike enjoined, "and you are helping Nigeria as a whole as well as the cause of learning in general."<sup>2309</sup>

The Eyo Ita Hall took a heavy hit; in January 1970, it was a "ramshackle."<sup>2310</sup> By spring 1971, it had "undergone a phase of carefully planned reconstruction work which achieved at a coup the effect of gathering up the debris of war."<sup>2311</sup> The University had transformed from an educational institution to a war-making site: 'The whole plan was for war,' a former agricultural worker, Obuna Robinson, recalls, "nothing about education."<sup>2312</sup> That March, some 1,800 students and 283 faculty/staff members returned to Nsukka, a fraction of the prior population.<sup>2313</sup> Obuna Robinson, a staff member, remembers that "this university suffered *terribly* because of [the] Biafra war."<sup>2314</sup> Robinson recalls: "The federal government eyed this place as enemy there [sic]."<sup>2315</sup> The Federal government drew on University faculty to compile historical events that would enable census enumerators to determine the ages of populations throughout the

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<sup>2303</sup> *Reconstructing the University* (May 1970), 11.

<sup>2304</sup> *Reconstructing the University* (May 1970), 11.

<sup>2305</sup> *Reconstructing the University* (May 1970), 10-12, *passim*.

<sup>2306</sup> *Reconstructing the University* (May 1970), 22.

<sup>2307</sup> *Reconstructing the University* (May 1970), 23.

<sup>2308</sup> *Reconstructing the University* (May 1970), 24.

<sup>2309</sup> *Reconstructing the University* (May 1970), 29.

<sup>2310</sup> "The Hall in Review," *The Gentleman* (March 1971): 29.

<sup>2311</sup> "The Hall in Review," *The Gentleman* (March 1971): 29.

<sup>2312</sup> Robinson interview.

<sup>2313</sup> *Reconstructing the University* (May 1970), 9.

<sup>2314</sup> Robinson interview.

<sup>2315</sup> Robinson interview.



countryside.<sup>2316</sup> Talk of a federal take-over of all universities was underway.<sup>2317</sup> Historian Stephen David has observed that the post-Biafra “reconciliation” left Biafrans in a “twilight border space that is neither here nor there, in an unhomely space.”<sup>2318</sup> The former Vice-Chancellor, Eni Njoku, did not quite know his place in the new environment: “the authorities here have not yet made up their minds what to do with me . . . Everything depends on the pleasure of the government.”<sup>2319</sup>

The hopes of an independent Biafra were now decaying, like feces, on the forlorn and abandoned University campus—while students hoped for institutional rebirth. Student poet Chukwuka Okafor wrote of his Biafran ancestor “groping his way/in broad daylight, carrying grotesque beards/Smudgy hands and visionless eyes” while “his voice, a rusty esoteric rumble/announced a refresher course on earth/for the dead.”<sup>2320</sup> In 1976, Steven Ezeanya, the Holy Ghost Fathers employee accused of prioritizing property of life and now the acting head of the Department of Religion, now delivered a eulogy for General Muhammad Murtala, observing: “It is not easy to come by a good leader. The history of this and other countries of the world confirm this.”<sup>2321</sup> UNN needed to prove itself worth of the regime. According to official rhetoric, post-war efforts would focus on “Reconciliation, Reconstruction, and Rehabilitation.”<sup>2322</sup> Gowon assured Biafrans that there would be “no victor and no vanquished”; as historian Douglas

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<sup>2316</sup> J. N. Afuba, Letter to A.E. Afigbo, December 4, 1972, Administration Building, Room 103, University of Nigeria, Nsukka.

<sup>2317</sup> Modilum Achufusi, Letter to Pro-Chancellor N. U. Akpan, August 25, 1972, Administration Building, Room 103, University of Nigeria, Nsukka.

<sup>2318</sup> Stephen David, “Lack of Return in Nigeria-Biafra Civil War Literature: A Case for a TRC?” *Matatu* 50, no. 1 (2018): 109.

<sup>2319</sup> Eni Njoku, Letter to C.T. Ingold, April 17, 1970, BW 90/2300, National Archives-Kew.

<sup>2320</sup> “Resurrection,” *Nsukka Harvest*, 18.

<sup>2321</sup> Steven Ezeanya, Eulogy transcript, February 20, 1976, Christ Church Chapel, Nsukka, Nnamdi Azikiwe Library, University of Nigeria, Nsukka.

<sup>2322</sup> Edlyne Eze Anugwom, *From Biafra to the Niger Delta Conflict Memory, Ethnicity, and the State in Nigeria* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2019), 129.

Anthony has observed, the federal regime planned, orchestrated, and dictated the terms of remembrance: “the war [was] to be remembered in a particular way, that is, forgotten.”<sup>2323</sup> The University Pro-Chancellor, S. U. Akpan spoke to General Yakubu Gowon in January 1971, urging him to consider “this whole episode as a misfortune of the past, by which we must not be so enslaved as to lose or obscure the future.”<sup>2324</sup> Akpan mourned that UNN had, among other institutions of higher learning, been among “seed-beds of bigotry, tribalism, and worse.”<sup>2325</sup> Akpan urged Gowon to assume federal responsibility over higher education.<sup>2326</sup> In May 1971, the former Western premier, Obafemi Awolowo received an honorary degree from UNN, indicating that Zik’s university was willing to forge ties with Azikiwe’s old nemesis.<sup>2327</sup> .

The University expanded its benefactor circles—and forged stronger ties with English universities.<sup>2328</sup> MSU’s support, including scholarships to Italy and the Netherlands sponsored by each respective government.<sup>2329</sup> UNN also received a robust gift from Shell-BP for the expansion of UNN’s Surveying Department.<sup>2330</sup> Historian John J. Stremalu notes, too, that the “deference that had often characterized Nigeria’s relations with European and American powers . . . disappeared as the federal government acquired self-confidence and sought greater independence from foreign influence.”<sup>2331</sup> They felt no need to cater to foreign sensibilities. And the history

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<sup>2323</sup> Douglas A. Anthony, “Ours is a war of survival”: Biafra, Nigeria and arguments about genocide, 1966–70.” *Journal of Genocide Research* 16(2/3): 208.

<sup>2324</sup> S.U. Akpan, speech, January 31, 1971, in *Annual Report, 1970/71*, 142.

<sup>2325</sup> S.U. Akpan, speech, January 31, 1971, in *Annual Report, 1970/71*, 143.

<sup>2326</sup> S.U. Akpan, speech, January 31, 1971, in *Annual Report, 1970/71*, 143.

<sup>2327</sup> *Information Bulletin, 1970-1971*, May 22, 1971, 1, Nnamdi Azikiwe Library, University of Nigeria, Nsukka.

<sup>2328</sup> A. Rowland Jones, Letter to I.C.M. Maxwell, May 7, 1971; C.T. Ingold, Letter to Inter-University Council, February 5, 1970, BW 90/2300, National Archives-Kew.

<sup>2329</sup> *Information Bulletin*, July 3, 1971, 1; July 17, 1971, 1, Nnamdi Azikiwe Library, University of Nigeria, Nsukka.

<sup>2330</sup> *Information Bulletin*, July 3, 1971, 1, Nnamdi Azikiwe Library, University of Nigeria, Nsukka.

<sup>2331</sup> John J. Stremalu, *The International Politics of the Nigerian Civil War, 1967-1970* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1977), 357.

was already being re-written. Reporter John de St. Jorre, who visited the villages between Owerri and Enugu in late 1969, applauded the post-war transition: “there was no ‘genocide,’ massacres, or gratuitous killings in the history of warfare there can rarely have been such a bloodless end and such a merciful aftermath.”<sup>2332</sup> De Jorre’s sunny outlook bore little reflection with reality.

Reconstruction demanded the cultivation of a unified identity; governance was not only an entity seeking the good of the people—it *was* the people.<sup>2333</sup> Governor Ukpabi Asika, governor of the East Central State, urged Easterners to “reject for all time the concept of government as a foreign institution standing outside the community and whose money, property, and goals are not the direct responsibilities of the community.”<sup>2334</sup> Governance was not *olu oyibo* (work of the foreigners); it was *olu obodo* (work of the community).<sup>2335</sup> But for his hearers, the *oyibo* were not the white colonizers; they were the Northern government and occupying soldiers whose wartime actions had not been forgotten.<sup>2336</sup> Ike urged benefactors to support the Reconstruction project: “Help to reconstruct the University, and you are helping Nigeria as a whole as well as the cause of learning in general.”<sup>2337</sup>

The war had rendered a number of students impoverished and incapable of covering tuition costs; In Nsukka, one government reported concluded with banal understatement, “public service, tools, plants equipment, machines, buildings, even organizational set-up, structures,

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<sup>2332</sup> John De St. Jorre, *The Nigerian Civil War*, 404.

<sup>2333</sup> *Olu Obodo: A Seminar on East-Central State Public Service in Its New Setting*, 1973, 11.

<sup>2334</sup> *Olu Obodo: A Seminar on East-Central State Public Service in Its New Setting*, 1973, 11, Institute of African Studies Library, University of Nigeria, Nsukka.

<sup>2335</sup> *Olu Obodo: A Seminar on East-Central State Public Service in Its New Setting*, 1973, 11, Institute of African Studies Library, University of Nigeria, Nsukka.

<sup>2336</sup> *Olu Obodo: A Seminar on East-Central State Public Service in Its New Setting*, 1973, 11, Institute of African Studies Library, University of Nigeria, Nsukka.

<sup>2337</sup> *Reconstructing the University* (May 1970), 29, Institute of African Studies Library, University of Nigeria, Nsukka.

documents, records, conditions of service of public servants were badly disrupted.”<sup>2338</sup> Theatre student Emeka Nwabueze saw that students “were not even able to afford their school fees . . . then they know that the hungry man cannot do too much, and the searchlight on the university began to decrease.”<sup>2339</sup> V. E. Chikwendu, an archaeology student, recalled that after Yakubu Gowon promised that students “will never be sent home,” indigent students “had some relief in that nobody sent us home.”<sup>2340</sup> At the December convocation, the newly-installed Vice Chancellor Hubert Kodilinye expressed gratitude for Gowon for the “opportunity to reactivate and rehabilitate” the University.<sup>2341</sup> Registrar Vincent Chukwuemeka Ike took a broader view: “every arm of the University, has to be reconstructed.”<sup>2342</sup>

One poet recalled the horrors of the war:

*Our minds are drained hollow  
by the chattering of small arms  
our bellies are set grumbling  
by the hooting of artillery  
our nerves are dissolved  
by the growling of jets;  
our hearts are jolted  
by the howling of the sky  
shelling without bombs. . . .*<sup>2343</sup>

A former student, V. E. Chikwendu felt that the University community “became very conscious of the fact that we were a hated people in the Nigerian policy.”<sup>2344</sup> One student poet wrote in remembrance: “So this kind of world exists/The world that rains bullets/The world that flows

<sup>2338</sup> *Olu Obodo*, 76, Institute of African Studies Library, University of Nigeria, Nsukka.

<sup>2339</sup> Emeka Nwabueze, interview with Russell W. Stevenson, August 13, 2018.

<sup>2340</sup> V. E. Chikwendu, August 9, 1999, in Wineth Nkechi Obi, “History of the History Department, University of Nigeria, Nsukka, 1960-1988,” 101, Nnamdi Azikiwe Library, University of Nigeria, Nsukka.

<sup>2341</sup> Hubert Kodilinye, December 11, 1971 convocation, 1, in H.C. *Kodilinye Speeches*, 1971-1974, Nnamdi Azikiwe Library, University of Nigeria, Nsukka.

<sup>2342</sup> *Reconstructing the University* (May 1970), 9.

<sup>2343</sup> “Sounds,” *The Muse* 4 (Nsukka: 1972): 10.

<sup>2344</sup> V. E. Chikwendu, August 9, 1999, in Wineth Nkechi Obi, “History of the History Department, University of Nigeria, Nsukka, 1960-1988,” 101.

blood.”<sup>2345</sup> The horrors seemed to give lie to Nigeria’s once heralded promise. “In our model democracy,” one student wrote with bitterness, “The magic promise of yesterday/Lie cold like mounds of dead cattle/Along caravans that lead nowhere.”<sup>2346</sup> Mamman J. Vatsa, a veteran of the Nigerian army and UNN student, reflected on the quietude of the campus at war: “I was there in 1967,” he wrote:

*The library was asleep  
And the campus a dream  
With its silent classrooms  
And idle chalks  
Watching the dusters  
That had ceased to harass  
The dirty blackboards*<sup>2347</sup>

After the close of the war, law professor Edwin Nwogugu returned to the Enugu campus of the University, to the government patron’s house: “There was nowhere to sleep . . . and we slept on that table, just for that night.”<sup>2348</sup>

The University used cement blocks and planks for their tables, desks, and chairs. “There was no electricity, so we used bush lanterns. . .it was a difficult condition, but we worked through it.”<sup>2349</sup> A former student, V. E. Chikwendu, too, remembered the struggled for infrastructure: “No classroom, no seat, no nothing.” University lecturers were “sitting on blocks, sometimes standing.”<sup>2350</sup> Novelist Chinua Achebe said that while the “lecturers came and teaching was resumed somehow,” students still “[sat] on the floor.”<sup>2351</sup> British author and Africanist James Currey reported that Achebe’s campus house “was a shell,” and their “walls

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<sup>2345</sup> “A Footnote,” *Okike*, vols. 19-26 (1981): 93.

<sup>2346</sup> “A Footnote,” *Okike*, vols. 19-26 (1981): 93.

<sup>2347</sup> Mamman J. Vatsa, “Homecoming,” *Omabe* 9 (January/February 1974): 44.

<sup>2348</sup> Nwogugu interview.

<sup>2349</sup> Nwogugu interview.

<sup>2350</sup> V. E. Chikwendu, August 9, 1999, in Wineth Nkechi Obi, 101.

<sup>2351</sup> Ezenwa-Ohaeto, *Chinua Achebe: A Biography* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1997), 158.

were black.”<sup>2352</sup> Hubert Kodilinye felt that the University had fallen into “a state of utter desolation and ruin.”<sup>2353</sup>

The University had a “good chance to chart a new course,” some campus pundits wrote, “to sail clear of all those festering swamps and shallows into which it had repeatedly run.”<sup>2354</sup> Achebe heard students excitedly proclaim that the war “taught us what we’re capable of.”<sup>2355</sup> In Achebe’s short story, “Civil Peace,” published shortly after the war, his character, Jonathan Iwegbu, experiences the full-weight of the post-war disarray, including the robbery of his already dilapidated house. All the same, Iwegbu proclaims: “I say let egg-rasher (*ex gratia*) perish in the flames! Let it go where everything else has gone! Nothing puzzles God.”<sup>2356</sup>

Rumors about loyalty, good favor, and post-war reconciliations abounded. Word spread that MSU had been expelled from working with UNN due to perceived Biafra sentiments.<sup>2357</sup> In February 1966, Lt. Col. Ojukwu had canceled all contracts that the University Council had signed, rendering them “null and void and of no effect.”<sup>2358</sup> When UNN’s religious studies founder, Andrew Walls, attempted to return to Nsukka for a term, immigration authorities “escorted [him] straight back to the airplane.”<sup>2359</sup> Even though he held a valid entry permit and was cleared by immigration officials, a “higher immigration authority” demanded his repatriation.<sup>2360</sup> Within a month, the Gowon regime reversed course and authorized Walls’ entry,

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<sup>2352</sup> James Currey, “Chinua Achebe, the African Writers Series and the Establishment of African Literature,” *African Affairs* 102, no. 409 (October 2003): 579.

<sup>2353</sup> Hubert C. Kodilinye, December 11, 1971 convocation, H.C. Kodilinye speeches, 1971-1974, 5, Nnamdi Azikiwe Library, University of Nigeria, Nsukka.

<sup>2354</sup> “Editorial,” *Nsukka Scope* 1 (October 1971): 1.

<sup>2355</sup> Ezenwa-Ohaeto, *Chinua Achebe*, 158.

<sup>2356</sup> Ezenwa-Ohaeto, *Chinua Achebe*, 165.

<sup>2357</sup> For a discussion of Michigan State University’s expulsion from UNN, see David Wiley, correspondence with Russell W. Stevenson, September 25, 2017.

<sup>2358</sup> Edict No. 13 of 1966, February 25, 1966, BW 90/2300, National Archives-Kew.

<sup>2359</sup> Andrew Walls, Letter to Vice-Chancellor, January 5, 1972, Andrew Walls File, University of Nigeria, Nsukka; E. H. Bitton, Letter to Hubert Kodilinye, January 13, 1972, Andrew Walls File, University of Nigeria, Nsukka.

