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**BORDER COMMUNITIES IN THE LITERATURE  
OF THE NIGERIA-BIAFRA WAR**

**BY**

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**Abstract**

Since the outbreak of the Nigeria-Biafra War, also known as the Nigerian Civil War, there has been a continuous publication of literature from military elite, journalists, historians, political scientists, economists, novelists, and sociologists. In spite of the increasing quantum of studies on the war, the border communities, which were most exposed to the scourge of the conflict, have been neglected. The existing literature on the war is produced mainly from the military perspective. It is therefore concentrated, even when it deals with border communities, on military operations and battles, without accounting, in any remarkable way, for the actual wartime experience of the civil populations. We must readjust and go back to the field to reclaim the civil war experience of the border communities.

**Introduction**

On 27 May, 1967 Lt.-Col. Yakubu Gowon, the Head of State of Nigeria, restructured the country, hitherto comprising 4 regions,

into 12 states. In disagreement with the move, Lt.-Col. Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu, the Military Governor of the oil-rich Eastern Region of Nigeria, declared the region an independent "Republic of Biafra" on 30 May, 1967. Gowon, averse to the balkanisation of Nigeria, was ready to stop Biafra by coercion. Both sides - Nigeria and Biafra - mobilised for war. Ojukwu's policy was defensive, not offensive. He would not attack Nigeria; but he would tenaciously defend the frontiers of Biafra against external aggression. On 6 July, 1967 Nigerian forces commenced offensive against the small Biafran border town of Gakem on the north-eastern frontier of Biafra. The Nigeria-Biafra War had begun. Gowon's strategy was to encircle Biafra and bombard it to capitulation "in a matter of weeks",<sup>1</sup> This was not to be. It took thirty months of intense and unceasing battle for Gowon to achieve the surrender of Biafra on 12 January, 1970.

The Nigeria-Biafra conflict was the first civil war in independent Africa that was fought entirely by indigenous soldiers without the intervention of any foreign force. It was also the first civil war in which two completely African armies, led by African officers, were engaged in combat with modern weapons. It was indeed an international conflict in which, for the first time in the history of the Cold War, super powers with antipodal ideological dispositions like Britain, the Soviet Union, and the United States joined forces on one side. These peculiarities and the historical, emotive, and polemical issues involved in the conflict have made it a most evocative and interesting subject of discourse among scholars, students, and writers of different backgrounds. Thus since 1967 there has been a continuous outpouring of literature on the war. A large chunk of the literature was produced by military officers, who participated in the war. Other contributors to the literature are journalists (especially foreign, who covered the war), historians, political scientists, novelists, economists, and sociologists.

<sup>1</sup>This paper was written for the maiden Network of Benue and Cross River Historians Conference held in Calabar, Nigeria, 4-6 September, 2013.

The aim of this paper is to identify the literature that has been published on the war, evaluate its border community content, and make suggestions for further research. Moreover, apart from indicating the general direction of literature on the Nigerian Civil War, the paper is also aimed at underscoring and validating the observation and line of thought that animated the most recent move by some eminent historians<sup>2</sup> to historicize the civil war experience of border communities in Nigeria. For the purpose of our objective, it is necessary to identify the strategic border communities involved in the war. Throughout the war Biafra, as much possible, maintained the boundaries which defined, or corresponded with those of, the erstwhile Eastern Region. Accordingly, the strategic communities on its northern frontier included Obudu, Gakem, Ogoja, Ikom, Obollo Afor, Obollo Eke, Nsukka, Idah, Oturkpo, Makurdi, and Lokoja. Those on the southern border were Eke, Calabar, Oron, Eket, Opobo, Bonny, Okrika, Port Harcourt, Degema, Brass, Oporoma, and Yenagoa. The eastern border towns were Boki, Ikom, and Obubra; while those on the western border included Ubiaja, Otuocha, Awukuza, Asaba, Onitsha, Nnewi, Ihiala, Uli, Oguta, Kwale, Ndoni, Aboh, Ugehelli, Owerri, Ebocha, Omoku, Elele, Ahoada.

