

# Opinion

## The country 'we wish to see'

By Edwin Madunagu

SET out on August 30 with the announcement of the three books - on "changing the world" - which I wished to appreciate: *How to change the world: Tales of Marx and Marxism* by Eric Hobsbawm; *Africa must be modern: The contemporary imperative in Africa (A Manifesto)* by Olufemi Taiwo; and *The world we see to wish: Revolutionary objectives in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*, by Samir Amin. The first of these books was appreciated in a six-part essay titled: "Endless debate on changing the world". Eric Hobsbawm, the inspirer of that essay, died on October 1, 2012, at the age of 95, three days before the final part appeared. The second book was appreciated in a four-part essay with the caption: Notes on the "modernity perspective". The third book, authored by Samir Amin, has been appreciated in this column over a long period. The present essay, the third step of the trilogy I planned, is inspired by that book. Ancient philosophers advised that if you are confused as to where to go, you may need to recall exactly where you are coming from, and then, try as hard as you can to reconstruct the way you got to where you are, how you got to the point of your confusion. I have decided to benefit from the philosophers' advice and begin with these twin-tasks. What follows is consequently a reconstruction of the trajectory of Nigeria's history - a revised, updated and condensed version of the 10-part article that I wrote in this column between October 25 and December 27, 1990 titled: "A refutation of official history". The present edition will be built around the ethnic nationality question.

The first step in the creation of "The country called Nigeria" was taken on January 1, 1900, by the British conquerors. On that day, they named and confirmed the establishment of three colonial territories: the Colony of Lagos, roughly co-extensive with the present Lagos State and parts of the present Ogun State; the Protectorate of Southern Nigeria, (roughly corresponding to the present South-West geo-political zone minus the Colony of Lagos plus the present South-South geopolitical zone, plus the present South-East geo-political zone); and the Protectorate of Northern Nigeria (roughly corresponding to the present North-Central plus North-Eastern plus North-West geopolitical zones).

The three British colonial territories had Lagos Island, Calabar and Ilokoja, respectively, as capitals. The second step in what I may call "colonial geo-political engineering" was taken in 1906, or thereabout, with the merger of the Colony of Lagos and the Protectorate of Southern Nigeria to produce the colony and Protectorate of Southern Nigeria, with Lagos as capital. Calabar "lost out". The so-called Berlin Conference had taken place in 1885. It was a conference between the European colonial powers in Africa. That gathering did not "carve out" territories for the various powers as such; it only resulted, at least in West Africa, in mutual recognition of the territories they had claimed as their respective areas and spheres of authority. It was after this conference that the powers rushed to take physical control and began their "colonial geo-political engineering". When Germany lost the First World War in 1918, its colonial territory to the east of Nigeria, called Kamerun, was divided between its two rivals, Britain and France. Britain took the western part (a narrow stretch of territory stretching from the Atlantic Ocean in the south to Lake Chad in the north) and France took the eastern part.

Britain split its own share of divided Kamerun (or Kamerun - as it was then called) into two: south and north. The southern part was merged with the Colony and Protectorate of Southern Nigeria and the northern part merged with the Protectorate of Northern Nigeria. All this "cut-and-join" was done purely for the interests and convenience of the British colonial administration - influenced, perhaps, by the aspects of their "anthropological studies" of the natives that were consistent with these interests and convenience. In 1914, the year the First World War began, the Protectorate of Northern Nigeria was merged with the Colony and Protectorate of Southern Nigeria. The new amalgamated entity was called the Colony of Nigeria. Sometime between the end of the First World War (1918) and the beginning of the Second World War, in 1939, the Colony and Protectorate of Southern Nigeria was split into two administrative parts: Western Provinces (with Ibadan as capital) and Eastern Provinces (with Enugu as capital). The Protectorate of Northern Nigeria became Northern Provinces, with Kaduna as capital. Ilokoja "lost out". Lagos became, or rather,

was confirmed as, the capital of the British Colony of Nigeria. Although the North and the South were "amalgamated" in 1914, it was only after the Second World War in 1945 that the two parts were brought together administratively. Between these two dates - 1914 and 1945 - the two parts of Nigeria were treated as if they were still separate colonies.

The 1954 colonial Constitution of Nigeria confirmed the federal and regional structure of the country: West (capital, Ibadan), East (capital, Enugu), North (capital, Kaduna) and Federal Capital (Lagos). As British colonial Nigeria and French colonial Cameroun both approached independence, a decision had to be taken by the British whether the part of colonial Cameroun "awarded" to them after the First World War and which they merged with Nigeria would remain part of Nigeria or would re-unite with their relations "awarded" to the French. In the event the people of northern part of the "awarded" territory voted to remain with Nigeria (and consequently became part of Northern Nigeria), but the people of southern part of the awarded territory voted to join their relations (and consequently became part of Cameroun).