<sup>2360</sup> Andrew Walls, Letter to Vice-Chancellor, January 5, 1972, Andrew Walls File, University of Nigeria, Nsukka; E. H. Bitton, Letter to Hubert Kodilinye, January 13, 1972, Andrew Walls File, University of Nigeria, Nsukka.

with no explanation of the “unfortunate incident.”<sup>2361</sup> Meanwhile, E. I. Nwogugu, now a law professor, rejected rumors that he had “influenced” Dean Zakin Mustafa from Ahmadu Bello University in Zaria, who was now serving as Nsukka’s external examiner.<sup>2362</sup> Those who spread such claims, Nwogugu told the Vice-Chancellor, were “unscrupulous persons” engaging in a “campaign of calumny” motivated by “malice and hatred.”<sup>2363</sup>

The Nigerian federal government had appointed Dr. Hubert Kodilinye, a British-trained ophthalmologist, to the position of Vice-Chancellor—to start the process of reconstructing the university, only this time, without Michigan State University’s help.<sup>2364</sup> Achebe perceived how the post-war University was going to look with a man like Kodilinye at the helm. Achebe remembered that Kodilinye “cannot recognize Nigerian food, let alone eat it.”<sup>2365</sup> Theater student Emeka Nwabueze attributed the tension to lived experience and social relations: Kodilinye “didn’t grow up with some of these professors [and] didn’t go to school with them.”<sup>2366</sup> As one author has observed, “in most respects,” Kodilinye had “become an Englishman.”<sup>2367</sup>

In 1978, A. K. Saikia, an American lecturer in civil engineering, broke his contract after two months and departed from the University without authorization from the Vice-Chancellor’s office or his departmental administration.<sup>2368</sup> Saikia’s wife was “very upset about the prevailing situation in the CEC.”<sup>2369</sup> Saikia told department head, Professor O. J. Uzomaka, that he would

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<sup>2361</sup> U. J. Ekaette, Letter to Andrew F. Walls, February 10, 1972, Andrew Walls File, University of Nigeria, Nsukka.

<sup>2362</sup> E.I. Nwogugu, Letter to Vice-Chancellor, March 29, 1972, E. I. Nwogugu File, University of Nigeria, Nsukka.

<sup>2363</sup> E.I. Nwogugu, Letter to Vice-Chancellor, March 29, 1972, E. I. Nwogugu File, University of Nigeria, Nsukka.

<sup>2364</sup> For a discussion of how Michigan State University’s expulsion from UNN, see David Wiley, correspondence with Russell W. Stevenson, September 25, 2017.

<sup>2365</sup> Ezenwa-Ohaeto, *Chinua Achebe*, 158.

<sup>2366</sup> Nwabueze interview.

<sup>2367</sup> -Ezenwa-Ohaeto, *Chinua Achebe*, 158.

<sup>2368</sup> C.O. Okafor, Letter to Vice-Chancellor, March 14, 1978, VC/PF/S/47, Administration Building, Room 103, University of Nigeria, Nsukka.

<sup>2369</sup> A.K. Saikia, Letter to Prof. Uzoamaka, February 16, 1978, VC/PF/S/47, Administration Building, Room 103, University of Nigeria, Nsukka.

take his family to Kano, where his wife's sister lived: "When a suitable housing will be available," he promised, "I shall bring my family back here."<sup>2370</sup> Uzoamaka granted Saika's request; whether Saikia went to Kano or not, he returned to the United States within the week and posted his resignation.<sup>2371</sup> C. O. Okafor, the Chemistry department head, noted that the University's housing shortage required that he be lodged in the CEC: "He should have been in sympathy with the institution," Okafor believed, and "should have waited for his turn like the others."<sup>2372</sup> Saikia felt that promises of housing and a vehicle loan extended to him when recruited in New York "are not fulfilled."<sup>2373</sup> His wife washed clothes in the bathroom sink "in an unsanitary condition," as the toilet had not flushed for some three days.<sup>2374</sup> Having a weak stomach and unable to cook food in the room, he was compelled to take the food in the CEC canteen, which "made my stomach worse and my health deteriorated."<sup>2375</sup> He took his wife and child back to the United States "for their welfare."<sup>2376</sup> A visiting professor reported that he needed to grow accustomed to "having no running water and poor food."<sup>2377</sup>

Students were not entirely lacking in resources. Nnaemeka Ikpeze, now a lecturer, returned to UNN following the war, a product of the wartime transition.<sup>2378</sup> Obligated to change universities during the 1966 pogroms, he nevertheless put "grease to the elbow" in completing

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<sup>2370</sup> A.K. Saika, Letter to Prof. Uzoamaka, February 16, 1978, VC/PF/S/47, Administration Building, Room 103, University of Nigeria, Nsukka.

<sup>2371</sup> A.K. Saika, Letter to Prof. Uzoamaka, February 16, 1978; C.N. Iroanya, Memo to Registrar of Ahmadu Bello University, April 26, 1978, VC/PF/S/47, Administration Building, Room 103, University of Nigeria, Nsukka.

<sup>2372</sup> C. O. Okafor, Letter to Vice-Chancellor, March 14, 1978, VC/PF/S/47, Administration Building, Room 103, University of Nigeria, Nsukka.

<sup>2373</sup> A. K. Saikia, Letter to Vice-Chancellor, February 15, 1978, VC/PF/S/47, Administration Building, Room 103, University of Nigeria, Nsukka.

<sup>2374</sup> A. K. Saikia, Letter to Vice-Chancellor, February 15, 1978, VC/PF/S/47, Administration Building, Room 103, University of Nigeria, Nsukka.

<sup>2375</sup> A. K. Saikia, Letter to Vice-Chancellor, February 15, 1978, VC/PF/S/47, Administration Building, Room 103, University of Nigeria, Nsukka.

<sup>2376</sup> A. K. Saikia, Letter to Vice-Chancellor, February 15, 1978, VC/PF/S/47, Administration Building, Room 103, University of Nigeria, Nsukka.

<sup>2377</sup> G. Hall, Report, July 1979, National Archives-Kew.

<sup>2378</sup> Ikpeze interview.



his degree program at the University of Nigeria, Nsukka.<sup>2379</sup> History professor Dr. C. Chieka Ifemesia recommended Ikpeze as an instructor for his “gentle and unassuming but quick and perceptive” nature.<sup>2380</sup> After receiving medical treatment for kidney problems in New York, Ikpeze assumed a position as instructor at UNN.<sup>2381</sup> Ikpeze became an economics instructor, drawing on the tradition of Nigerian economists such as Pius Okigbo.<sup>2382</sup>

Tuition totaled 174 pounds for the academic year, no mean sum for a population recovering from wartime trauma.<sup>2383</sup> Government entities also issued a handful of scholarships to UNN students: 10 from the federal regime and some from state governments. Mobil, Shell-BP, Gulf Oil offered funding for students interested in highly lucrative oil extraction positions.<sup>2384</sup> Additional funding continued from private institutions such as the Ford Foundation and the Theological Education Fund alongside extensive funding from the Dutch Government, USAID, and the Federal Republic of Germany.<sup>2385</sup> UNN student Tony Ebere dismissed much of the government scholarship programs he called the “crash scholarship programme”: they were loans for teachers, when they should “crash into other needy students apart from teachers or some other loan scheme.”<sup>2386</sup>

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<sup>2379</sup> Ikpeze interview.

<sup>2380</sup> C. Chieka Ifemesia, Letter to Personnel Officer, May 25, 1970, Nnameka Ikpeze File, Administration Building, Room 103, University of Nigeria, Nsukka.

<sup>2381</sup> N.I. Ikpeze, Letter to Vice-Chancellor, April 23, 1972, N. I. Ikpeze File, Administration Building, Room 103, University of Nigeria, Nsukka.

<sup>2382</sup> Ikpeze interview.

<sup>2383</sup> *University of Nigeria: Information for Prospective Students, 1972-1973*, 11, Nnamdi Azikiwe Library, University of Nigeria, Nsukka.

<sup>2384</sup> *University of Nigeria: Information for Prospective Students, 1972-1973*, 15-17, Nnamdi Azikiwe Library, University of Nigeria, Nsukka.

<sup>2385</sup> Hubert C. Kodilinye, December 11, 1971 convocation, H.C. Kodilinye speeches, 1971-1974, 19, Nnamdi Azikiwe Library, University of Nigeria, Nsukka.

<sup>2386</sup> Tony Ebere, “The Concert of Indigency in Nsukka,” *The Gentleman* (March 1971): 28.

*Things Come Together: The Achebes and the Post-War UNN*

Chinua Achebe, a renowned novelist for his work, *Things Fall Apart*, had become a leading light of Africa's founding generation of intellectuals. Trained at the University College Ibadan, Achebe produced works of intellectual rigor with complicated African characters, unlike the absurd tropes he saw in British literature about Africa.<sup>2387</sup> As a school child, he identified with Europeans more than Africans as he read the Great Works of British literature:

I took sides with the white men against the savages. In other words, I went through my first level of schooling thinking I was of the part of the white man in his hair-raising adventures and narrow escapes. The white man was good and reasonable and smart and courageous. The savages arrayed against him were sinister and stupid, never anything higher than cunning. I hated their guts.<sup>2388</sup>

His novels, along with others, were now defining the challenge of African independence. Achebe noted that he would be satisfied if his work “did no more than teach my readers that their past--with all its imperfections—was not one long night of savagery from which the first Europeans acting on God's behalf delivered them.”<sup>2389</sup>

Christie and Chinua met while Christie was a University College, Ibadan student who wrote a column for the *Nigerian Outlook*. Christie had learned that she was not being compensated equitably for her work, so her friend urged her to go see the controller at the Nigerian Broadcast Service. There, she saw Chinua for the first time.<sup>2390</sup> Chinua recalls: “She was a beautiful young woman and very articulate, and when she spoke, she caught my attention. I was spellbound.”<sup>2391</sup>

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<sup>2387</sup> Livsey, *Nigeria's University Age*, Kindle location 764-785.

<sup>2388</sup> Chinua Achebe, *The Education of a British-protected Child: Selected Essays* (New York: Penguin, 2009), 118.

<sup>2389</sup> Chinua Achebe, *Morning Yet on Creation Day* (New York: Pearson Education, 1975), 59.

<sup>2390</sup> Ezenwa-Ohaeto, *Chinua Achebe*, 67.

<sup>2391</sup> Chinua Achebe, *There Was A Country*, 31.

The granddaughter of a *dibia* (indigenous medicine practitioner) “known from Arochukwu to Nri and from Onitsha to Ogoja” for his knowledge of indigenous medicine, Christie was raised in a Christian home, as her grandfather directed.<sup>2392</sup> The *dibia* instructed his son, Timothy Okoli to join with the new order of things.<sup>2393</sup> Christie was raised in a home that valued all things English: Shakespeare, King James scripture, and the great English poets alike.<sup>2394</sup> When Chinua joked with her father not to worry about a comment missed in their conversation, using an Igbo pun (*Rapia ka ona aghaigha agba*—roughly translated to mean: “Don’t mind her, wagging her jaw”), her father chided him: “Don’t say or imply that what someone else has to say or is saying is not worth attending or listening to.”<sup>2395</sup> Achebe saw the marriage pragmatically: “The Igbo are not starry-eyed about the world. . . the woman forgoes love for lunch; the man tells a lie for supper.” Igbo do not “ask you to meet [marriage] head-on with a placard, nor do they ask you to turn around and run away. They ask you to find a way to cope.”<sup>2396</sup>

As the Biafra war began to break out, Achebe had been under suspicion from the Nigerian military since the January coup of 1966; his book, *A Man of the People*, was so prescient that Nigerian officials had presumed that he enjoyed insider knowledge; he narrowly escaped with his life.<sup>2397</sup> UNN had been following his work, too. In spring 1967, Eni Njoku requested that the Eastern Military Government “second” Achebe from his position in their information office to the University as a research fellow at the Institute for African Studies.<sup>2398</sup>

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<sup>2392</sup> Chinua Achebe, *There Was A Country*, 31.

<sup>2393</sup> Chinua Achebe, *There Was A Country*, 31.

<sup>2394</sup> Chinua Achebe, *There Was A Country*, 33.

<sup>2395</sup> Chinua Achebe, *There Was A Country*, 33.

<sup>2396</sup> Achebe, *The Education of a British-Protected Child* (Toronto: Bond Street Books, 2009), 12.

<sup>2397</sup> Achebe, *There Was A Country*, 67.

<sup>2398</sup> Eni Njoku, Letter to Chinua Achebe, May 12, 1967, and Samuel N. Nwabara, Letter to Vice-Chancellor, May 18, 1967, VC/PR/A/77, Administration Building, Room 103, University of Nigeria, Nsukka.

Njoku anticipated that Achebe would serve in this position for “not less than 3 years.”<sup>2399</sup> Unlike many of the other faculty, Achebe was not informed that there was a housing shortage.<sup>2400</sup> He accepted the offer and was granted a salary 2,575 pounds per year, with hopes of establishing a creative writing center along with the poet, Christopher Okigbo.<sup>2401</sup>

When Nsukka fell as the rains fell in July 1967, Achebe’s home was bombed—and he escaped to Enugu.<sup>2402</sup> Achebe listened to radio reports of the Nsukka siege: from Radio Kaduna, BBC, and Voice of America. He hoped—indeed, needed—to know “what the wider world had to say to all that.”<sup>2403</sup> He became a self-described “radio addict.”<sup>2404</sup> When he heard word of Christopher Okigbo’s death, and told his family, his three-year old son exclaimed: “Daddy, don’t let him die!”<sup>2405</sup> Achebe rejected posts in America in order to support the Biafra war effort, assuming a position with his nephew, Nnaemeka Ikpeze, in the Ministry of Information.<sup>2406</sup> When Enugu fell in October 1967, he, like others, followed the government headquarters to Aba.<sup>2407</sup> Surrounding him was the mass of refugees, not unlike his family. Banal activities took on existential significance. He wrote:

*In another life this  
Would have been a little daily  
Act of no consequence before his  
Breakfast and school; now she  
Did it like putting flowers  
On a tiny grave*<sup>2408</sup>

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<sup>2399</sup> V. Chukwuemeka Ike, Letter to Chinua Achebe, April 20, 1967, VC/PR/A/77.

<sup>2400</sup> V. Chukwuemeka Ike, Letter to Chinua Achebe, April 20, 1967, VC/PR/A/77.

<sup>2401</sup> V. Chukwuemeka Ike, Letter to Chinua Achebe, April 20, 1967, VC/PR/A/77; A.E. Afigbo, “The Institute of African Studies, 89.

<sup>2402</sup> Nwakanma, *Christopher Okigbo*, 250.

<sup>2403</sup> Ezenwa-Ohaeto, *Chinua Achebe*, 129.

<sup>2404</sup> Ezenwa-Ohaeto, *Chinua Achebe*, 129.

<sup>2405</sup> Ezenwa-Ohaeto, *Chinua Achebe*, 129.

<sup>2406</sup> Ezenwa-Ohaeto, *Chinua Achebe*, 130.

<sup>2407</sup> Ezenwa-Ohaeto, *Chinua Achebe*, 130.

<sup>2408</sup> Ezenwa-Ohaeto, *Chinua Achebe*, 131.

When Achebe returned to the University, he found his home in tatters.<sup>2409</sup> When British philanthropist, James Currey, visited him at his Nsukka home, he saw that the “walls were black,” with no electricity, as Achebe’s manuscripts lay dormant.<sup>2410</sup> Nsukka was “then an exhilarating place,” Achebe recalled<sup>2411</sup> “Most windows were broken, and most furniture or other movable objects had been ‘liberated’ by the army.”<sup>2412</sup> Achebe was informed that the government would not be “re-open[ing] the University so soon,” since it was a “hotbed of rebellion.”<sup>2413</sup>

In early May, the Enugu Cabinet Office, the local arm of the federal government, informed Achebe that the Australian government invited him to speak at the University of Papua and New Guinea in May 1971.<sup>2414</sup> He accepted, and Kodilinye approved.<sup>2415</sup> According to Achebe, the episode turned into a diplomatic farce, with the Lagos federal government denying his passport.<sup>2416</sup> When he protested the denial, the Commissioner for External Affairs responded, with words to the effect of: “thank you for your letter in which you complained about difficulties which you thought you had with my officials.”<sup>2417</sup>

Over the next two years, however, Achebe continued to engage in speaking engagements: for his Heinemann book launch of *Girls at War* in London and to receive an Honorary Doctorate

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<sup>2409</sup> James Currey, “Chinua Achebe, the African Writers Series and the Establishment of African Literature,” *African Affairs* 102, No. 409 (Oct. 2003): 579.

<sup>2410</sup> James Currey, “Chinua Achebe, the African Writers Series and the Establishment of African Literature,” *African Affairs* 102, No. 409 (Oct. 2003): 579.

<sup>2411</sup> Ezenwa-Ohaeto, *Chinua Achebe*, 158.

<sup>2412</sup> Ezenwa-Ohaeto, *Chinua Achebe*, 158.

<sup>2413</sup> Ezenwa-Ohaeto, *Chinua Achebe*, 158.

<sup>2414</sup> Chinua Achebe, Letter to Vice Chancellor, May 13, 1971, VC/PR/A 77, Administration Building, Room 103, University of Nigeria, Nsukka.

<sup>2415</sup> Hubert Kodilinye, Letter to Chinua Achebe, May 14, 1971, VC/PR/A 77, Administration Building, Room 103, University of Nigeria, Nsukka.

<sup>2416</sup> Ezenwa-Ohaeto, *Chinua Achebe*, 158.