### **Examining the Civil War Literature as it Affects Border Communities**

In 1969 Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu, the Head of State of the Republic of Biafra, published his popular book, *Biafra: Selected Speeches and Random Thoughts*. The book is a collection of Ojukwu's thoughts and speeches on the issues surrounding the Nigeria-Biafra conflict. It also has a diary of events in which Ojukwu gives some information on the military operations relating to the border towns of Owerri, Oguta, and Aboh.<sup>3</sup>

In 1972 four more popular works were published on the civil war. Zdenek Cervenka released his *A History of the Nigerian War 1967-1970*. In this work Cervenka provides an account of the War in all its ramifications, beginning with the military *coup d'etat* of 15

January, 1966. He dwells in detail on the military operations conducted for the control of the border towns of Ogoja, Nsukka, Bonny, Onitsha, Calabar, Port Harcourt, and Owerri. Other border towns merely mentioned are Ubiaja, Ughelli, and Obudu.<sup>4</sup> The year also witnessed the publication of Suzanne Cronje's *The World and Nigeria: The Diplomatic History of the Biafran War 1967-70*. Cronje is concerned in this book with the diplomatic role of other countries and international organisations in the Nigeria-Biafra conflict. She is particularly preoccupied with the analysis of the decisions, actions, and positions taken in connection with the war by countries such as Britain, the Soviet Union, the United States, France, Portugal, Tanzania, the Organisation of African Unity, and United Nations and the underlying motives. Border communities do not naturally fall within the focus of Cronje's work and could only have been mentioned incidentally. Among those mentioned are Owerri, Ughelli, and Port Harcourt.<sup>5</sup> Then came Arthur Nwankwo, a historian, with his *Nigeria: The Challenge of Biafra*, in which he takes a look at the Biafran struggle. He particularly analyses the issues and circumstances surrounding the Biafran war and points out the strengths, weaknesses, contradictions, problems, and achievements of the Biafran nation. He indicates briefly how the war was fought on the border fronts of Gakem, Nsukka, and Owerri and mentions the Onitsha sector.<sup>6</sup> Also, in a fascinating account, *The Nigerian Civil War*, John de St. Jorre takes us through the entire civil war process, beginning from the horrendous *coup d'etat* of 15 January, 1966 to the end of the war in January, 1970. He pays considerable attention to the military encounters on the border fronts of Ogoja, Nsukka, Bonny, and Onitsha and mentions Asaba, Ughelli, and the fall of Owerri, Calabar, and Port Harcourt.<sup>7</sup>

In 1977 *The Making of An African Legend: The Biafra Story* was published by Frederick Forsyth, a novelist and journalist. Forsyth deals essentially with the experience of Biafra as a nation engaged in a war of survival. He gives a good account of the military confrontations between Biafran and Nigerian forces at the border

towns of Ogoja, Nsukka, Onitsha, Owerri, and Bonny and mentions other border towns such as Gakem, Nyonga, Ughelli, Ubiaja, Opobo, and Port Harcourt.<sup>8</sup>

In 1979 Lindsay Barrett wrote T.Y. Danjuma's biography titled, *Danjuma: The Making of a General*. In it he tells the story of Danjuma's life from childhood up to the time he retired from the Nigerian Army on the rank of Lt. General. He narrates in detail the military operation for the conquest of Enugu, where Danjuma was involved. In so doing he mentions Nsukka, a border town.<sup>9</sup> Another publication in this year was A.B. Akinyemi's *The British Press and the Nigerian Civil War: the Godfather Complex*. In this book Akinyemi, a political scientist, brings into focus the multifarious views of British newspapers and magazines on such issues of the Nigerian Civil War as the events which inspired the *coup d'etat* of 15 January, 1966 and the pogroms of 1966 against the Igbo. He also examines the response of the British press to the political issues immediately surrounding the Biafran secession, the failure of the Nigerian military leaders to broker an acceptable settlement of the issues, the genocide against Biafrans during the war, and the issue of British arms in the war, as well as the handling of relief supplies to Biafra. No mention, whatsoever, is made of border communities in the war.<sup>10</sup>

In 1980 three publications were made on the civil war, one of them being *The Nigerian Revolution and the Biafran War*, written by Alexander Madiebo, the Biafran Army commander. Madiebo analyses the historical, political, and military events, circumstances, and conditions that led to the civil war. He gives a vivid account of the battles in which Biafran and Nigerian forces were engaged for the control of the border communities of Gakem, Ogoja, Obudu, Nsukka, Obollo Afor, Obollo Ake, Owerri, and Oguta. He also narrates the story of the Onitsha campaign and the capture of Calabar, Bonny, and Port Harcourt. He makes incidental mention of other border communities like Ubiaja, Asaba, Enugu Ezike, Adoru, Agaya, Ikem, Nadu, Akpanya, Ogugu, Akpoha, Ikom, Ajasso, Ahoada, Eket,

and Opobo.<sup>11</sup> Olusegun Obasanjo also published one of the three books of the year, 1980, titled, *My Command*. In this book he demonstrates how the war was fought on all fronts. He pays remarkable attention to the conduct of military operations in the border fields of Gakem, Ogoja, Obudu, Owerri, Onitsha, Calabar, Bonny, and Port Harcourt.<sup>12</sup> The third book, *The Trial of Biafra's Leaders*, was published by Nelson Ottah. His focus is on the trial of some Biafran leaders, who were accused of treason and insurrection against the Biafran government. He also pays remarkable attention to the military operations in the Mid-West, mentioning the border towns of Onitsha, Asaba, and Nsukka.<sup>13</sup>

Two years later Frederick Forsyth published Ojukwu's biography entitled, *Emeka*. Forsyth dwells on Ojukwu's life from childhood to his days in school, the civil service, and his soldiering in the Nigerian Army. He continues up to his leadership of the Biafran struggle and the period of his exile in Cote d' Ivoire. Forsyth also explains Ojukwu's decisions, actions, and related issues in the Nigeria-Biafra War. Incidental references are made to the invasion of the small border town of Gakem, the loss and recapture of Owerri, the fall of Calabar and Onitsha, and the bombing of a Red Cross plane around Opobo by Nigerian forces.<sup>14</sup> Forsyth's *Emeka* was trailed by Philip Efiog's *Reintegration: True or False?*. In this book Efiog looks at the events, circumstances, and issues surrounding the Nigeria-Biafra War, focusing remarkably on the last moments of the war. He does not mention in any significant way any border town involved in the war.<sup>15</sup>

In 1984 Tekena Tamuno edited a book, *The Civil War Years*, to which Abdullahi Shelleng contributed a paper titled, "The Nigerian Army in the Civil War". Shelleng examines the prosecution of the war by the Nigerian Army, analysing the problems involved and the behavior and martial qualities of the field commanders on both sides of the war. He makes scanty allusions to the military operations on the border fronts of Obudu, Gakem, Ogoja, Nsukka, Owerri, Calabar, and Port Harcourt.<sup>16</sup>

The next year, 1985, witnessed the publication of more books on the civil war. Bernard Odogwu published his *No Place to Hide: Crises and Conflicts Inside Biafra*. He brings to our knowledge the politics, intrigues, sabotage, and conflicts within the Biafran leadership and their connection with the failure of the Biafran struggle. He also examines the military battles fought by Biafra on all fronts, including those for the frontier towns of Gakem, Ogoja, Nsukka, Bonny, Onitsha, Calabar, Owerri, and Port Harcourt.<sup>17</sup> The year also saw the coming of Reuben Ogbudinkpa's most informing book on *The Economics of the Nigerian Civil War and its Prospects for National Development*. Ogbudinkpa identifies the technological and scientific inventions and innovations, which took place in Biafra in response to the scarcities and necessities created by the war, and advocates the need for further research into them and their utilisation for national development in post-civil war Nigeria. He mentions the border towns of Asaba, Onitsha, Nsukka, Bonny, and Port Harcourt.<sup>18</sup> Ogbudinkpa's work came with James Oluleye's *Military Leadership in Nigeria 1966-1979*. In a most illuminating account, Oluleye assesses the political role of the military in Nigeria from 1966 to 1979, including its prosecution of the civil war. He brilliantly describes how the Nigerian and Biafran forces contended every inch of the Biafran territory. In the process he tells how the battles were fought for the occupation of the border towns of Ogoja, Obollo Afor, Obollo Eke, Enugu Ezike, Nsukka, Bonny, Onitsha, Calabar, and Port Harcourt. The fall of other border towns such as Ubiaja, Ughelli, Asaba, Opobo, Ikom, Insofani, and Ekan are mentioned.<sup>19</sup>