<sup>2417</sup> Ezenwa-Ohaeto, *Chinua Achebe*, 158.

at Dartmouth College.<sup>2418</sup> Achebe became a center in the polycentric intellectual milieu that made up UNN. He oversaw the Frantz Fanon Research Centre in Enugu and also founded and edited the UNN literary journal, *Okike*.<sup>2419</sup> Achebe hoped to “make plain that this is a culture with something to offer the world.”<sup>2420</sup> The journal boasted authors such as Wole Soyinka, Emmanuel Obiechina, and Cyprian Ekwensi.<sup>2421</sup> Ezenwa Ohaeto attributes Achebe’s creative activity to “intellectual restlessness.”<sup>2422</sup> Chinua Achebe’s daughter, Nwando Achebe, who grew up on the Nsukka campus, credits UNN for “very much support[ing] our own histories, our own literatures, our own art. . . anyone who goes through or went through the University of Nsukka got to know themselves even better.”<sup>2423</sup>

In this environment, Achebe produced his exploration of the relevance of *chi* for Igbo thought.<sup>2424</sup> His work on this, the most fundamental construct of Igbo worldviews, could be tethered immediately to the time and place of Nsukka—a trauma-filled campus stripped of its physical aspirations to grandeur, even while its human resilience endured. Each individual, Achebe explained, has a spiritual counterpart to their physical identity: the *chi*. Indeed, humans cannot be properly separated from their spiritual identity; the word for *mmadu* translates either to mean “the good life/the goodness of life” (*mma ndụ*) or *mmụọ dị ndụ*: the spirit is alive.<sup>2425</sup> Our *chi* co-exists with our physical identity in a constant state of negotiation, collaboration,

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<sup>2418</sup> John G. Kemeny, Letter to Chinua Achebe, January 27, 1972, VC/PR/A 77, Administration Building, Room 103, University of Nigeria, Nsukka.

<sup>2419</sup> Ezenwa-Ohaeto, *Chinua Achebe*, 159.

<sup>2420</sup> Ezenwa-Ohaeto, *Chinua Achebe*, 159.

<sup>2421</sup> Ezenwa-Ohaeto, *Chinua Achebe*, 159.

<sup>2422</sup> Ezenwa-Ohaeto, *Chinua Achebe*, 161.

<sup>2423</sup> Nwando Achebe, on “Nsukka is Burning,” BBC Podcast, <https://www.bbc.co.uk/sounds/play/m000m5lt> <accessed September 2, 2020>.

<sup>2424</sup> Chinua Achebe, “The Chi in Igbo Cosmology,” in *Morning Yet on Creation Day* (New York: Anchor Press/Doubleday, 1975), 161- 175.

<sup>2425</sup> Nwando Achebe, “Balancing Male and Female Principles: Teaching About Gender in Chinua Achebe’s *Things Fall Apart*,” *Ufahamu: A Journal of African Studies* 29, no. 1 (2002): 128.

contestation, and at times, contest; *Chukwu*, the great *Chi*, engages in a dialogue with each *chi* at the moment of their creation, explicating the anticipated future of the unborn child in the physical world.<sup>2426</sup> A popular rough equivalent of “if there’s a will, there’s a way” is *onye kwe, chi ya ga-ekwe*. (if a person agrees, their *chi* will agree).

When Achebe spoke of *chi* and wrote of spirits, his readers were no longer imagining the standard cycles of life and death; they pondered on the horrific violence of shellings, shootings, and starvation. Biafrans had seen in grotesque, intimate detail the limitations of human’s existence and the frailty of life. Achebe tells the story of a wrestler who, upon conquering all his earthly opponents, travels to *ani mmo* (land of the spirits) to conquer that land, too.<sup>2427</sup> When it is clear that he reigns supreme, even in the land of the spirits, the spirit inhabitants urge him to leave—knowing the fate that awaited him.<sup>2428</sup> Finally, his *chi* appears in the form of a thin rope, with the demeanor of a tepid contestant. Snickering at this seemingly weak opponent, he charges—only to find the thin looking rope-*chi* using its little finger to crush him.<sup>2429</sup>

Achebe’s *chi* analysis resonated with the world that the students and other scholars had seen up-close. *Chi* explained Biafra—and in particular, it explained UNN. As the former “hotbed of rebellion,” UNN remained under intensive skepticism from federal officials. “It is not surprising,” Achebe wrote:

that the Igbo held discussion and consensus as the highest ideals of the political process. This made them ‘argumentative’ and difficult to rule. But how could they suspend for the convenience of a ruler limitations which they impose even on their gods?<sup>2430</sup>

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<sup>2426</sup> I. Chukwukwere, “Chi in Igbo Religion and Thought: The God in Every Man,” *Anthropos* 78, no. 3/4 (1983): 526.

<sup>2427</sup> Chinua Achebe, “The Chi in Igbo Cosmology,” 163.

<sup>2428</sup> Chinua Achebe, “The Chi in Igbo Cosmology,” 163.

<sup>2429</sup> Chinua Achebe, “The Chi in Igbo Cosmology,” 163

<sup>2430</sup> Chinua Achebe, “The Chi in Igbo Cosmology,” 161- 175.

At the foundation of Igbo cosmology, Achebe argued, is “a belief in the fundamental worth and independence of every man”—a meaning seemingly ignored over the previous years.<sup>2431</sup> He had seen a Nigeria “brutalized”: “I think there is no doubt at all—even the children, my children—talk about killing Nigerians.”<sup>2432</sup> Nigeria—even Nsukka—had “seen too much death.” And thus, death “begins to lose some of its reverence.”<sup>2433</sup>

Christie Achebe saw wartime death, too, while serving as an instructor and educator in Port Harcourt and Calabar during the war.<sup>2434</sup> In early 1968, she and her children, Chinelo and Ikechukwu, fled to her ancestral homeland in Ogidi, with Chinua not far behind.<sup>2435</sup> While the Achebe family lived in Enugu during the war, Christie oversaw the refurbishing of their home: a “miraculous feat of transformation” in which she supervised laborers ranging from painters to electricians.<sup>2436</sup> As Chinua traveled abroad as the Biafran ambassador, Christie and her children went to Chinua’s friend, Christopher Okigbo to provide them support; once, when tasked to pick up food for a now pregnant Christie, he ended up eating it before delivering it to the famished Christie; she was craving *isi ewu* (goat head).<sup>2437</sup> Their three-year-old son, Ike, “launched at Okigbo, tackling him to ground and punch[ed] him with everything he had.”<sup>2438</sup> Okigbo “howled and feigned pain”—and took care to provide Christie and her children a robust meal.<sup>2439</sup>

Christie had to rise very early in the morning to shop at the local market, now moved to a forested area. In one bombed out market, she saw a pregnant woman split asunder because of the bombing: “That was a horrendous experience for most of us,” she recalled, “and we were all very

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<sup>2431</sup> Chinua Achebe, “The Chi in Igbo Cosmology,” 175.

<sup>2432</sup> Chinua Achebe, “Chinua Achebe on Biafra,” *Transitions* 36 (1968): 35.

<sup>2433</sup> Chinua Achebe, “Chinua Achebe on Biafra,” *Transitions* 36 (1968): 35.

<sup>2434</sup> Chinua Achebe, *There Was A Country*, 170.

<sup>2435</sup> Chinua Achebe, *There Was A Country*, 69.

<sup>2436</sup> Chinua Achebe, *There Was A Country*, 179.

<sup>2437</sup> Chinua Achebe, *There Was A Country*, 180.

<sup>2438</sup> Chinua Achebe, *There Was A Country*, 181.

<sup>2439</sup> Chinua Achebe, *There Was A Country*, 181.



frightened after that.”<sup>2440</sup> During another bombing raid, this time in Ezinifite outside Enugu, they were waiting for the bombs to drop when Christie noticed that their son, Chidi, was not present; he was wandering outside. Against the admonitions of others hiding in the bunker, she leapt out and grabbed Chidi, pulling him to safety.<sup>2441</sup> After they relocated to Oguta, they found solitude for a spell; the Nigerians had already been expelled, a victory that Oguta lake devotees attributed to Ohammiri. They lived in the village of Nnokwa, in a friend’s mansion. Friends joked that it was Buckingham Palace.<sup>2442</sup> Christie pulled together books from various markets and started a school for her children and her hosts’ children.<sup>2443</sup>

Having completed her Ph.D. in education from the University of Massachusetts-Amherst in 1972, Achebe arrived at the University as, she observed, there was “confusion and controversy regarding [women’s] changing status.”<sup>2444</sup> Christie had managed many tasks as a wife and mother. She was now raising four children, ranging from nursery age to the teens. For Achebe, Nigerian women’s “traditional role of wife and mother” was “no longer completely rewarding” and was “now open to question and revision.”<sup>2445</sup> Achebe advocated for societies to “minimize the differences between the sexes” and for women to “combine their masculine and feminine attributes for the good of this society.”<sup>2446</sup> Modern Nigeria suffered from a “hardening of the arteries,” given its slow pace in adapting the prevailing “outmoded” views of women.<sup>2447</sup> When

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<sup>2440</sup> Chinua Achebe, *There Was A Country*, 189.

<sup>2441</sup> Chinua Achebe, *There Was A Country*, 190.

<sup>2442</sup> Chinua Achebe, *There Was A Country*, 192.

<sup>2443</sup> Chinua Achebe, *There Was A Country*, 193.

<sup>2444</sup> Christie C. Achebe, “Continuities, Changes and Challenges: Women's Role in Nigerian Society,” *Présence Africaine* 120 (4e Trimestre 1981): 3.

<sup>2445</sup> Christie C. Achebe, “Continuities, Changes and Challenges: Women's Role in Nigerian Society,” 3.

<sup>2446</sup> Christie C. Achebe, “Continuities, Changes and Challenges: Women's Role in Nigerian Society,” 8.

<sup>2447</sup> Christie C. Achebe, “Continuities, Changes and Challenges: Women's Role in Nigerian Society,” 9.

Achebe assumed a position at UNN, she felt that she was “making a vital contribution to the services” of her community in Nsukka.<sup>2448</sup>

Student admissions needed reformation. Achebe argued. As a counselor and professor at UNN, she saw multiple students, some struggling from war-time difficulties, fail their UNN entrance exam four times.<sup>2449</sup> “The excruciating feeling of loss of self-esteem,” Achebe observed, must be “witnessed to be fully appreciated.” She saw students who “seem to come to a standstill,” with “some go[ing] without food” while “others resort to drug abuse.”<sup>2450</sup> The failure decimates their self-esteem, with many students saying to themselves:

I’m not the type of girl who deserves to fail and be disgraced in this way. My ‘chi’ has killed me. After all, I came out in the first division in my school certificate examination three years ago. I must continue to perform excellently. I must maintain the high expectations of my parents, boyfriend, and roommates. Otherwise, I will lose their esteem of, and regard for me. I will only prove to them that I am a dull, hopeless nitwit, who should never have been inside the walls of a university. I must not be asked to withdraw! I’d rather die than live to see this disgrace!”<sup>2451</sup>

Achebe’s reference to *chi* is illustrative, showing a persistence in students’ self-perception following the war. Coupled with the struggles of indigency and wartime trauma, students faced a seemingly insurmountable burden. Christie Achebe assumed the position of guidance counselor at UNN.<sup>2452</sup> The *Mask* joked at the sight of the high-achievers: “From the way the library and allied swot spots have been under siege since the past nine weeks or eight you can make out that the lions and lionesses are on the war-path, teeth bared. There can be no healthier pursuit.”<sup>2453</sup> Achebe stood on the frontlines of engaging students’ raw, post-war experience.

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<sup>2448</sup> Christie C. Achebe, “Continuities, Changes and Challenges : Women's Role in Nigerian Society,” 10.

<sup>2449</sup> Christie Achebe, “Multi-Modal Counseling for Examination Failure in a Nigerian University: A Case Study,” *Journal of African Studies* 9, no. 4 (Winter 1982): 187.

<sup>2450</sup> Christie Achebe, “Multi-Modal Counseling for Examination Failure in a Nigerian University: A Case Study,” 188.

<sup>2451</sup> Christie Achebe, “Multi-Modal Counseling for Examination Failure in a Nigerian University: A Case Study,” 189.

<sup>2452</sup> Christie C. Achebe, “Literary Insights into the "Ogbanje" Phenomenon,” *Journal of African Studies* 7, no. 1 (1980): 31.

<sup>2453</sup> *The Mask*, vo. 6 (73), 3.

Christie Achebe became a versatile scholar. Trained as a school counselor and the granddaughter of a *dibia*, she was “embarrassed” to learn how little she knew of certain indigenous notions of pathology—particularly, the idea of *ogbanje*: the spirit child destined to rebirth and death to one mother until its *iyi uwa* (“oath of the world”: an object tethering the child by covenant to the mortal world: stones, clothes, etc.) could be destroyed.<sup>2454</sup> Only expert *dibia* (“medicine men/diviners”) knew the location of the *iyi-uwa*.<sup>2455</sup> Achebe urged therapists not “to allow their ability to help their patients to be arrested by a closed mind” or to give up on an “unintelligible or complex new problem.”<sup>2456</sup> She also worked on career development among secondary-aged students, demonstrating that factors such as sex, urban/rural setting, and class are all “interactive” factors in assessing the degree of “vocational maturity” of any given student.<sup>2457</sup>

#### *Humor and Daily Life in Post-War UNN*

Indicative of the world Christie Achebe experienced was the publication of the student satirical periodical, *The Mask*, under the editorship of Andy Martin Agu.<sup>2458</sup> *The Mask*, referring to the traditional Igbo religion often dictated by the *Mmonwu* (from *mmuo ownu*: “spirit dead”) worn by dancers assuming the identity of traditional Igbo as incarnated versions of spirits.<sup>2459</sup> *The Mask* reflected a kind of ribald, gallows humor born of war and disenchantment. Designed to launch invective and annoyance at virtually all avenues of campus life—from rape culture to academic grievances to food—*The Mask* offered low-brow critique of the University’s failings: it

<sup>2454</sup> Christie C. Achebe, “Literary Insights into the ‘Ogbanje’ Phenomenon,” 36-37.

<sup>2455</sup> Christie C. Achebe, “Literary Insights into the ‘Ogbanje’ Phenomenon,” 36-37.

<sup>2456</sup> Christie C. Achebe, “Literary Insights into the ‘Ogbanje’ Phenomenon,” 38.

<sup>2457</sup> Christie Achebe, “Assessing the Vocational Maturity of Students in the East Central State of Nigeria,” *Journal of Vocational Behavior* 20 (1982): 160.

<sup>2458</sup> Introduction, *The Mask* 1(1970): 3.

<sup>2459</sup> Donatus Nwoga and Chukwuma Azuonye, eds., *The Hero in Igbo Life and Literature* (Enugu: Fourth Dimension, 2002), 115; Charles Gore, ‘Burn the Mmonwu’: Contradictions and Contestations in Masquerade Performance in Uga, Anambra State in Southeastern Nigeria,” *African Arts* 41, no. 4 (Winter 2008): 62.

is “meant to entertain while it is corrective,” with “neither friend nor foe.”<sup>2460</sup> But it revealed institution-wide anxieties, the kind Christie Achebe saw daily. Andy Martin Agu described *The Mask*’s mission: the mask

had the peculiar privilege of enjoying an eternal life while still on earth. The mask seemingly blind, deaf, and dumb, with a look of plastic coldness, almost passive; the mask is so much alive and seemingly ubiquitous. That’s why you can’t escape the mask whose presence among you can be readily felt in your conscience—the awareness of right and wrong.<sup>2461</sup>

Yet, *The Mask* never took itself too seriously as a moral gauge; another issue reminded readers that they made no claims to moral commentary:

We are no moral custodians or perfectionists and all that jazz. Our hobby is to entertain at nobody’s cost but your ten kobo, unless some folks take it upon themselves to claim that they bear the brunt of our harmless jokes (that’s when they have got a big bug on their social conscience). We have never prescribed that people should live on the straight and narrow path, for certainly we are blacker than you (and beautiful!)

“The drabness of the air,” another commentator joked, was unbearable, “and so comes tumbling in the roaring humor of the Mask to keep your bodies and souls in one healthy piece.”<sup>2462</sup>

Students noticed the post-war decay, and *The Mask* made sport of it. The CEC was “ever on the decline,” one pundit observed. “I wish to God Henriette de Luxe and the Otel,” one writer opined, “were a trifle nearer”; then, the “health centers would be out of business in no time.”<sup>2463</sup> The CEC had once been a grand operation, with “waiters and stewards . . . in spotless uniform tunics.”<sup>2464</sup> Since the CEC would not return to their more orthodox days, the writer hoped, perhaps “let’s have bunnies there”; the “sisters will do better things to your appetite and thirst than any Paris trained waiter.”<sup>2465</sup> *The Mask* issued the predictable kvetching about academic

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<sup>2460</sup> “Campus Gossips,” *The Mask* 2 (1971): 3.

<sup>2461</sup> *The Mask*, no. 1 (May 1971): 3.

<sup>2462</sup> *The Mask* (1973): 3, 7.

<sup>2463</sup> *The Mask* 6 (1973): 13.

<sup>2464</sup> *The Mask* 6 (1973): 13.