In 1986 *Requiem Biafra* was published by J.O.G. Achuzia, one of Biafra's most talented, brilliant, and successful commanders. He tells the story of the military operations, exploits, and activities in which he was involved during the civil war. He renders a vivid account of the military operations at the border towns of Onitsha, Ono, Otuocha, Nsukka, Bonny, and Port-Harcourt.<sup>20</sup> He makes incidental references to such border communities as Idah, Onono Island (located between the Anambra River and River Niger), Adoro

(Adoru) Adani (Adoni), Ikem-Nando, Anaku, Omor, Adaba, Aguleri, Ugwuoba, Okpatu, Opobo, and Ifete-Ogwusi. Another book, *Gowon*, was also published in this year by J. Isawa Elaigwu. The book is a biography of General Yakubu Gowon, Head of State of the Federal Republic of Nigeria during and after the civil war. In this book Elaigwu also provides a 4-page summary of the entire military operations in the Nigerian Civil War. He thus makes no more than mention the capture of Nsukka, Ogoja, Onitsha, Bonny, Calabar, and Port Harcourt by Nigerian troops and the Biafran attacks on the border town of Agill in the Benue region, which he notes was deserted.<sup>21</sup> Then came John Okpoko's *The Biafran Nightmare* in which he examines the management of relief operations and items for Biafra during the Nigeria-Biafra War. No border community is mentioned in any significant connection with the provision of relief items, even though the border communities were the most invaded throughout the war.<sup>22</sup>

Civil war literature in 1987 was focused on Major Nzeogwu. Charles Enonchong came up with the book, *Who Killed Major Nzeogwu?* In this book Enonchong, a firm director, glimpses into the conditions and events in Nigeria's first republic that led to the *coup d'etat* of 15 January, 1966. He tells the story of the *coup d'etat* and how its leader, Major Patrick Chukwuma Kaduna Nzeogwu, eventually became a Biafran and got involved in fighting the civil war on the side of Biafra. Most importantly, he delves into a critical analysis of the circumstances in which Nzeogwu was killed on the border front of Obollo Eke and, in the process, makes incidental references to such other border towns as Obollo Afor, Nsukka, and Calabar.<sup>23</sup> Olusegun Obasanjo's book, *Nzeogwu*, was also published. This is a brilliant and authoritative account of the life and death of Major Chukwuma Kaduna Nzeogwu. It also gives an insight into how Nzeogwu participated and died in the frontier Nsukka sector of the Nigeria-Biafra War.<sup>24</sup>

In 1988 two books came out. One was published by Christopher Chant under the title, *War: Armed Conflicts of the 20<sup>th</sup>*

*Century Outside the Two World Wars*. Chant devotes three pages of the book to the Nigerian Civil War. He presents a summary of the military operations conducted in the course of the war. He mentions Gakem and Onitsha and gives scanty information on the combat for the control of the frontier towns of Nsukka, Bonny, Owerri, Calabar, and Port Harcourt.<sup>25</sup> The other book, published by Kole Qmotoso, is *Just Before Dawn*. In a delicate combination of facts and fiction, Omotoso, a journalist, looks at the tempestuous political and military events, including the civil war, which characterised the landscape of Nigerian history from the colonial period up to the end of the third republic in 1983. In his account of the civil war events, he mentions in passing the border towns of Onitsha, Owerri, and Port Harcourt.<sup>26</sup>