<sup>2465</sup> *The Mask* 6 (1973): 13.

rigor, too: “The man who designed the Nsukka academic programmes certainly knew his onions,” one author observed.<sup>2466</sup> If the Nazis “had consulted him . . . in their concentration camp plans,” then “they would have come out with something that would have made any other things the Nazis did look like manna falling for the children of Israel.”<sup>2467</sup> And when Kodilinye celebrated that the student hostel walls had been painted, *The Mask* observed that the walls were “so variegated” that its writers “prefer[red] them dirty but in one shade.”<sup>2468</sup>

*The Mask* promoted an aggressive kind of masculinity, albeit one shrouded in male victimhood. The University placed “frequent electric charges on the brain (called tests) and periodic ones (called exams)” that are “designed to show the lion exactly how much he doesn’t know the system is fool proof.”<sup>2469</sup> The Nsukka lion came to carry “a harassed look that has become second nature.”<sup>2470</sup> Male students came with “cheeks and full heads of hair,” only to leave “with beautiful worry lines etched on their faces and half their hair gone.”<sup>2471</sup> This post-war Nsukka lion prided himself on not only sexual prowess but sexual stratagem that exploited ongoing anxieties over campus water access.<sup>2472</sup> The Nsukka lion, the *Mask* joked, stored water in their rooms, and “when the chicks come around, the lions move out of their ambush positions” to start their manipulations.<sup>2473</sup> “Why bother yourselves?” the male student would tell the female student. “I have water to spare in my room.”<sup>2474</sup> And “so the poor girl in her desperate need for water goes in and comes out with more than she bargained for (water inclusive though).”<sup>2475</sup> *The*

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<sup>2466</sup> “Exams and Things,” *The Mask* 1 (May 1971): 14.

<sup>2467</sup> “Exams and Things,” *The Mask* 1 (May 1971): 14.

<sup>2468</sup> Hubert C. Kodilinye, December 2, 1971 Matriculation Ceremony, 4, H.C. Kodilinye, Speeches, 1971-1974, Nnamdi Azikiwe Library, University of Nigeria, Nsukka.; “Rumor Mill,” *The Mask* 2 (1971): 18.

<sup>2469</sup> “Exams and Things,” *The Mask* 1 (May 1971): 14.

<sup>2470</sup> “Exams and Things,” *The Mask* 1 (May 1971): 14.

<sup>2471</sup> “Exams and Things,” *The Mask* 1 (May 1971): 14.

<sup>2472</sup> “Exams and Things,” *The Mask* 1 (May 1971): 14.

<sup>2473</sup> “Rumor Mill,” *The Mask*,

<sup>2474</sup> “Rumor Mill,” *The Mask*,

<sup>2475</sup> “Rumor Mill,” *The Mask*,

*Mask* styled itself as a mechanism for protecting female students conned and hoodwinked by aggressive “lions.” Quoting a letter from an anonymous correspondent:

A fellowship of cheats, double crossers [and] poachers . . . who blackmail foolish girls into pledging their virtue for the vain and empty promise of protection from being cartooned when they themselves are not sure of self-protection. Victims of such unscrupulous lions should protest to the Mask. The Mask is also a protective organ—such Lions should be brought to book.”<sup>2476</sup>

The letter writer, *The Mask* editor observed, “is not far from the real situation.”<sup>2477</sup>

UNN students balanced education with socializing. Romance bloomed in the undergraduate halls. Youth engaged in all kinds of dance forms. One *Mask* wag ribbed some Nsukka youth for attempting to imitate European dance:

I’d like to take a sock at the waltz dancers (with no love lost). Who on earth told these folks that you attain class in Black Africa of the 70s by waltzing and fox-trotting back to Europe 1940s and 30s? There’s no mortal sin in delusion and any way, it’s their own thing!<sup>2478</sup>

Those who dabbled in European dance were more “Lonely Hearts Club” than quality dancers, since “most members are hearts with broken melody” who “got enrolled just for the hugging part of their lessons.”<sup>2479</sup> *The Mask* celebrated the plight for partners, giving an award to a student “whose first achievement on this campus was to camp a lion” in one hall and “for keeping three dates with three lions” in another hall.<sup>2480</sup>

Editor Andy Martin Agu took particular delight in making sport of Westernized female fashion, highlighting efforts of indigent post-war Nsukka student females to adopt to university life.<sup>2481</sup> Agu stood amazed at the “speedy transformation” of the “Pickinfyne” from the state of

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<sup>2476</sup> Letter, *The Mask*, vol. 3 (1971-1972): 4.

<sup>2477</sup> Letter, *The Mask*, vol. 3 (1971-1972): 4.

<sup>2478</sup> *The Mask*, vo. 6 19 (1973): 1.

<sup>2479</sup> *The Mask*, vo. 6 19 (1973): 1.

<sup>2480</sup> *The Mask*, Vol. 3, 71-72, 10

<sup>2481</sup> “Campus Gossips,” *The Mask* 2 (1971): 6.

absolute poverty and peasantry to that of a psychedelic fashion model: “Who says that money can’t do everything?”<sup>2482</sup> Agu attributed the student’s rise to a liaison with an older customs officer: “three months ago,” she “was fat, black, and virtuously colourless before meeting the 42-year-old customs officer/smuggler during her last so-called 19<sup>th</sup>-birthday.”<sup>2483</sup> Agu “congratulate[d] her for her desperate efforts to catch up with the other notorious and childish Pikinfyne of [the] Animal Department.”<sup>2484</sup> Agu credited “the most backward Mgboko” [a reference to someone from the Aba area] for her capacity to “go psychedelic if she runs into an unfortunate man.”<sup>2485</sup>

The war had left UNN students’ masculinity dismantled. J. S. Tarka, the Transport Commissioner, described the indigent student as “never happy, never relaxed, hardly concentrates.”<sup>2486</sup> Emeka Okose wrote that UNN’s very motto, “To Restore the Dignity of Man” had been carved hollow through the emasculation of University manhood: “Man has lost his dignity here so much that I doubt whether it could ever restored.” Okose urged men to “assume [their] correct role as an animal” so that “his dignity be restored.”<sup>2487</sup> Another campus publication, *The Gentleman*, implicitly compared male sexual conquerors and their female seductees to drivers and buses, urging impoverished men to stay committed to the chase: “Prospective drivers should not worry about indigency. If you have a sharp tongue, you have a way.”<sup>2488</sup> Electrical outages provided the opportunity for sexual trysts:

There is a black-out. Shout! In the Arts theatre, the lights are out. Shout! Switch on your torches and play with suggestive beams on the wall. Do not get worried, you are not an animal; you are only being a lady or a gentleman . . . This is Black Power—Black

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<sup>2482</sup> “Campus Gossips,” *The Mask* 2 (1971): 6.

<sup>2483</sup> “Campus Gossips,” *The Mask* 2 (1971): 6.

<sup>2484</sup> “Campus Gossips,” *The Mask* 2 (1971): 6.

<sup>2485</sup> “Campus Gossips,” *The Mask* 2 (1971): 6.

<sup>2486</sup> Tony Ebere, “The Concert of Indigency in Nsukka,” *The Gentleman* (March 1971): 28.

<sup>2487</sup> Emeka Okose, “Lessons to Restore the Dignity of Man,” *The Gentleman* (March 1971): 18.

<sup>2488</sup> C. Chidozie, “Driving,” *The Gentleman* (March 1971): 12.

pa[n]ther party time. Rediscover yourselves sows and hogs. No, it's ladies and gentlemen in sex orgy.<sup>2489</sup>

While dating life offered up troubling outcomes for some, the University offered young female university students the opportunity to organize, to learn, and collaborate. *The Mask* joked that women had “proclaimed the existence and sovereignty of their new Republic,” namely, “the Grand Republic of the Women Liberation Movement . . . The two most important posts would be those of the commissioner for Boys Affairs and that for Safe Driving. Meanwhile, boys are lying low. Only conjectures are made on the real purpose, of this movement.”<sup>2490</sup> *The Mask* warned, with a healthy dose of sardony, that “there would be forces like the Army, Police, etc.”<sup>2491</sup> Women resisted their advances, too: “when she is cold sober and sipping a bitter lemon. . . you are likely to wind up having all your harmless advances brushed off as drunken language.” If men were to “get fresh,” she would “you to piss off and go drown in the swimming pool.”<sup>2492</sup> Just as embarrassing was the sexually free woman: ““May I explore you?” a man asked, in one joke. “I will draw you a map,” the woman replied, “Of where others have been to before you.”<sup>2493</sup>

*The Mask* bemoaned female rejection: “when an able-bodied lion musters his courage and throws a pass she pulls a sour face at him. Why, the poor sap shrines right into his boots and never dares look a woman in the face again.”<sup>2494</sup> Indeed, *The Mask* panned, there was a “sex war raging on here worse than in a taboo-infested Amazon Jungle tribe,” with “no exchange of ideas, academic or otherwise.”<sup>2495</sup> Dance clubs provided a vibrant social scene, with amateur tin bands

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<sup>2489</sup> Emeka Okose, “Lessons to Restore the Dignity of Man,” *The Gentleman* (March 1971): 19-20.

<sup>2490</sup> *The Mask* 6 (1973): 11.

<sup>2491</sup> *The Mask* 6 (1973): 11.

<sup>2492</sup> *The Mask* 6 (1973): 15.

<sup>2493</sup> *The Mask* 6 (1973): 16.

<sup>2494</sup> *The Mask* 6 (1973): 15.

<sup>2495</sup> *The Mask* 6 (1973): 15.



provided regular entertainment at the local breweries like the Emperor's Canteen.<sup>2496</sup> Some felt disinclined to join, joking that they were a “one man club with my pals.”<sup>2497</sup>

While events charmed and entertained the students, the campus, nevertheless, was a post-war environment—with the infrastructural casualties of war surrounding the students and faculty throughout the campus. Chikwe Ihekweazu, then a student, recalls the environment as “a very simple existence. . . there wasn't a lot of luxury, really.”<sup>2498</sup> Kodilinye himself acknowledged that the University struggled with “intractable problems of finance, of physical construction, and above all, of human relations.”<sup>2499</sup> Financial and infrastructural conditions demanded resilience and vibrancy. Efforts at joviality were a symbolic challenge to the sense of depression surrounding them. Even as a young child, Ihekweazu recalls the “vibrant community” of Nsukka—a vibrancy that the post-war environment demanded.<sup>2500</sup>

In May 1971, James Adichie's vehicle was nearly stolen from the university garage: “They had pushed the car out of the garage, removed the windscreen, and was at the point of driving it away when luckily I was alerted.”<sup>2501</sup> Garage security was non-existent, Adichie complained: “Nothing stops the thieves from coming tomorrow, as long as the garrage [sic] remains open.”<sup>2502</sup> Some of the University's most celebrated intellectuals, such as Chinua Achebe, Chimere Ikoku, and Emmanuel Obiechina, combined their forces to challenge the Kodilinye administration's policies in a “devastating, fearless, brutal, and true” magazine they

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<sup>2496</sup> *The Mask* 6 (1973): 13.

<sup>2497</sup> *The Mask* 6 (1973): 13.

<sup>2498</sup> Ihekweazu interview.

<sup>2499</sup> Hubert C. Kodilinye, December 11, 1971 convocation, H.C. Kodilinye speeches, 1971-1974, 5, Nnamdi Azikiwe Library, University of Nigeria, Nsukka.

<sup>2500</sup> Ihekweazu interview.

<sup>2501</sup> James Adichie, Letter to Hubert Kodilinye, May 25, 1971, James Adichie File, Administration Building, Room 103, University of Nigeria, Nsukka.

<sup>2502</sup> James Adichie, Letter to Hubert Kodilinye, May 25, 1971, James Adichie File, Administration Building, Room 103, University of Nigeria, Nsukka.

called *Nsukka Scope*.<sup>2503</sup> In October 1971, *Nsukka Scope* editor Chinua Achebe chided Nigerian intelligentsia *writ large* for dereliction of their duties: “while they are quick to assert a superiority of wisdom and intellect, their practical performance has often betrayed a fumbling opportunism, greed, dishonesty, and selfishness,” attributes that came into stark relief “in their own secluded citadel, the university, where corruption, philintism, favouritism, clannishness, and all types of grossness flourish under their aegis.”<sup>2504</sup> They accused Kodilinye not only of gross maladministration but of personal ingratiation and subservience to the Nigerian national regime. Kodilinye, they accused in their pilot issue, had refurbished his lodge to be a “Taj Mahal in a slum,” while his faculty members “slept on untiled floors and sit on planks raised on cement blocks.”<sup>2505</sup> The laboratories were “make-shift, temporary arrangements of a first-aid nature.”<sup>2506</sup> Several years later, in 1979, a visiting professor from the University of Heriot-Watt found similar problems, noting that “regular electric power cuts” and a gas shortage caused ongoing difficulties.<sup>2507</sup>

“Indigency,” one student observed, has become a “household word in this community—a conventional word for explaining away so many embarrassing situations.”<sup>2508</sup> The majority of the Eastern student body had “no hope of paying their last term’s fees,” few had “reasonable pocket money,” and many relied on second-hand clothing.<sup>2509</sup> One professor told the student body that the “example of the extravagant spending which has come to be regarded as a stamp of one’s arrival on the social scene is not in consonance with any ideas of the life of the

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<sup>2503</sup> Chinua Achebe, ed., *Nsukka Scope* 1 (October 1971): cover.

<sup>2504</sup> Chinua Achebe, “Editorial,” *Nsukka Scope* 1 (October 1971): 1.

<sup>2505</sup> Editorial, *Nsukka Scope* 1 (1971): 2.

<sup>2506</sup> Chimere Ikoku, “Where are the laboratories,” *Nsukka Scope* 1 (1971): 10.

<sup>2507</sup> I. Campbell, Report, June 1979, BW 90/2548, National Archives-Kew.

<sup>2508</sup> Tony Eberé, “The Concert of Indigency in Nsukka,” *The Gentleman* (March 1971): 25, 27.

<sup>2509</sup> Tony Eberé, “The Concert of Indigency in Nsukka,” *The Gentleman* (March 1971): 25, 27.

university.”<sup>2510</sup> In order to replenish his library, James Adichie had to write to friends in the United States. He contacted his statistician friend, Charles Bell; Bell orchestrated a donation drive for Adichie that provided him over 200 books.<sup>2511</sup> “They replenished my library,” Adichie recalled—books that he could not have purchased even if he had the money.<sup>2512</sup>

### *The Integration of the University into National Life*

The editors of *Nsukka Scope* imagined the University according to its original *raison d’etre*: an international institution committed to what scholars Taiye Selasi, Kwame Appiah, and Chielozone Eze consider to be various versions of “Afro-politan” values: a sense of African nationalism that is bounded neither by geography, language, space, or ethnicity: “it is an erroneous idea to argue alone is international only when its staff and students consist of people from different racial stocks.”<sup>2513</sup> A university became “international” not by its ethnic makeup, Achebe et al. argued but by its creed and intellectual makeup: “the sustenance of international values cherished.”<sup>2514</sup> Edwin Nwogugu, then secretary of the academic staff, complained that Kodilinye’s plans for establishing the collegiate system would be extensive, expensive, and restrictive—funding that could, in the spirit of Azikiwe’s original plans, provide more educational access.<sup>2515</sup> He served as *Nsukka Scope*’s legal advisor, to ensure that they did not commit libel.<sup>2516</sup> “Practicality was the key word,” Edwin Nwogugu observed; the *Nsukka Scope* critics wanted not only to “enable the units to function effectively” but also, “to provide room for other students to come in.”<sup>2517</sup> Indeed, Kodilinye acknowledged, “only about 1,245” were

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<sup>2510</sup> Antony R. H. Copley, “Nigerian Academic Year 1974-75: Background to the July Coup 1976,” *Civilisations* 28, no. 1/2 (1978): 147.

<sup>2511</sup> Adichie interview.

<sup>2512</sup> Adichie interview.

<sup>2513</sup> “Universities: How International Are They?” *Nsukka Scope* 1 (1971): 7.

<sup>2514</sup> “Universities: How International Are They?” *Nsukka Scope* 1 (1971): 7.

<sup>2515</sup> Nwogugu interview.

<sup>2516</sup> Nwogugu interview.

<sup>2517</sup> Nwogugu interview.

admitted out of a total of 11,288 applicants for the 1971-1972 academic year.<sup>2518</sup> Kodilinye, however, was pleased to tout the University's female student population, which increased by about 80%: "It augurs well for the future."<sup>2519</sup> In actuality, women struggled to increase their numbers at UNN; by 1972, only 174 of 1,259 students were women.<sup>2520</sup>

The CEC served as their case study in official mismanagement for these scholars. Law professor Edwin I. Nwogugu noted that traces of CEC deterioration began "when we started having Nigerian manager[s]."<sup>2521</sup> while lecturers struggled in their "pitch-dark" lodging, parties and plays enjoyed robust lighting nightly.<sup>2522</sup> "Is electricity not an irreducible minimum condition for the efficient execution of our official duties?" one professor complained.<sup>2523</sup> More, the CEC management charged them retroactively for their rent to the day that the room was allocated rather than the day that the lecturers assumed residence.<sup>2524</sup> The lecturers were forbidden from using their rooms to cook food.<sup>2525</sup> Finally, they were ejected—without notice—with no refund for their unused time. The problems underlying the infrastructure, one junior lecturer commented, were systemic and mental: "mental reconstruction should precede any physical reconstruction."<sup>2526</sup> Perhaps the university was "under attack by blind irrational forces."<sup>2527</sup> In 1975, it was widely acknowledged that buildings had been "hurriedly finished"

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<sup>2518</sup> Hubert C. Kodilinye, December 11, 1971 convocation, H.C. Kodilinye speeches, 1971-1974, 7, Nnamdi Azikiwe Library, University of Nigeria, Nsukka.

<sup>2519</sup> Hubert C. Kodilinye, December 11, 1971 convocation, H.C. Kodilinye speeches, 1971-1974, 7, Nnamdi Azikiwe Library, University of Nigeria, Nsukka.

<sup>2520</sup> *University of Nigeria: Information for Prospective Students, 1972-1973*, 8, University of Nigeria, Nsukka Library.

<sup>2521</sup> Nwogugu interview.

<sup>2522</sup> "The Plight of a 'Junior Lecturer,'" *Nsukka Scope* 1 (October 1971): 19.

<sup>2523</sup> "The Plight of a 'Junior Lecturer,'" *Nsukka Scope* 1 (October 1971): 18.

<sup>2524</sup> "The Plight of a 'Junior Lecturer,'" *Nsukka Scope* 1 (October 1971): 19.

<sup>2525</sup> "The Plight of a 'Junior Lecturer,'" *Nsukka Scope* 1 (October 1971): 17.

<sup>2526</sup> "The Plight of a 'Junior Lecturer,'" *Nsukka Scope* 1 (October 1971): 21.

<sup>2527</sup> "The Plight of a 'Junior Lecturer,'" *Nsukka Scope* 1 (October 1971): 19.

and did “not have enough facilities for effective teaching.”<sup>2528</sup> Kodilinye acknowledged that while the university had been in existence for 14 years, it still lacked some of the most essential buildings.”<sup>2529</sup> All concurred, “at no time during its past 15 years of existence has there been an approved, and therefore, implemented plan for its development.”<sup>2530</sup> Kodilinye blamed the university’s “founding fathers” for their “speed” in construction and their failure to follow the established Mansfield plan for construction, leading to structures being “structurally unsafe.”<sup>2531</sup> The electrical power source was faulty; each night, some 80% of the campus lost all electricity, leading to a loss of water because of water pump failure.<sup>2532</sup> Several faculty members still lacked offices.<sup>2533</sup> The building schema, Kodilinye held, was “haphazard,” introducing fire hazards.<sup>2534</sup> Research facilities experienced ongoing power failures.<sup>2535</sup> And the campus needed a “general purpose shopping centre.”<sup>2536</sup> Kodilinye wanted the library, limited in capacity as it was, to be demolished and replaced with a new one<sup>2537</sup> He anticipated massive population growth over the coming years—hopefully reaching 200,000 people.<sup>2538</sup>

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<sup>2528</sup> “Planning Sub-Committee on the Case for the Re-Development of the University,” Report on Meeting, December 6, 1975, Nnamdi Azikiwe Library, University of Nigeria, Nsukka.

<sup>2529</sup> “Planning Sub-Committee on the Case for the Re-Development of the University,” Report on Meeting, December 6, 1975, Nnamdi Azikiwe Library, University of Nigeria, Nsukka.

<sup>2530</sup> “Planning Sub-Committee on the Case for the Re-Development of the University,” Report on Meeting, December 6, 1975, Nnamdi Azikiwe Library, University of Nigeria, Nsukka.

<sup>2531</sup> “Planning Sub-Committee on the Case for the Re-Development of the University,” Report on Meeting, December 6, 1975, Nnamdi Azikiwe Library, University of Nigeria, Nsukka.

<sup>2532</sup> “Planning Sub-Committee on the Case for the Re-Development of the University,” Report on Meeting, December 6, 1975, Nnamdi Azikiwe Library, University of Nigeria, Nsukka.

<sup>2533</sup> “Planning Sub-Committee on the Case for the Re-Development of the University,” Report on Meeting, December 6, 1975, Nnamdi Azikiwe Library, University of Nigeria, Nsukka.

<sup>2534</sup> “Planning Sub-Committee on the Case for the Re-Development of the University,” Report on Meeting, December 6, 1975, Nnamdi Azikiwe Library, University of Nigeria, Nsukka.

<sup>2535</sup> “Planning Sub-Committee on the Case for the Re-Development of the University,” Report on Meeting, December 6, 1975, Nnamdi Azikiwe Library, University of Nigeria, Nsukka.

<sup>2536</sup> “Planning Sub-Committee on the Case for the Re-Development of the University,” Report on Meeting, December 6, 1975, Nnamdi Azikiwe Library, University of Nigeria, Nsukka.

<sup>2537</sup> “Planning Sub-Committee on the Case for the Re-Development of the University,” Report on Meeting, December 6, 1975, Nnamdi Azikiwe Library, University of Nigeria, Nsukka.

<sup>2538</sup> “Planning Sub-Committee on the Case for the Re-Development of the University,” Report on Meeting, December 6, 1975, Nnamdi Azikiwe Library, University of Nigeria, Nsukka.

By 1972-73, UNN boasted 3,891 students and served as the only university in the Eastern region.<sup>2539</sup> But Kodilinye had big plans for UNN. He anticipated a re-development plan that would extend over the next decade.<sup>2540</sup> Kodilinye intended to transition the University from the liberal arts Americana model to the British-styled University college system. In December 1971, Kodilinye “proposed that the University of Nigeria should aim at being a Collegiate University,” with 12-16 colleges based in Nsukka with 4-8 based in Ogoja.<sup>2541</sup> He credited progress toward the Collegiate model to the support of the Council of Deans and the University Senate; he did not mention that many of those staffing these bodies were made up of Ibadan hands who embraced British models for university education.<sup>2542</sup> Kodilinye, claiming the support of the Executives of the Student Union, further issued regulations requiring students to wear academic dress at all official university functions, including examinations and in the presence of the Vice-Chancellor.<sup>2543</sup> The Student Union Executives enjoyed little capacity to resist the Vice-Chancellor; their on-the-record agreement was, in fact, compliance.<sup>2544</sup> In 1973, Kodilinye believed UNN could become “one of the great Universities of the ancient and Western worlds.”<sup>2545</sup> Kodilinye considered himself to be singular, even special—and certainly unwilling to settle for the middling “land grant” model that had governed UNN’s founding.<sup>2546</sup> Kodilinye

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<sup>2539</sup> *The Nigerian Universities and Udoji Commission* (1973), 41, Institute of African Studies Library, University of Nigeria, Nsukka.

<sup>2540</sup> “Planning Sub-Committee on the Case for the Re-Development of the University,” Report on Meeting, December 6, 1975, Nnamdi Azikiwe Library, University of Nigeria, Nsukka.

<sup>2541</sup> Hubert C. Kodilinye, December 11, 1971 convocation, 10, H.C. Kodilinye speeches, 1971-1974, Nnamdi Azikiwe Library, University of Nigeria, Nsukka.

<sup>2542</sup> Hubert C. Kodilinye, December 2, 1971 Matriculation Ceremony, 1, H.C. Kodilinye, Speeches, 1971-1974, Nnamdi Azikiwe Library, University of Nigeria, Nsukka.

<sup>2543</sup> Hubert C. Kodilinye, December 2, 1971 Matriculation Ceremony, 4, H.C. Kodilinye, Speeches, 1971-1974, Nnamdi Azikiwe Library, University of Nigeria, Nsukka.

<sup>2544</sup> Hubert C. Kodilinye, December 2, 1971 Matriculation Ceremony, 4, H.C. Kodilinye, Speeches, 1971-1974, Nnamdi Azikiwe Library, University of Nigeria, Nsukka.

<sup>2545</sup> Hubert C. Kodilinye, December 2, 1971 Matriculation Ceremony, 1, H.C. Kodilinye, Speeches, 1971-1974, Nnamdi Azikiwe Library, University of Nigeria, Nsukka.

<sup>2546</sup> Hubert Kodilinye, Letter to Eni Njoku, December 31, 1966, Hubert Kodilinye File, University of Nigeria, Nsukka.

saw a university in crisis. The pharmacology department magazine, under the student editor-in-chief, Julius Onwughalu, urged the government to distribute cheese, milk, and eggs to pregnant women and the very aged: then, he wrote, they could say together that Nigeria is “OUR DEAR NATIVE LAND WHERE NO MAN IS OPPRESSED.”<sup>2547</sup>

The jostling and bickering to which Achebe alluded in his *Nsukka Scope* editorial came to full view in the conflict between A. E. Afigbo in the History Department and Don Hartle in Anthropology. A. E. Afigbo, formerly at the University of Ibadan, petitioned the Department regarding his “intolerable and particularly unjust case.”<sup>2548</sup> Promoted to senior lecturer in July 1970 with a promise for an evaluation for further advancement, Afigbo heard rumors that those up for promotions in July needed to wait for two years or, perhaps, reach a certain age before assessment.<sup>2549</sup> Other faculty members felt similarly. James Adichie similarly argued that the Kodilinye administration had overlooked him.<sup>2550</sup> Physicist Frank Ndili similarly charged the Appointments and Promotions Committee with bypassing him; writing his petition pained him, as “academic positions and excellence should not be the subject of petitions and maneuvers.”<sup>2551</sup> His department head, Arizona archaeologist, Don Hartle, felt disinclined to accommodate him.<sup>2552</sup> Afigbo was a “very brilliant young man but academically unsocialized” and “seems bent on the destruction of the Department of History and Archaeology.”<sup>2553</sup> Hartle identified Afigbo’s

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<sup>2547</sup> Julius M. Onwughalu, “Editorial,” *Pharmasukk* 1, no. 1 (1974): 7.

<sup>2548</sup> A. E. Afigbo, Letter to Department Head, History, September 13, 1972, A. E. Afigbo File, Administration Building, Room 103, University of Nigeria, Nsukka.

<sup>2549</sup> A. E. Afigbo, Letter to Department Head, History, September 13, 1972, A. E. Afigbo File, Administration Building, Room 103, University of Nigeria, Nsukka.

<sup>2550</sup> James Adichie, Letter to Dean, March 1, 1971, James Adichie File, Registrar’s Office.

<sup>2551</sup> Frank M. Ndili, Letter to Appointments and Promotions Committee, August 7, 1972, Frank M. Ndili File, Registrar’s Office.

<sup>2552</sup> Don Hartle, Letter to Dean, Faculty of Arts, January 9, 1973, A.E. Afigbo File, Administration Building, Room 103, University of Nigeria, Nsukka.

<sup>2553</sup> Don Hartle, Letter to Dean, Faculty of Arts, January 9, 1973, A.E. Afigbo File, Administration Building, Room 103, University of Nigeria, Nsukka.

grievances as being two-fold: his lack of status and his resentment in not being granted a professorship.<sup>2554</sup> Afigbo “resents the Head as such rather than the individual involved,” Hartle observed; that is to say, “he resents authority.”<sup>2555</sup> Hartle implored of the Faculty of Arts Dean to intervene in Afigbo’s “‘political’ machinations” targeting “students, the clerical staff, and colleagues” who were “being victimized by this man.”<sup>2556</sup> Hartle stressed that “it must not continue.”<sup>2557</sup> Afigbo promised the Dean that he had “nothing against” Hartle and “had obeyed and will obey all his legitimate commands.”<sup>2558</sup> While the exact nature of the spat remains unknown, Afigbo promised that “this kind of talk will not affect my determination to continue to serve this University.”<sup>2559</sup> Two months later, in March 1973, Afigbo left for a fellowship, with a salary of 22,000 dollars, at the University of Massachusetts-Amherst.<sup>2560</sup> While in the United States, Afigbo continued his attacks.<sup>2561</sup> When one academic colleague observed that Afigbo, as a historian, was a “big embarrassment” and that he was incapable of “distinguish[ing] between ideal norms and actual norms,” Afigbo mounted a libel suit against Ukpog and demanded

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<sup>2554</sup> Don Hartle, Letter to Dean, Faculty of Arts, January 9, 1973, A.E. Afigbo File, Administration Building, Room 103, University of Nigeria, Nsukka.

<sup>2555</sup> Don Hartle, Letter to Dean, Faculty of Arts, January 9, 1973, A.E. Afigbo File, Administration Building, Room 103, University of Nigeria, Nsukka.

<sup>2556</sup> Don Hartle, Letter to Dean, Faculty of Arts, January 9, 1973, A.E. Afigbo File, Administration Building, Room 103, University of Nigeria, Nsukka.

<sup>2557</sup> Don Hartle, Letter to Dean, Faculty of Arts, January 9, 1973, A.E. Afigbo File, Administration Building, Room 103, University of Nigeria, Nsukka.

<sup>2558</sup> A.E. Afigbo, Letter to Dean, Faculty of Arts, January 12, 1973, A.E. Afigbo File, Administration Building, Room 103, University of Nigeria, Nsukka.

<sup>2559</sup> A.E. Afigbo, Letter to Dean, Faculty of Arts, January 12, 1973, A.E. Afigbo File, Administration Building, Room 103, University of Nigeria, Nsukka.

<sup>2560</sup> Mike Thelwell, Letter to A.E. Afigbo, March 22, 1973, A.E. Afigbo File, Administration Building, Room 103, University of Nigeria, Nsukka.

<sup>2561</sup> Anthony O. Mogboh, letter on behalf of Afigbo to M.U. Ukpog, February 1, 1974, A.E. Afigbo File, Administration Building, Room 103, University of Nigeria, Nsukka.



10,000 naira in damages.<sup>2562</sup> Afigbo became head of the history department in mid-1974 and Dean, in 1977.<sup>2563</sup>

The Hartle-Afigbo battle continued. Afigbo now brought up a decade-old dispute over whether Hartle had illegally removed antiquities from the History Department's collections in 1968. Afigbo had ascertained that Hartle handed them to a Mr. Ekwebelem and a Fidelia Ani for temporary "safe-keeping." "They alone," Afigbo told the committee, "can say whether Hartle came back and collected the bronzes."<sup>2564</sup> A committee convened in order to investigate Afigbo's investigation of Hartle's activities. When the Chairman of the committee informed Afigbo that the investigation had taken three weeks, Afigbo rejoined that he "thought [the Chairman] was cracking a joke."<sup>2565</sup> Once the report had been printed, Afigbo, outraged, recognized that the Committee was "was dead serious."<sup>2566</sup> Either the Committee "is either under influence hostile to me" or its members "do not know even the ABC[s] of investigation."<sup>2567</sup> Afigbo's animosity ran deeper than missing bronze items; Afigbo charged Hartle with the "exploitation of tribal animosities" and his "handling of funds."<sup>2568</sup> But the Committee "showed a marked resistance to follow the evidence."<sup>2569</sup>

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<sup>2562</sup> Anthony O. Mogboh, letter on behalf of Afigbo to M.U. Ukpong, February 1, 1974, A.E. Afigbo File, Administration Building, Room 103, University of Nigeria, Nsukka.

<sup>2563</sup> A.E. Afigbo, Letter to Dean's Office, Faculty of Arts, December 13, 1978; Handing-over Notes to Dr. Uche Okeke, July 31, 1979, A.E. Afigbo File, Administration Building, Room 103, University of Nigeria, Nsukka.

<sup>2564</sup> A.E. Afigbo, "Impact of the Investigation Committee into my Administration of the Department of History and Archaeology," May 3, 1978, A.E. Afigbo File, Administration Building, Room 103, University of Nigeria, Nsukka.

<sup>2565</sup> A.E. Afigbo, "Impact of the Investigation Committee into my Administration of the Department of History and Archaeology," May 3, 1978, A.E. Afigbo File, Administration Building, Room 103, University of Nigeria, Nsukka.

<sup>2566</sup> A.E. Afigbo, "Impact of the Investigation Committee into my Administration of the Department of History and Archaeology," May 3, 1978, A.E. Afigbo File, Administration Building, Room 103, University of Nigeria, Nsukka.

<sup>2567</sup> A.E. Afigbo, "Impact of the Investigation Committee into my Administration of the Department of History and Archaeology," May 3, 1978, A.E. Afigbo File, Administration Building, Room 103, University of Nigeria, Nsukka.

<sup>2568</sup> A.E. Afigbo, "Impact of the Investigation Committee into my Administration of the Department of History and Archaeology," May 3, 1978, A.E. Afigbo File, Administration Building, Room 103, University of Nigeria, Nsukka.

<sup>2569</sup> A.E. Afigbo, "Impact of the Investigation Committee into my Administration of the Department of History and Archaeology," May 3, 1978, A.E. Afigbo File, Administration Building, Room 103, University of Nigeria, Nsukka.

In February 1979, when legal authorities detained Hartle, likely on Afigbo's report, Hartle's lawyer protested; Afigbo's attorneys responded that while Afigbo was simply acting in his position as Head of Department "without malice"; he was "not aware" that Hartle had been detained, but he is "so busy a scholar to have time to concern himself with Professor Hartle as a person."<sup>2570</sup> Hartle accused Afigbo of making a false report against him and requested compensation, but Afigbo denied that he was "liable to the sums [Hartle] demanded or any part of it."<sup>2571</sup> Even in 1979, Hartle was unwilling to divulge to Afigbo exactly what became of the antiquities.<sup>2572</sup>

The Afigbo-Hartle conflict reflected ongoing anxieties regarding the influence of American institutions on newly independent university life. Hartle was now in the distinct minority; only 10% of the University staff/faculty was constituted of expatriate faculty.<sup>2573</sup> As Toyin Falola and Saheed Aderinto observe, Afigbo saw history as important for "creat[ing] the ideological armor for the nationalist struggle for self-determination."<sup>2574</sup> Afigbo considered historical study to be "an ideal whetstone for sharpening and tempering the emotional and intellectual capacities of perception."<sup>2575</sup> Historical study should foster an "ideological and cultural climate conducive to development."<sup>2576</sup> The shortcomings of nationalist historiography paled in comparison to the problems of Hartle's ongoing presence at the university. But at the

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<sup>2570</sup> Messrs Okele and Akpangbo, Solicitors for Professor A. Afigbo, February 5, 1979, A.E. Afigbo File, Administration Building, Room 103, University of Nigeria, Nsukka.