Two more books were published in 1989. One of them, authored by David Ejoor, came with the title, *Reminiscences*. This is an account of the author's career and experience as a soldier and his role in government and the events which led to the civil war. The author also tells the story of the invasion of the Mid-West Region of Nigeria, of which he was the Military Governor, by Biafran forces and his eventual escape. He practically makes no reference to the relationship between the war and any border community, except to incidentally mention the border towns of Asaba and Ughelli in matters which did not concern the civil war.<sup>27</sup> The other book, *The Fall of Biafra*, written by Ben Gbulie, describes the events, circumstances, and conditions which occasioned the fall of Biafra. Unlike the works of other military personnel, Gbulie's book is not focused on military operations. He, however, tells in brief the story of the invasion of the border town of Onitsha.<sup>28</sup> He makes incidental references to the border towns of Nsukka, Owerri, and Port Harcourt.

The present millennium opened with more major works on the war. H. B. Momoh edited a voluminous book published in the year 2000 with the title, *The Nigerian Civil War 1967-1970: History and Reminiscences*. This is more or less an official history of the Nigerian Civil War, written from the point of view of the Nigerian military. In the main the book deals with the origins and conduct of

the civil war, with keen focus on the way the Nigerian forces operated in the various theatres of the war. It also captures the opinions and testimonies of the Nigerian and Biafran *dramatis personae* on various issues and events of the war. The book mentions briefly the occupation of Ogoja, Enugu Ezike, Obollo Afor, and Obollo Eke by Nigerian troops. It analyses in detail the capture of Nsukka, Onitsha, Bonny, Owerri, Port Harcourt, and Calabar.<sup>29</sup> Another of Philip Efiang's book, *Nigeria and Biafra: My Story*, came in 2003. The author looks at the issues surrounding the war. He also peeps at the battles in the border sectors of Nsukka, Calabar, and Owerri and mentions Gakem, Obudu, and Ogoja.<sup>30</sup> In the next year Abiodun Adekunle edited and compiled *The Nigeria-Biafra War Letters*. This obviously important book is based on a wide range of correspondence on the Nigeria-Biafra War, emanating from Brigadier Benjamin Adekunle, arguably the most efficient, effective, and controversial Nigerian commander during the war. The book furnishes a profile of Brigadier Adekunle's life from birth through his military career. It gives an insight into his thoughts on the war and the issues surrounding it. The book is evidently not concerned with border communities under the war. However, it provides, in one chapter, a detailed account of the military operations, led by Brigadier Adekunle, in the border sectors of Bonny and Calabar.<sup>31</sup>

In 2007 Luke Nnaemeka Aneke published *The Untold Story of the Nigeria-Biafra War*. The 766-page book is undoubtedly one of the most informative on the Nigeria-Biafra conflict. It reports in a chronological order and on a daily basis nearly all the significant events related to the war, beginning from 1964 to 1970. The report covers internal events as well as external response to the crisis. It does not capture in any remarkable way the experiences of border communities, except how the military operations affected the border town of Owerri.<sup>32</sup>

In 2008 James Ewah published "Ethnic Minorities and the Nigerian Civil War: A Case Study of the Boki-Igbo Relations 1960-1970" as chapter 8 of an edited book, *The Nigerian Civil War Forty*

*Years After*. The paper is focused on Boki, a border community on Biafra's international frontier with the Republic of Cameroun. It examines the inter-ethnic relations between the people of Boki and the Igbo, especially in the civil war years.<sup>33</sup>