<sup>2571</sup> Messrs Okele and Akpangbo, Solicitors for Professor A. Afigbo, February 5, 1979, A.E. Afigbo File, Administration Building, Room 103, University of Nigeria, Nsukka.

<sup>2572</sup> Messrs Okele and Akpangbo, Solicitors for Professor A. Afigbo, February 5, 1979, A.E. Afigbo File, Administration Building, Room 103, University of Nigeria, Nsukka.

<sup>2573</sup> *The Nigerian Universities and Udoji Commission* (1973), 45, Institute of African Studies Library, University of Nigeria, Nsukka.

<sup>2574</sup> Toyin Falola and Saheed Aderinto, *Nigeria, Nationalism, and Writing History* (Rochester, NY: Boydell and Brewster, 2010): 109.

<sup>2575</sup> Toyin Falola and Saheed Aderinto, *Nigeria, Nationalism, and Writing History* (Rochester, NY: Boydell and Brewster, 2010): 109.

<sup>2576</sup> Toyin Falola and Saheed Aderinto, *Nigeria, Nationalism, and Writing History* (Rochester, NY: Boydell and Brewster, 2010): 109.

same time, the artifact dust-up reveals a renewed a sustained interest in the arts set against the tatters of the university—reflective of the “intellectual restlessness” that seemed to hover over the university, as it sought to reshape its past.<sup>2577</sup>

More, it reflected the anxieties of indigenous knowledge—the artifacts reflected the endurance of past glories through the horrors of war. In the months following the war, UNN was undergoing a “rehabilitation term,” as Afigbo observed.<sup>2578</sup> Scholar Kamene Okonjo trained as a sociologist, had been teaching from before the war.<sup>2579</sup> Okonjo’s work reflected the Institute of African Studies’ broader effort to reckon with itself. The federal attack on UNN had destroyed all Institute records.<sup>2580</sup> The Institute lost several scholars to the wartime violence or displacement: Christopher Okigbo, political scientist Kalu Ezera (missing), and E. B. Ndem (displaced outside the country).<sup>2581</sup>

Okonjo worked alongside anthropologist Felicia I. Ekejiuba in recovering indigenous Igbo identity in the post-war period. Indeed, the institute’s mission was to “recover the past of the peoples of Africa,” “deal with their current social problems,” and “encourage and project their living art and culture.”<sup>2582</sup> Okonjo exemplified Nsukka’s self-examination, churning out works on the “dual-sex” model of gender relations in pre-colonial Igbo, arguing that while men and women governed separate institutions, they enjoyed institutional equity. Her work on women’s credit, in the form of “contribution clubs,” highlighted Igbo women’s economic sovereignty. The founder of such clubs were called *Nne-Otu* (mother of the organization), and in some instances, had a male co-president—demonstrating the frequent harmony of the sexes in

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<sup>2577</sup> Ezenwa-Ohaeto, *Chinua Achebe*, 161.

<sup>2578</sup> A.E. Afigbo, “The Institute of African Studies,” *Africa Spectrum* 6, no. 3 (1971): 90.

<sup>2579</sup> A.E. Afigbo, “The Institute of African Studies,” 90.

<sup>2580</sup> A.E. Afigbo, “The Institute of African Studies,” 90.

<sup>2581</sup> A.E. Afigbo, “The Institute of African Studies,” 90.

<sup>2582</sup> A.E. Afigbo, “The Institute of African Studies,” 90-91.

managing economic affairs.<sup>2583</sup> Okonjo made this argument consistently: that village governance structures drew on a duality of sexual powers, with a ruling *obi* (male) and a ruling *omu* (female, lit: “one who gives birth”).<sup>2584</sup>

Similarly, anthropologist Felicia Ekejiuba also worked to preserve understanding of indigenous institutions and statehood. In 1967, she left her post at the University of Ibadan as an academic refugee to teach at UNN.<sup>2585</sup> She had served as a research assistant at the University of Ibadan to Dike during her studies at the University of Ibadan before she attended University of London for her full, undergraduate degree.<sup>2586</sup> At the outbreak of the war, it was Ekejiuba notified Kenneth Dike of the attack on Nsukka.<sup>2587</sup> Trained at the University of London, reading Geography for her undergraduate study, by 1970, she graduated from Cambridge University with her M.A; by 1976, she had graduated from Harvard University with her Ph.D. Later, in 1988, she received a Fulbright fellowship to study at the State University of New York.<sup>2588</sup>

She, along with Dike, conducted groundbreaking examinations of Aro societies, arguing that Aro kingdoms served as a “trading state” reflective of its founder, Akuma, who “consolidate[d] and expan[ded]” Aro trading and Aro founding.<sup>2589</sup> She taught at UNN from 1966 until 1977, when she left to become a professor at Boston College.<sup>2590</sup> While Ekejiuba’s and Dike’s argument regarding Aro statehood has not aged well—historian G. Ugo Nwokeji has

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<sup>2583</sup> Kamene Okonjo, “Rural Women’s Credit Systems: A Nigerian Example,” *Studies in Family Planning* 10, nos. 11/12 (Nov-Dec. 1979): 327-328.

<sup>2584</sup> Kamene Okonjo, “The Dual-Sex Political System in Operation: Igbo Women and Community Politics in Midwestern Nigeria,” in Nancy Hafkin and Edna Bay, eds., *Women in Africa: Studies in Social and Economic Change* (Palo Alto: Stanford University Press, 1976), 47.

<sup>2585</sup> Felicia Ekejiuba, “Omu Okwei, the Merchant Queen of Osomari A Biographical Sketch,” *Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria* 3, no. 4 (June 1967): 633.

<sup>2586</sup> “Anthropological Institutions,” *Current Anthropology* 6, no. 5 (December 1965): 506.

<sup>2587</sup> Alexander O. Animalu, *Life and Thoughts of Professor Kenneth Onwuka Dike* (Abuja: Ucheakonam Foundation, 1997), 151.

<sup>2588</sup> “Spotlight on the Faculty,” *Colgate University Women’s Studies News*, 2, no. 3 (Fall 1992): 2.

<sup>2589</sup> K. Onwuka Dike and Felicia I. Ekejiuba, “The Aro State: A Case Study of State Formation in Southeastern Nigeria,” *Journal of African Studies* 5, no. 3 (Fall 1978): 300.

<sup>2590</sup> “New Faculty,” *Boston College Colleague* 3, no. 1 (October 1977): 3.

concluded that they “constructed an early autocratic state that never really was—her work reflects the ongoing aspirations for Igbo statehood in the wake of the Biafra war.”<sup>2591</sup> Okonjo, Ekejiuba, and other scholars of the Institute of African Studies used the post-war Institute of African Studies in an effort to preserve the notion of Igbo and indigenous institutions, even as the idea of Biafra had begun to die. UNN’s Institute of African Studies served as a sub-terranean mechanism for celebrating indigenous Igbo traditions as former Biafrans became “Nigerians.” In later years, UNN historian, A.E. Afigbo, critiqued this effort to uphold Igbo statehood: Igbo history “does not have to be cast in the same mold as the history of the great mega states. . . our little David does not have to wear the battle dress of Saul in order to appear in the same field of battle as Goliath.” Afigbo attributed the Biafra movement to a “primordial but out-dated sense of community in the region.”<sup>2592</sup> But even as UNN’s scholars sought to *preserve* its past, they also continued to *expand* what UNN meant—which can be exemplified in the Nigerian scholar, Edith Otremba Ihekweazu.

### *Binding Germany to Nigeria*

Modilum Achufusi served as the University’s lone history professor at its inception.<sup>2593</sup> Competent in French, German, and Russian, he received his Ph.D. from the University of Leipzig (later named Karl Marx University) in July 1960 and became the first African lecturer of that university.<sup>2594</sup> Achufusi carried the task of producing a history department fitting and usable for an explicitly nationalist university project. An early student, P. O. Esedebe saw his history education as distinctly nationalist in its purpose: “if history courses must be meaningful, they

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<sup>2591</sup> G. Ugo Nwokeji, *The Slave Trade and Culture in the Bight of Biafra: An African Society in the Atlantic World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 16.

<sup>2592</sup> Falola and Aderinto, *Nigeria, Nationalism, and Writing History*, 113.

<sup>2593</sup> M. A. Achufusi, interview with Wineth Nkechi Obi, July 9, 1999, 73-74, Nnamdi Azikiwe Library, University of Nigeria, Nsukka.

<sup>2594</sup> Curriculum Vita for Modilum Achufusi, VC/PR/A 17, University of Nigeria, Nsukka, Administration Building, Room 103, University of Nigeria, Nsukka.

must include courses that were relevant for nation-building.”<sup>2595</sup> Achufusi had Marxist leanings, from his days at Leipzig—but the University had little choice. “There was a dearth of historians to teach in the Department,” he remembered, “Everybody knows that not many Nigeria historians were in existence as of that time because of the existence of one university,” the University College, Ibadan.<sup>2596</sup> Achufusi taught his staff that a proper historian “does not only study African history, but also world history, which comprises European history, medieval history, pre-history, modern history and so on.”<sup>2597</sup> Achufusi had a reputation for firm management, efficient planning, and pioneering vision.<sup>2598</sup> In January 1962, he became senior lecturer, and that summer, took leave to forge personal linkages with Africanist scholars at Michigan State University, University of California, and Northwestern University while on leave from UNN.<sup>2599</sup>

Achufusi’s supervisor, Walter Markov, a longtime German Democratic Republic Community operative and Communist historian, became the first official Head of Department at the University in 1962, the following year.<sup>2600</sup> A long-time fixture in German leftist circles, he viewed the wave of Americans to be the “*emprunts*”: the loans who had replaced the “discredited British.” The University had created a “*nouvelle elite d’évolués*” [a new evolved

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<sup>2595</sup> Dr. P.O. Esedebe, interview with Wineth Nkechi Obi, July 12, 1999, 77, Nnamdi Azikiwe Library, University of Nigeria, Nsukka.

<sup>2596</sup> M. A. Achufusi, interview with Wineth Nkechi Obi, July 9, 1999, 73-74, Nnamdi Azikiwe Library, University of Nigeria, Nsukka.

<sup>2597</sup> M. A. Achufusi, interview with Wineth Nkechi Obi, July 9, 1999, 73-74, Nnamdi Azikiwe Library, University of Nigeria, Nsukka.

<sup>2598</sup> J.A. Flint, Letter of Recommendation for Modilum Achufusi, February 17, 1964, VC/PR/A 17, Administration Building, Room 103, University of Nigeria, Nsukka.

<sup>2599</sup> Modilum Achufusi, Letter to George M. Johnson (Vice-Chancellor), April 21, 1961, VC/PR/A 17, University of Nigeria, Nsukka, Administration Building, Room 103; George M. Johnson, Letter to Modilum Achufusi, January 19, 1962, VC/PR/A 17, University of Nigeria, Nsukka, Administration Building, Room 103.

<sup>2600</sup> Andreas Eckert, “Afrikanische Sprachen und Afrikanistik,” in Heinz-Elmar Tenorth, Volker Hess, and Dieter Hoffman, eds. *Geschichte der Universität Unter den Linden 1810-2010: Praxis ihrer Disziplinen. Band 6: Selbstbehauptung einer Vision* (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2010), 540, note 17.

elite) that had “surpassed the ancient chieftaincy.”<sup>2601</sup> He considered the whole of the project to be an extension of coloniality as well as a reproduction of insularity. Was not Nsukka University, “in practice and in spite of the views of its spiritual creators, become the university of the Igbo, as Ife became that of the Yoruba and Zaria that of the Hausas?”<sup>2602</sup> Where, he queried, “should the professors, the books” and “the means come from, if not still from abroad,” even if it came in “dollars” rather “than in pounds, sterling, or francs)?”<sup>2603</sup> The perception that the University of Nigeria had not, in fact, unified the whole of Nigeria was transparent to external observers.

In 1962, H.J. Maitre, a professor of German with the West German Academic Exchange, had taught German language at UNN from 1961-1962.<sup>2604</sup> UNN continued to receive funding from external organizations, especially the German Foundation.<sup>2605</sup> Following the war, German scholar, Edith Otremba Ihekweazu, felt the call to come to the land of her husband’s ancestors. Born and raised in Erlangen, Otremba had studied German and Latin at Hamburg and Freiburg, finally receiving a Ph.D. in 1971 for her study of Johann Goethe’s poetry, *West-östlicher Divan*.<sup>2606</sup> Edith married a prominent Nigerian physician, Dr. Umelobi Ihekweazu. Umelobi was a spokesperson for the Biafra solidarity committee in Hamburg. Edith Otremba shared Ihekweazu’s vision of Biafra, so as soon as Edith’s Ph.D. was completed, she and Umelobi left to help re-build Nsukka. Umelobi became the deputy director of the UNN’s Medical services. By 1974, she, her husband, and her child, Chikwe, then five months old, had left Germany to assume

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<sup>2601</sup> Walter Markov, "La Naissance de L'Université Africaine: Le Succès Difficile," *Afrique*, (January 1, 1979): 60.

<sup>2602</sup> Markov, "La Naissance de L'Université Africaine: Le Succès Difficile," 60.

<sup>2603</sup> Markov, "La Naissance de L'Université Africaine: Le Succès Difficile," 59-64.

<sup>2604</sup> "University of Nigeria, Nsukka, Annual Report, 1961-1962," Rough Draft No. 2, 8, Hannah Papers, Box 50, Folder 2.

<sup>2605</sup> Nwabueze interview.

<sup>2606</sup> Edith Ihekweazu, "Wandlung und Wahnsinn. Zu expressionistischen Erzählungen von Döblin, Sternheim, Benn und Heym," *Orbis Litterarum* 37 (1982), 344.

a German post at UNN.<sup>2607</sup> Edith surrendered her German citizenship and became a Nigerian citizen.<sup>2608</sup>

Edith raised young Chikwe in the shadow of the University. Chikwe remembers having a “beautiful childhood” in Nsukka, where there was a “real community that shared its responsibility of bringing up its children.”<sup>2609</sup> The family celebrated a “home that was a melting pot for all sorts—her students, his patients—we had a sense that whatever we have, we share.”<sup>2610</sup> UNN made for an “idyllic world,” Chikwe recalls. He “tell[s] [his] children now . . . that with all the money in the world, [he] cannot offer them the childhood that [he] had.”<sup>2611</sup> Nwando Achebe, a contemporary of Chikwe living in Nsukka with her father, Chinua, echoed Chikwe’s sentiments: Nsukka “seemed to be this melting pot of all of these different, talented, creative people. . . musicians, writers, poets, but they were also professors.”<sup>2612</sup> Ihekweazu imagined herself as a bridge connecting Germany to Nigeria and back. But she was no mere tourist. Chikwe recalls: “She never imagined herself really leaving,” even as she felt lonely and disconnected from her family—many of whom objected to her marriage.<sup>2613</sup>

A scholar of Bertold Brecht, Ihekweazu imagined Africa as a lush new ground for the comingling for the European on terms of equality: “Will European literature, no longer forced by

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<sup>2607</sup> Aloy U. Ohaegbu, “Memorial Tribute to Professor (Mrs. Edith Ihekweazu,” in Wilfried F. Feuser, ed., *Elective Affinities* (Bayreuth: Boomerang Press, 1993), 14.

<sup>2608</sup> “Physician and Gentleman-Dr. Umelobi Ihekweazu, 1932-2007,”

<https://nigeriaworld.com/feature/publication/anya/080107.html> <accessed August 29, 2020>.

<sup>2609</sup> “Fellows Friday with Chikwe Ihekweazu,” <https://blog.ted.com/fellows-friday-with-chikwe-ihkwazu/> <accessed August 29, 2020>.

<sup>2610</sup> Dr. Chikwe Ihekweazu: The Nigerian Doctor Leading the Fight Against Coronavirus,” [https://neusroom.com/dr-chikwe-ihkwazu-the-nigerian-doctor-leading-the-fight-against-coronavirus/?utm\\_source=dlvr.it&utm\\_medium=facebook](https://neusroom.com/dr-chikwe-ihkwazu-the-nigerian-doctor-leading-the-fight-against-coronavirus/?utm_source=dlvr.it&utm_medium=facebook) <accessed August 29, 2020>.

<sup>2611</sup> Chikwe Ihekweazu, Interview with Russell W. Stevenson, October 13, 2020, Zoom Recording in author’s possession.

<sup>2612</sup> Nwando Achebe, on “Nsukka is Burning,” BBC Podcast, <https://www.bbc.co.uk/sounds/play/m000m5lt> <accessed September 2, 2020>.

<sup>2613</sup> Chikwe Ihekweazu, interview with Russell W. Stevenson, October 13, 2020, Zoom Recording in author’s possession.



colonial cultural policy, become a new kind of subject matter, a new kind of teaching material, a lesson in criticism?”<sup>2614</sup> She not only built up the German language program at UNN; she exported Nigeria back to the site of her childhood in Hamburg. Yet, in spite of her facility with language, she struggled with the Igbo language. “She tried really, really hard,” winning the respect of village residents from her husband’s village.<sup>2615</sup>



Figure 19: The Ihekweazu family, late-1980s, in Nsukka. L to R: Adaocha, Edozie, Umelobi, Edith, and Chikwe. Courtesy of Chikwe Ihekweazu.

By 1983, she had become a full professor and was, as Professor Aloy U. Ohaegbu observed, a “house-hold word among students, scholars and literary critics all over Nigeria”; she

<sup>2614</sup> Edith Ihekweazu, “Brecht-Rezeption in Afrika: Die Adaption von Lehrstück und Parablestück im zeitgenössischen afrikanischen Theater,” *Monatshefte* 75, no. 1 (Spring 1983): 25.

<sup>2615</sup> Chikwe Ihekweazu, interview with Russell W. Stevenson, October 13, 2020, Zoom Recording in author’s possession.

later became a dean of the University.<sup>2616</sup> Senegalese scholar Amadou Booker Sadjì credited her as a “great woman of letters” whose “constant quest” hoped to discover the “development of German-African intercultural relationships.”<sup>2617</sup>

Author Don Burness saw Ihekweazu as a metaphor for African cosmopolitanism: “the fact that this German woman had become a Nigerian dean” reflected “an African worldview where race was not at all the heart of the matter.”<sup>2618</sup> When Ihekweazu died prematurely in an automobile accident in 1992, Ezenwa-Ohaeto wrote of her: “a yam tuber uprooted/A maize cob plucked/In a harvest too soon/Wastes an annual labour.”<sup>2619</sup> Poet John N. K. Esseboe cried that “the might bridge across the Niger has collapsed!” and “a mighty canoe has sunk/A mighty canoe has sunk/Into the Niger river/into the deep river.”<sup>2620</sup> Historian Ifi Amadiume praised Ihekweazu praised her as the “eagle kola nut,” with the *onu n’ekwulu Igbo* [the mouth that spoke Igbo]” and the *nne umu Igbo* [the mother of the Igbo people]. She mourned: *Onwu-oo, alu-oo* [Death! Abomination!].<sup>2621</sup> Ihekweazu had entered the Nsukka cosmos; she was “now an ancestor and in the soft shills of Nsukka, her spirit will ride high on iroko.”<sup>2622</sup>

### *Facility Problems*

Following the war, traumatized students, sensitive to administrative centralization, launched resistance movements in universities throughout Nigeria. Azikiwe had designed UNN to place centralized power in the office of the Vice-Chancellor; neither George Johnson nor Glenn Taggart had designs for long-term residence in Nigeria. Eni Njoku, the first Nigerian to

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<sup>2616</sup> Aloy U. Ohaegbu, “Memorial Tribute to Professor (Mrs. Edith Ihekweazu,” in Wilfried F. Feuser, ed., *Elective Affinities* (Bayreuth: Boomerang Press, 1993), 14.

<sup>2617</sup> Amadou Booker Sadjì, Book Review of *Wahlverwandtschaften-Elective Affinities: Tributes and Essays on Germanic and African Studies in Memory of Edith Ihekweazu (1941-1991)* (Bayreuth: Boomerang Press, 1993), 348.

<sup>2618</sup> Don Burness, “Praise Son for Edith Ihekweazu,” in *Elective Affinities*, 17.

<sup>2619</sup> Ezenwa-Ohaeto, “A Harvest Too Soon,” in *Elective Affinities*, 13.

<sup>2620</sup> John N.K. Essoboe, “A Mighty Canoe Has Sunk,” in *Elective Affinities*, 16.

<sup>2621</sup> Ifi Amadiume, “Edidi-oo!” in *Elective Affinities*, 18.

<sup>2622</sup> Don Burness, “Praise Son for Edith Ihekweazu,” in *Elective Affinities*, 17.

become Vice-Chancellor was also the first Vice-Chancellor to make gestures toward a full consolidation of power with a lifetime appointment; Taggart imagined Njoku to be a “long-term appointment.”<sup>2623</sup> Njoku told Hannah that he expected an “indefinite appointment,” as the University law already gave the University’s governing council power to terminate the Vice-Chancellor “for cause.”<sup>2624</sup>

In spite of nominal improvements to campus life, students were keenly attuned to what the Students Union considered the “acute accommodation problems” and lack of classroom space. So packed were the classrooms that “some students take their lectures peeping through windows because they lack sitting space in the classroom.”<sup>2625</sup> The Chief Engineer concurred: “It is the Vice-Chancellor [Kodilinye] who had frustrated all efforts to provide for student and staff facilities.”<sup>2626</sup> Gowon refused to remove Kodilinye due solely to student resistance: “To do so without due consideration of any allegations made against him is to adopt the law of the jungle.”<sup>2627</sup>

The popular narrative of student resistance centers on sexual emancipation: on March 9, 1975, they had defied the regulations prohibiting inter-hostel visits.<sup>2628</sup> Such clandestine visits had long been common practice; two years earlier, *The Mask* had joked that it had “become a rare sight to spot a lion prowling around [the female hostels] unless he is extremely-loved soaked.”<sup>2629</sup> While the Union’s grievances did speak to a genuine crisis, the crisis long pre-dated

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<sup>2623</sup> Glen L. Taggart, Letter to John A. Hannah, December 27, 1965, Box 49, Folder 3, Hannah Papers.

<sup>2624</sup> John A. Hannah, Letter to Glen L. Taggart, January 27, 1966, Box 49, Folder 3, Hannah Papers.

<sup>2625</sup> Antony R. H. Copley, “Nigerian Academic Year 1974-75: Background to the July Coup 1976,” *Civilisations* 28, no. 1/2 (1978): 146.

<sup>2626</sup> Antony R. H. Copley, “Nigerian Academic Year 1974-75: Background to the July Coup 1976,” *Civilisations* 28, no. 1/2 (1978): 146.

<sup>2627</sup> Antony R. H. Copley, “Nigerian Academic Year 1974-75: Background to the July Coup 1976,” *Civilisations* 28, no. 1/2 (1978): 146.

<sup>2628</sup> Antony R. H. Copley, “Nigerian Academic Year 1974-75: Background to the July Coup 1976,” *Civilisations* 28, no. 1/2 (1978): 147.

<sup>2629</sup> “Bad Weather Hits the Land,” *The Mask*, vo. 6 (1973): 5.

Kodilinye—housing troubles extended back to the foundations of the University.<sup>2630</sup> The land grant university vision had become bogged down in mundane matters—food, housing, and water.<sup>2631</sup> In early 1975, students organized a mass demonstration, chanting the words: “Kodilinye must go! Kodilinye must go!”<sup>2632</sup> Within two months, Kodilinye had resigned and was replaced with James Ezeilo, a longtime faculty member and British-trained mathematician.<sup>2633</sup> That same year, the National Universities Commission, newly empowered to take over all university education, assumed control over the formerly region-based University of Nigeria.<sup>2634</sup>

Meanwhile, the hospital became an exemplary institution of the University. Under the guidance of Professor F. A. Udekwu, facilitated the first open-heart surgery in sub-Saharan Africa in 1974.<sup>2635</sup> With Umelobi’s support and guidance, the medical services were improving since the MSU days. Alum-turned-professor Paul Akubue established a pharmacology department, and theatrical arts expanded.<sup>2636</sup> One Christmas, the hospital students went around the ward singing carols to cheer up the mood.<sup>2637</sup> As late as 1976, locals resisted UNN efforts to expropriate land for university use; around 1977, the University’s newly-established hospital struggled to acquire land from indigenes in Akagbe Ugwu.<sup>2638</sup> In 1976, under the guidance of

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<sup>2630</sup> Antony R. H. Copley, “Nigerian Academic Year 1974-75: Background to the July Coup 1976,” *Civilisations* 28, no. 1/2 (1978): 147.

<sup>2631</sup> Antony R. H. Copley, “Nigerian Academic Year 1974-75: Background to the July Coup 1976,” *Civilisations* 28, no. 1/2 (1978): 147.

<sup>2632</sup> Esohe Francis Ikpomwen, interview with Russell Stevenson, November 2019, recording in author’s possession.

<sup>2633</sup> Adichie interview.

<sup>2634</sup> Phillip A. Akpan, “The Role of Higher Education in National Integration in Nigeria,” *Higher Education* 19, No. 3 (1990): 294.

<sup>2635</sup> Tony Edike, “UNTH and Its Open Heart Surgery Feat,” *AllAfrica.com*, November 4, 2013, [https://link.gale.com/apps/doc/A347913086/ITOF?u=msu\\_main&sid=ITOF&xid=ef6a711f](https://link.gale.com/apps/doc/A347913086/ITOF?u=msu_main&sid=ITOF&xid=ef6a711f) <accessed August 13, 2020>.

<sup>2636</sup> Akubue interview; Nwabueze interview.

<sup>2637</sup> *University of Nigeria Teaching Hospital Enugu, Annual Report, 1976/1977*, 16, Nnamdi Azikiwe Library, University of Nigeria, Nsukka.

<sup>2638</sup> *University of Nigeria Teaching Hospital Enugu, Annual Report, 1976/1977*, 5, Nnamdi Azikiwe Library, University of Nigeria, Nsukka.

Mrs. P. U. Egbociem, the School of Midwifery, on the other hand, struggled to keep a sufficiently robust instructor-student ratio—along with “extreme congestion” in the post-natal unit, preventing students from being able to work together at once.<sup>2639</sup> They needed to pace out their shifts.<sup>2640</sup> But the school had a “good start,” considering it had only begun that year.<sup>2641</sup>

The integration of UNN as an officially *national* university aligned with Nigeria’s rise as an oil-producing power.<sup>2642</sup> Shortly after 1973, the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries, of which Nigeria was a member, in response to American support for Israel during the Seven Days’ War, cut back on oil exports.<sup>2643</sup> While agricultural output dropped, the price of sweet crude oil exports skyrocketed, rendering the Nigerian national government flush with cash.<sup>2644</sup> Nigerian oil exports grew through an alliance with Western oil producers, such as British Petroleum and the Nigerian Federal Regime—oil all coming from the recently conquered Biafran lands; by 1970, Nigeria was producing 1.4 million barrels daily, a threefold increase from three years prior.<sup>2645</sup> Throughout the war, Shell-BP, for instance, procured oil with relatively little disruption—primarily due to Shell-BP’s payment of royalties to the Biafra regime.<sup>2646</sup>

In Samuel U. Ifejika’s novel, *The New Religion*, a war veteran, Edward Onochie, returns to his village, trained as a veterinarian. When his village falls to cholera immediately after the

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<sup>2639</sup> *University of Nigeria Teaching Hospital Enugu, Annual Report, 1976/1977*, 20, Nnamdi Azikiwe Library, University of Nigeria, Nsukka.

<sup>2640</sup> *University of Nigeria Teaching Hospital Enugu, Annual Report, 1976/1977*, 20, Nnamdi Azikiwe Library, University of Nigeria, Nsukka.

<sup>2641</sup> *University of Nigeria Teaching Hospital Enugu, Annual Report, 1976/1977*, 20, Nnamdi Azikiwe Library, University of Nigeria, Nsukka.

<sup>2642</sup> Freund, “Oil Boom and Crisis in Contemporary Nigeria,” 92-94.

<sup>2643</sup> Freund, “Oil Boom and Crisis in Contemporary Nigeria,” 92-94.

<sup>2644</sup> Freund, “Oil Boom and Crisis in Contemporary Nigeria,” 92-94.

<sup>2645</sup> Vicki I. Brennan, “Mediating “The Voice of the Spirit”: Musical and religious transformations in Nigeria’s oil boom,” *American Ethnologist* 37, no. 2 (2010): 356.

<sup>2646</sup> “Oil and Biafra: An Assessment of Shell-BP’s Dilemma During the Nigeria Civil War,” *Kuwait Chapter of Arabian Journal of Business and Management Review* 2, no. 11 (July 2013): 25.

war, he uses cattle medication to treat the villagers, thus gaining renown and income for himself. When his corner-cutting is revealed, he kills himself; Ifejika exhorts the reader to beware of the “new religion”—the worship of income.<sup>2647</sup> Musician Chief (Dr) Oliver Akanite (stage name: Oliver De Coque), with his group, People’s Club of Nigeria, articulated the age with his song: “Identity,” which associated material wealth with Nigerian-ness: *oooh money money identity*.<sup>2648</sup>

International guests continued to flow into the University, such as the Czechoslovakian ambassador, Jaromia Vrla.<sup>2649</sup> The University students impressed some British guests. “Their teaching standards are high,” one British botanist observed in 1979, and certainly their students are enthusiastic and committed and very ready to ask questions of a searching nature.”<sup>2650</sup> He “gained more than [he] was able to give.”<sup>2651</sup> While laboring under serious financial constraints, a Scottish visiting chemist observed, they “were in good heart despite of their various difficulties.”<sup>2652</sup> That same year, in 1979, another guest scholar, J.M. Wigglesworth, celebrated the “many personal friendships” he cultivated during his visits.<sup>2653</sup> But any positive attitudes were weighed down by structural and organizational conditions concerned them. Another scholar observed: “It appears to be almost bankrupt and staff morale very low.”<sup>2654</sup> University-building and nation-building did not have the same cachet as it did a generation prior—let alone a university identified with a separatist rebellion.

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<sup>2647</sup> Wilfried F. Feuser, “A Farewell to the Rising Son: Post-Civil War Writings from Eastern Nigeria,” *Books Abroad* 49, no. 1 (Winter 1975): 47.

<sup>2648</sup> Oliver De Coque, “Identity,” on *Legends* (album).

<sup>2649</sup> *Information Bulletin*, April 22, 1972, 1.

<sup>2650</sup> D. Ratchcliff, “Report on Visit to University of Nigeria, Nsukka,” December 16, 1979, BW 90/2548, National Archives-Kew. National Archives-Kew.

<sup>2651</sup> D. Ratchcliff, “Report on Visit to University of Nigeria, Nsukka,” December 16, 1979, BW 90/2548, National Archives-Kew. National Archives -Kew.

<sup>2652</sup> H. Gibson, Report, August 1979, National Archives-Kew, BW 90/2548, National Archives-Kew.

<sup>2653</sup> J.M. Wigglesworth, Report, March 1979, BW 90/2548, National Archives-Kew, National Archives-Kew.

<sup>2654</sup> G. Hall, Report, July 1979, BW 90/2548, National Archives-Kew.

Oil funding subsidized the military occupation more than education; the 1978 budget offered 193.2 million naira for the federal police, 75% of which supported police salaries.<sup>2655</sup> University staff throughout the country received rent-free housing. And students presumed that the funding would support an affluent lifestyle after the order of Western educational housing projects.<sup>2656</sup> Simultaneously, the cost of living index multiplied itself several times over: 151 in 1970 to 493 in 1978.<sup>2657</sup> University education suffered from over-enrollment, even as funding remained static; given that Nigerian universities relied on government funding for up to 90 percent of their fixed expenditures.<sup>2658</sup> Overstaffed universities, tasked with the burden of building infrastructure (e.g. infrastructure) and excessive expectations of staff welfare, faced heavy burdens of cost.<sup>2659</sup> Moreover, universities were becoming overly generalized; the “general studies” program was becoming too generalized.<sup>2660</sup>

### *Conclusion*

The post-war university reflected the ongoing contradictions of the UNN experience: grand aspirations and intellectual flourishing coupled with ongoing structural and financial duress. Claiming luminaries and literati, brilliance and boldness, UNN seemed to offer a hope for Nigeria, a claim to Nigeria’s destiny. The Igbo proverb, *Ebe onye dara, ka chi ya kwaturu ya* (the place where a person falls, that is where his/her *chi* has pushed them), would seem to indicate that UNN’s difficult landing will illustrate its future. And historians Toyin Falola and Saheed Aderinto note that in the generation following independence, Nigerian higher education left students “with a deep sense of failure, with a belief that their country has no future, and with

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<sup>2655</sup> Bill Freund, “Oil Boom and Crisis in Contemporary Nigeria,” *Review of African Political Economy* 13 (Sep. - Dec. 1978): 94.

<sup>2656</sup> Freund, “Oil Boom and Crisis in Contemporary Nigeria,” 94.

<sup>2657</sup> Freund, “Oil Boom and Crisis in Contemporary Nigeria,” 95.

<sup>2658</sup> S.O. Oduleye, “Decline in Nigerian Universities,” *Higher Education* 14 (1985): 19-20.

<sup>2659</sup> S.O. Oduleye, “Decline in Nigerian Universities,” *Higher Education* 14 (1985): 32-33.

<sup>2660</sup> S.O. Oduleye, “Decline in Nigerian Universities,” *Higher Education* 14 (1985): 33-34.

an aggressive ambition on the part of many Nigerians youths to see migration to the West as an avenue for survival and success.”<sup>2661</sup> In 1988, Chinua Achebe bemoaned the increasing irrelevance of the Nigeria University: “Not to have had one university man in eight, and not once in twenty-six years in leadership!” he cried. “Our traditional people would have sought the offices of *Afa* divination to explain that!”<sup>2662</sup>

By 1975, UNN, the “Igbo university,” now needed to reckon with a *national* Nigeria—and demonstrate its willingness to incorporate itself into the Nigerian national climate: as a recipient of national funds, as a conquered war university, and as an institution geared toward educating the masses. The coming decade would reveal whether the University could now rise above the burdens of the war and exemplify the aspirations to indigenous education that Azikiwe had intended. Despite Azikiwe’s, the Americans’, and the Nigerian Federal Regime’s most dogged efforts, the challenge of UNN never had been intellectual but structural, rooted in the rocks and the pipes more than the books and the words.

The Nigeria-Biafra war left long-term infrastructural and personal legacies for the University of Nigeria, Nsukka. With widespread infrastructural damage, looting, and the intangible effects of campus-wide trauma, the war crippled a university already struggling to survive. It served as a site for the unresolved contestation over educational models and the enduring relevance of colonial education in modern Nigeria. Eliciting caricaturized masculinities and reflecting the advancement impulses built into old colonial systems, the University, for its best intentions carried over old forms of governance and politicking. Wartime violence and destruction convinced both students and faculty further of the pointlessness of the endeavor,

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<sup>2661</sup> Falola and Aderinto, *Nigeria, Nationalism, and Writing History*, 114.