More literature on the civil war came in 2011. *Nigeria/Biafra Civil War: My Experience* was published by Achike Udenwa. This is a vivid account of the Nigeria-Biafra War, based on the author's participation and experience as a Biafran soldier. Udenwa tells the story of the military operations in which he was involved. He gives account of the battles for the border towns of Onitsha and Owerri and provides scanty information on other border towns such as Asaba, Otuocha, Bonny, Degema, and Ahoada.<sup>34</sup> Udenwa makes a remarkable departure from most other writers on the civil war, who focus mainly on its military elements. He devotes a good part of his book to the study of the social impact of the war on some selected communities, among which are the border communities of Onitsha and Ahoada.<sup>35</sup> Although the study is not done in great detail, it is significantly based on testimonies of the people who experienced the war. Richard Akresh *et al* wrote "War and Structure: Growing Up during the Nigerian Civil War". Published online as Working Paper No. 11/279, December 2011, by the Centre for Market and Public Services Organisation, Bristol, the paper assesses the impact of the civil war on the health of a select civil population of all ages. The study pays no particular attention to any border community.<sup>36</sup> Chinua Achebe, the great African novelist, marked the year, 2012, and his eternal departure from the world with the publication of his "*There Was a Country: A Personal History of Biafra*". In this book Achebe, after ruminating on his past and that of Nigeria since the colonial times, essentially tells the story of the events, issues, decisions, actions, and wartime culture, which characterised Biafra as a nation at war. He makes scanty references to the invasion of Onitsha by Nigerian troops and the recapture of Owerri by Biafran forces.<sup>37</sup> He also mentions the border towns of Asaba and Calabar as places where the Igbo were massacred by Nigerian soldiers.<sup>38</sup>

Achebe's book came along with another publication, *Ojukwu*. Edited by Ray Ekpou, this book is plotted on Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu's early life, his entry into the Nigerian Army as a recruit, his rise to military prominence, and his transactions as the Biafran leader. It mentions briefly the Biafran air raids into the border towns of Makurdi, Idah, Lokoja, and Oturkpo as well as the capture of Nsukka, Onitsha, Owerri, Port Harcourt, and Calabar by the federal forces.<sup>39</sup> James Aboh Ajang also published "The Impact of the Nigerian Civil War on Ogoja", in "*The Leajon: An Academic Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies*". Appreciably, Aboh's paper is a detailed study of the political, economic, and socio-cultural impact of the civil war on the border community of Ogoja.<sup>40</sup> There is also Chukwuma Osakwe and Ubong Umoh's paper, "The Nigerian Civil War in the Calabar Sector, 1967-1970", published in the *Lapai Journal of Humanities*. It is focused entirely on the border town of Calabar during the civil war.<sup>41</sup> Osakwe and Umoh essentially examine the combatant operations for the control of Calabar and draw attention to the strategic and tactical issues involved. The study brings forth, for greater understanding, the conflict between the theory and practice of warfare. It is indeed a classical study of a classical campaign in a classical border community in the Nigerian Civil War.

The most recent major works on the Nigeria-Biafra War, published in 2013, are Alabi Isama's *The Tragedy of Victory* and Emeffena Ezeani's second edition of *In Biafra Africa Died: The Diplomatic Plot*. Isama's book is centred specially on military operations conducted for the occupation of the border towns of Bonny, Port Harcourt, Calabar, Opobo, Bakassi, Obubra, Owerri, and Ahoada. Ezeani's book is one of the most scholarly and interesting works on the Nigeria-Biafra War. Written from the Biafran perspective, the book deals with the polemical issues of the war. It is, therefore, focused on furnishing answers to such questions as whether or not the 15 January, 1966 *coup d'état* was an Igbo affair; Nigeria or Biafra: which to blame for the war; the truth and myth of the position of the Biafran minority elements in the war; the reality or otherwise of

genocide in the war; and the Ojukwu factor. Ezeani is of the opinion, that the end of Biafra was, and still remains, a great loss to Africa. Since the book does not deal with the prosecution of the war, it is understandable why the wartime experience of any border community is nowhere mentioned.

### Back to the Field

It can be seen from the foregoing, that outside the minor studies by Aboh and Ewah, the rest of the literature does not accommodate the wartime experience of the border communities. We are led by this observation to submit, that border communities have been neglected in the literature of the Nigerian Civil War. Although much of the literature consists in the accounts of the military operations and episodic battles that took place within and around border communities, the actual wartime experience of the border populations has been alienated from the accounts. Thus border communities are only superficially mentioned in the civil war literature. It is imperative, therefore, for the historian to go beyond the present literature to investigate the experience of the wartime border communities before it is completely lost to time. This imperative ultimately imposes a great responsibility on the historian to return to the field and undertake a rigorous collection of data for the reconstruction of the history of border communities in the Nigerian Civil War.