<sup>2662</sup> Chinua Achebe, “The University and the Leadership Factor in Nigerian Politics,” in *The Education of a British-Protected Child*, 172.



transforming its members from the nationalist-scholars of Azikiwe's dreams into neo-colonial self-seekers. Certainly, many faculty and students avoided the worst of the institutional impulses; figures such as Chinua Achebe in the Department of English and Chimere Ikoku in the Department of Chemistry challenged the post-war university tendencies to fostering neo-colonial advancement. For the next generation, University administrations ranging from Frank Ndili to Oleka Udeala found themselves facing a hostile faculty scrambling for material gain—to which they responded with the heavy-handed approaches typical to colonial governance. And as administrators fought their battles, children found shells and bones lying around the countryside.<sup>2663</sup> But as the Igbo proverb holds, *ihe kwulu, ihe ekwudebe ya* (where one thing stands, another stands beside it). Even as Chinua Achebe invoked *Afa* divination to explain how Nigerian universities became irrelevant, a counter-narrative endures—one of brilliance and light co-existing along the foundering water systems.

The University represented something grand and hopeful to post-war Igbo Nigerians. It promised connection, diversity, and above all, a distinctive Afro-politanism with prospects for transforming Nigeria into center of light for Azikiwe's dream of a continent illuminated by knowledge, exploration, and mental emancipation. It promised self-exploration, cultural recovery and preservation.

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<sup>2663</sup> Erica Strasser, "Five Months in Nsukka," *Chicago Tribune*, August 4, 1985 <<https://www.chicagotribune.com/news/ct-xpm-1985-08-04-8502200710-story.html>> (accessed May 5, 2020).

## CONCLUSION

This dissertation provides a probing exploration of the origins, transformation, and results of UNN from its conception in the mid-1930s to its incorporation into the National Universities Commission in 1975. In a manner, this dissertation engages the question: what makes institutions indigenous? What makes them foreign? And can they be both? Another poet writes, “Nsukka is a lover. . . a lover with whom life started, who held my hands through the early days of adulthood, with whom I was free to test waters, take wrong turns over and over again until I got it right or made my rights”<sup>2664</sup> Novelist Chimamanda Adichie writes of Nsukka in her novel, *Purple Hibiscus*: “Nsukka’s untarred roads coat cars with dust in the harmattan and with sticky mud in the rainy season,” and “the tarred roads spring potholes like surprise presents and the air smells of hills and history and the sunlight scatters the sand and turns it into gold dust. Because Nsukka could free something deep inside your belly that would rise up to your throat and come out as freedom song.”<sup>2665</sup> It provided a hope for freedom from all structures and strictures, domestic and foreign.

Not all have shared this hope. One writer, Arinze Ifeakandu, has called Nsukka a “small, progressive enclave within a larger conservative frame.” “If Nigeria were different,” he continues, Nsukka “would be the place that I would always return to.” But “what do you do when home is on fire?”<sup>2666</sup> It is not uncommon to hear scholars speak of a crisis in Igbo life.<sup>2667</sup> Historian John Oriji has claimed that this “crisis” among peoples of the Igbo diaspora—and a crisis in the “genesis of amorality” that can be linked to “the end of sacred authority.”<sup>2668</sup> Once

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<sup>2664</sup> “Nsukka is Burning,” <https://www.bbc.co.uk/sounds/play/m000m5lt> <accessed September 2, 2020>.

<sup>2665</sup> Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, *Purple Hibiscus* (Chapel Hill: Algonquin Books, 2012), 299.

<sup>2666</sup> Arinze Ifeakandu, “Nsukka is Burning,” BBC Podcast, <https://www.bbc.co.uk/sounds/play/m000m5lt> <accessed September 2, 2020>.

<sup>2667</sup> John Oriji, “The End of Sacred Authority and the Genesis of Amorality and Disorder in Igbo Mini States,” *Dialectical Anthropology* vol. 31, no. 1/3 (2007): 263.

<sup>2668</sup> John Oriji, “The End of Sacred Authority and the Genesis of Amorality and Disorder in Igbo Mini

reliant upon the moral codes upheld by local spiritual institutions such as the *Amala* (“those who know *Ala*” or “council of elders”), Igbo communities had become untethered through these institutions’ “erosion” and the increasing rise of Christian and Western powers.<sup>2669</sup>

There is an Igbo invocation:

*Ala idi nso buru mma gi*  
*Ala, ihe mbiara bu ncho*  
*Afo mula umuazi*  
*Okpa njiribia kam ga*  
*Ejikwa la*  
*Makala eje ana bu isi ijie*  
*Ihe okuko bu mmiri achu bu afo ya*  
*Obiara be onye abigbula ya*  
*Onajee, mkpumkpu apula ya*  
*Isee—Ihia*

Holy *Ala*, upholding your goodness  
*Ala*, the reason I am seeking  
Is that the stomach of the children will be filled  
The *okpa* I bring allows me  
To return home  
Because returning home is the heart of the journey  
The reason the chicken is in the rain is because of its stomach  
The visitor to a community should not be a death omen to them  
So that when he leaves, he shall not become a hunch back.  
So it is.<sup>2670</sup>

The land upon which UNN was placed—the *ala*—became a holy site of learning for the purposes of the material well-being of Nigeria’s struggling laborers; *ala*’s system for governing humanity represented a deep-seated need for Igbo people to preserve their identity and prevent “a return to chaos as the realization of its death.”<sup>2671</sup> The land upon which UNN was built relied upon human talent for its consecration to the *ala* Nsukka; UNN became a kind of shrine to the aspiration for

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States,” *Dialectical Anthropology* vol. 31, no. 1/3 (2007): 263.

<sup>2669</sup> John Oriji, “The End of Sacred Authority and the Genesis of Amorality and Disorder in Igbo Mini States,” *Dialectical Anthropology* vol. 31, no. 1/3 (2007): 279.

<sup>2670</sup> Emmaneul Ifemegbunam Ifesieh, “Prayer in Traditional Igbo Religion: Some Traditional Models (A Case Study),” in *Religion and African Culture*, ed. Elochukwu E. Uzukwu (Enugu: Spiritan Publications, 1988), 90.

<sup>2671</sup> John Oriji, “The End of Sacred Authority and the Genesis of Amorality and Disorder in Igbo Mini States,” *Dialectical Anthropology* vol. 31, no. 1/3 (2007): 265.

knowledge.<sup>2672</sup> In both peace and war, *ala* served as the mediating element—the sight over which blood was shed in defense of the land of Nsukka.<sup>2673</sup> Has UNN become a new kind of shrine, replacing indigenous authority and cultivating an environment reliant upon western wealth?

For some, the land evokes a kind of nostalgia. Chikwe Ihekweazu, the head of the Centre for Disease Control in Nigeria and a UNN alum, has lamented what UNN has become, observing that the university “hasn’t grown intellectually as rapidly as many of us would have wished it would have.” Ihekweazu recalls his days at Nsukka with fondness—one that prepared him well for the “hyper-competitive environment” of Nigeria life: “The foundation was so strong.” Now, he meets up with fellow Nsukka alum whom he describes as the “Nsukka Mafia”: where they “sit together over a few beers [and] reflect on nostalgia around those days.”<sup>2674</sup> Thus, while the university struggles, the university *community* endures.

This dissertation has engaged the origins of this University—situating it against a whirlwind of converging forces. For UNN’s progenitors, Nsukka exists in the realm of mythos and timelessness for many of Nigeria’s intelligentsia, representing a grand effort that transcends themselves: “Nsukka beckons,” a poet writes.<sup>2675</sup> Whether seen as an institution defining independence, representing Biafran solidarity, exemplifying creativity, or demonstrating the appropriations of patronage politics, this dissertation, particularly chapters IV-VI, shows that the University is suspended in a mental space of ambivalence: as a zone of patronage politics, as a zone of creative output, and as a zone of war violence. While official narratives have depicted

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<sup>2672</sup> John Oriji, “The End of Sacred Authority and the Genesis of Amoralism and Disorder in Igbo Mini States,” *Dialectical Anthropology* vol. 31, no. 1/3 (2007): 269-270.

<sup>2673</sup> John Oriji, “The End of Sacred Authority and the Genesis of Amoralism and Disorder in Igbo Mini States,” *Dialectical Anthropology* vol. 31, no. 1/3 (2007): 269-270.

<sup>2674</sup> Ihekweazu interview.

<sup>2675</sup> “Nsukka is Burning,” <https://www.bbc.co.uk/sounds/play/m000m5lt> <accessed September 2, 2020>.

UNN as an “indigenous” university and other scholarship has depicted UNN as U.S.-informed, this dissertation situates UNN as a hybrid, reflective of indigenous impulses while, at the same time, drawing on a host of externalities.<sup>2676</sup> This dissertation re-imagines UNN as neither a romantic project nor a post-colonial failure but as a project that both highlighted the realities of colonial-era patronage politics while, simultaneously, providing an embodied representation for aspirational Nigerians like Nnamdi Azikiwe who hoped to produce a unified Nigeria.

In this dissertation, I argue that the University of Nigeria’s expansiveness is what makes the University quintessentially Nigerian: its capacity to incorporate a host of actors, a pantheon of knowledge bases, and a variety of methodologies. Azikiwe envisioned an educational universe teeming with life, filled with linkages and connections. I demonstrated how Azikiwe craved connection and networks—and with a variety of actors. Azikiwe believed in a unified Nigeria—and one that relished in knowledge and ideas from throughout the globe. UNN was an indigenous institution because Nigerians made it so, not because the programs implemented universally reflected distinctively indigenous ways of knowing. In chapter 5, I further highlighted how until the outbreak of conflict in 1967, UNN housed several non-Eastern students as well as Westerners—rendering it a cosmopolitan enclave.

But its diversity was not the product of external actors; I demonstrate that its diversity was a natural extension of Azikiwe’s vision for what university education was meant to be: a mechanism for aligning indigenous Africans to themselves anew, *chi to mmadu* and *people to nation-state*.<sup>2677</sup> Only through university education, Azikiwe argued, could Africans hope to recover their dignity stripped through colonialism; Timothy Livsey situates UNN against both

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<sup>2676</sup> Hanson, *Education, Nsukka* (1968); Zerbys, *If I Should Die Before I Wake* (1971, and Livsey, *Nigeria’s University Age* (2015), chpt. 6.

<sup>2677</sup> For an excellent survey of the idea of the *chi*, see Chinua Achebe, “The Chi in Igbo Cosmology,” in Chinua Achebe, *Morning Yet on Creation Day* (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 1975).

the Cold War and the general “university breakdown.”<sup>2678</sup> This dissertation emphasizes the grandeur of Azikiwe’s aspirations, the intricacy of political maneuvering, and the University’s embodiment of an educational experiment meant to convey knowledge to a population broader than the privileged few in Africa.

Placed against the broader conversation about higher education in Africa, this dissertation demonstrates the complexity of Africa-U.S. inter-institutional linkages. Much literature on African higher education emphasizes crisis, distress, and struggle or, perhaps, emphasizes institutional development.<sup>2679</sup> These stories, while immensely important, are not the lone stories worthy of being told. Recent (and even not-so-recent) studies emphasize UNN’s place as a Cold War-era institution.<sup>2680</sup> In 1967, education scholar Thomas Hodgkin has noted the broad tendency of African universities to be the offshoot of the “colonial epoch” to “follow the same general pattern.”<sup>2681</sup> As a university with indigenous aspirations, Western influence, and towering aspirations, UNN has faced what Hodgkin calls the “problems of adaption.”<sup>2682</sup> How can UNN, in the final estimation, derive the best practices from all institutions while retaining its fundamentally indigenous character? Hodgkin notes that

The expatriate academics who came out as founding fathers, and played a major part in shaping the new institutions, represented on the main the more conformist aspects of Western university life. Indeed, they were partly selected for this reason. The African academics who have inherited, or will shortly inherit, power within these universities, have tended to absorb the assumptions and outlook of the institutions within which they

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<sup>2678</sup> For a treatment on how Africans throughout the continent saw the university-building project as part of the broader nation-building project, see Jason C. Parker, “‘Made-in-America Revolutions’: The ‘Black University’ and the American Role in the Decolonization of the Black Atlantic,” *Journal of American History* 96, no. 3 (December 2009): 727-750.

<sup>2679</sup> See Hanson, *Education, Nsukka*; A. Babs Fafunwa, *A History of Higher Education in Nigeria* (New York: Macmillan and Coy, 1971); Zerbys, *If I Should Die Before I Wake*;

<sup>2680</sup> Livsey, *Nigeria’s University Age*, chpts. 6-7.

<sup>2681</sup> Thomas Hodgkin, “African Universities and the State: Another View,” *Comparative Education* 3, no. 2 (March 1967): 107.

<sup>2682</sup> Thomas Hodgkin, “African Universities and the State: Another View,” *Comparative Education* 3, no. 2 (March 1967): 107.

themselves have trained. Thus it is not infrequently the African academics who are the most devoted defenders of the status quo.<sup>2683</sup>

Azikiwe's aspirations for UNN reflected broader considerations about Nigeria's looming labor needs and the threat of an under- or "mis"-educated Nigerian population. In this regard, this dissertation challenges explanations that seek to describe African educational systems as either exclusively *Western* or exclusively *indigenous*. This dissertation highlights both the promise and the perils of state-sponsored university-building projects. The renowned scholar of African education, Paul Zeleza, wrote in 2005 that what he called "transnational education" had by and large failed: "the processes of knowledge exchange are uneven," and "the structures of institutional collaboration are uneven."<sup>2684</sup> With the rise of online delivery of educational content, Zeleza concluded, "Africans can neither afford to blissfully ignore the new forces of transnational education nor embrace them blindly."<sup>2685</sup> Higher education linkages, not unlike the MSU-UNN linkage, "requires bold visions of internationalism and *alternative* globalization that transcend the edicts of market accountability and narrow commercial calculations."<sup>2686</sup> Fundamentally, the University must continue to retain Azikiwe's vision: "as an ennobling adventure for individuals, communities, nations, and the world at large."<sup>2687</sup>

But the University cannot replace the archive of the local mind. Malian author Amadou Hampate Ba observed that "when an elder dies in Africa, it is a library that burns."<sup>2688</sup> In fall

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<sup>2683</sup> Thomas Hodgkin, "African Universities and the State: Another View," *Comparative Education* 3, no. 2 (March 1967): 108.

<sup>2684</sup> Paul Tiyambe Zeleza, "Transnational Education and African Universities," *Journal of Higher Education in Africa* 3, no. 1 (2005): 4.

<sup>2685</sup> Paul Tiyambe Zeleza, "Transnational Education and African Universities," *Journal of Higher Education in Africa* 3, no. 1 (2005): 17.

<sup>2686</sup> Paul Tiyambe Zeleza, "Transnational Education and African Universities," *Journal of Higher Education in Africa* 3, no. 1 (2005): 20.

<sup>2687</sup> Paul Tiyambe Zeleza, "Transnational Education and African Universities," *Journal of Higher Education in Africa* 3, no. 1 (2005): 20.

<sup>2688</sup> Birgit Brock-Utne, "African Universities and the African Heritage," *International Review of Education* 45, no. 1 (1999): 89.

2019, I conducted a systematic, randomized survey of UNN students as they left the Nnamdi Azikiwe library. I asked one to two questions of each student: 1) “How did the University begin?”; and 2) “Why is a university education at the University of Nigeria, Nsukka important?” The survey amounted to a total of 84 respondents over the course of a day. Students’ answers varied, but they were defined by their practicality. Of those I asked question #1, few were familiar with the University’s origins. I asked all students the second question, and most cited proximity, professional prospects, or the University’s functions. Student #81 observed that “it’s a very nice university. It’s well-known for its academic excellence and it’s a very good university.”<sup>2689</sup> Student 77 felt that UNN graduates were “most opportuned” in Nigeria. Student 66 justified their decision because “I’m an Easterner, and it’s very mobile to my house.”<sup>2690</sup> And student 62 cited its reputation: “Because of the name and the prestige it’s gotten over the years.”<sup>2691</sup> Although answers were given in passing, it became quickly clear that few students had imbibed of the nationalist heritage Azikiwe intended to bestow. In 2003 George Axinn felt assured that “the doctrine” of the University “has persisted” to today.<sup>2692</sup> UNN represented the epic of a lifetime, a dream of a visionary nationalist to enjoy not only political but also, intellectual sovereignty—mental emancipation Azikiwe believed could be discovered and, indeed, built in the hills and lanes that sat at the chiastic center of independent Nigeria.

This dissertation offers an approach to UNN heretofore untouched in the literature on post-independence Nigeria. I offer a contribution to understanding the relevance of UNN to the independence project—enmeshed as it was in contexts both domestic and international. UNN

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<sup>2689</sup> Student interviews, conducted by author, October 16-17, 2019, transcript in author’s possession.

<sup>2690</sup> Student interviews, conducted by author, October 16-17, 2019, transcript in author’s possession.

<sup>2691</sup> Student interviews, conducted by author, October 16-17, 2019, transcript in author’s possession.

<sup>2692</sup> Axinn interview.



reveals the complicated political, intellectual, infrastructural, and economic transitions from coloniality to independence.

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