In doing this, the historian must note that the border communities were the first or primary line of offensive and counter-offensive during the war. The communities were, *ipso facto*, vulnerable to attack and counter-attack, which resulted in a tumultuous demographic movement and frequent displacement of people. There was the possibility of some villages relocating permanently, thereby causing changes in the demographic map and boundaries of the border communities. Politically, the loyalty of some border communities, for some reasons, must have been divided between Nigeria and Biafra. Also, the ruins and relics of the war must

have survived to provide us an insight into its catastrophic nature. Socially and economically, the border communities were the most emasculated and disrupted. How they survived the war is of great interest. All these issues must be taken into account for further research on the civil war experience of border communities in Nigeria.

### Conclusion

It is obvious from the nature of the works examined, that the production of the civil war literature has been opportunistically dominated by the military literati, who were involved in the prosecution of the war. Consequently, the literature has been overwhelmingly branded from the military point of view.

The concentration of its literature on military operations and related incidents and issues has greatly distorted the Nigerian Civil War experience, especially as it would seem that the war was isolated from the civil population. The time has arrived for us to demilitarise the civil war literature by focusing our research on the relationship between the war and the civil society in all ramifications. Studying the wartime experience of border communities is a significant initiative in the process of demilitarising the civil war literature.

### Endnotes

- <sup>1</sup>Abdulahi Shelleng, "The Nigerian Army in the Civil War," in *The Civil War Years*, ed. Tekena Tamuno (Zaria, Nigeria: Gaskiya Corporation, 1984), 65.
- <sup>2</sup>In 2013 some eminent historians from the Benue and Cross River regions of Nigeria came together as "Network of Benue and Cross River Historians (NBCH)" to promote historical research on these two contiguous regions. They thought that existing literature on the Nigerian Civil War did not accommodate the wartime experience of the Nigeria-Biafra border communities, many of which were in the Benue and Cross River regions. This thinking impelled them to hold a conference in Calabar, Nigeria, in September, 2013 to historicize the civil war experience of border communities in Nigeria. See [www.benuecrossriverhistorians.org](http://www.benuecrossriverhistorians.org)
- <sup>3</sup>C.Odumegwu Ojukwu, *Biafra: Selected Speeches and Random Thoughts of C. Odumegwu Ojukwu* (London: Harper and Row, 1969), 382-387.
- <sup>4</sup>Zdenek Cervenka, *A History of the Nigerian Civil War 1967-1970* (Ibadan, Nigeria: Onigboje Press, 1979), 50-77.
- <sup>5</sup>Suzanne Cronje, *The World and Nigeria: The Diplomatic History of the Biafran War 1967-70* (London: Sidgwick and Jackson, 1972), 131,151-154.
- <sup>6</sup>Arthur Nwankwo, *Nigeria: The Challenge of Biafra* (Enugu, Nigeria: Fourth Dimension, 1972), 18-21, 36-41.
- <sup>7</sup>John de St. Jorre, *The Nigerian Civil War* (London: Hodder and Staughton, 1980), 148-153,184-190,207-208.
- <sup>8</sup>Frederick Forsyth, *The Making of an African Legend: The Biafra Story* (London: Penguin Books,1977),116-155.
- <sup>9</sup>Lindsay Barret, *Danjuma: The Making of a General* (Enugu, Nigeria: Fourth Dimension,1979), 64.
- <sup>10</sup>A.B.Akinyemi, *The British Press and the Nigerian Civil War: The Godfather Complex* (Lagos, Nigeria: University Press,1979),1-102.
- <sup>11</sup>Alexander Madiebo, *The Nigerian Revolution and the Biafran War* (Enugu, Nigeria: Fourth Dimension, 1980), 123-161,189-224-256,274-283,319-348.

- <sup>12</sup>Olusegun Obasanjo, *My Command: An Account of the Nigerian Civil War 1967-70* (London: Heinemann, 1980), 14-64,95-120.
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