The merger of British northern Cameroun with Northern Nigeria and separation of British Southern Cameroun from Eastern Nigeria took place in February 1961, four months after Nigeria's independence on October 1, 1960. One of the results of these events - the 1885 Berlin Conference, the adjustments and re-adjustments of borders between British colonial Nigeria and German colonial Cameroun, the division of the latter colonial territory between Britain and France, the merger of British Cameroun with British Nigeria and then partial separation from Nigeria - is today's crisis over the Bakassi Peninsula.

In 1963, the Midwest region (covering the current Edo and Delta states) was carved out of the West. Four years later, in 1967, Nigeria, now under military regime, and close to Civil War, was re-divided into 12 states with Lagos now becoming a state. The number of states rose to 19 in 1976; 21 in 1987; 30 in 1991; and 36 in 1996. The dual status of Lagos - a state and the federal capital - was broken in 1976 with the designation of Abuja as the new federal capital territory. In 1995, politicians meeting under General Sani

Abacha's Constitutional Conference unofficially re-organised the states into six geopolitical zones: three in the pre-independence North, and three in the pre-independence South.

Today, 19 of the 36 constituent states are in the pre-1960 North, and 17 in the pre-1960 South; and of the six unofficial geopolitical zones, two are constituted by the well-known pre-1960 minority areas: the Mid-West and the Calabar-Ogoja-Rivers (COR) areas constituting one zone in the South; and the Middle-Belt constituting one zone in the North.

What I have given is a rough sketch of the trajectory of geopolitical structuring of Nigeria from 1900, through 1906, through 1914, through 1963, through 1967, 1976, 1987, 1991, 1996, up to the present. With, perhaps, minor corrections in dates and names, this is what I expect to find in every truthful historical record - official or unofficial. But that is not all the story. For history is not simply the records of deeds, acts, ideas and pronouncements of authorities. In particular, the history of Nigeria is not the records of acts of the Nigerian state - from colonial to post-colonial (in the various forms it has assumed: civilian and military).

As I have also said several times in this column, Nigeria is not the arithmetical sum of its ethnic or geopolitical components. There are, today, significant elements in the composition of Nigeria that are simply Nigerian and, therefore, cannot be resolved into ethnic and geo-political segments. I can also affirm that the political history of Nigeria is not, at any point in that history, simply the record of ethnic nationality struggles led by ethnic nationality leaders. The assertions above should not, however, be construed to mean that this country, Nigeria, cannot break up allegedly along ethnic nationality lines. But it would be "allegedly" and an imposition based falsehood. Please, propose a viable geopolitical structure for Nigeria and, in it, point at a component that will not embrace significant ethnic minorities that will fight for their "autonomy" or "independence" in the event of another ethnic or ethno-religious tragedy. Remember Biafra. Remember Bosnia (Yugoslavia). These four propositions will be elaborated in the succeeding segments.

• To be continued next Thursday.



# Opinion

## The country 'we wish to see' (2)

By Edwin Madunagu

THE first segment of this essay ended with a number of connected propositions, which can be re-presented as follows: That Nigeria is not the arithmetical sum of its ethnic or ethno-religious components, by which we mean that there are, in the composition of Nigeria today, entities that are simply Nigerian and that are, therefore - fortunately or unfortunately - inseparable into ethnic or ethno-religious components; and that the political history of Nigeria is not - or rather, is more than - a record of struggles between ethnic groups under the command of their respective leaders.

Furthermore, there does not exist a viable geopolitical restructuring of Nigeria in which there will not exist at least a component with significant minorities that will not fight for their "national autonomy" or "national independence" if the country embarks on the "Yugoslav option" (1990-2000); and that although Nigeria is burdened by acute ethnic nationality question - arising, in part, from the manner the country was constituted between 1885 and 1914 and in part, by the way it has been governed from then to the present time - it can no longer be described - again, fortunately or unfortunately - as a mere "geographical expression". What follows is an attempt to elaborate this multiple proposition, and then proceed from there.

In the opening paragraph of his book, *The Fall of Nigeria*, Obaro Ikime, a prominent Nigerian historian, says: "The bulk of what is now Nigeria became British territory in the period between 1885 and 1914. It is, therefore, usual when we speak of the British conquest of Nigeria to think in terms of the many military expeditions mounted against various Nigerian peoples during that period. Yet, the events, which took place between 1885 and 1914, were but a culmination of a series of events, indeed a process, which began early in the nineteenth century".

The earlier "events" referred to by Ikime include the suppression of slave trade, the promotion of so-called legitimate trade (including trade in palm oil) and the penetration and spread of Christianity. The "events" not only brought together Europeans and various peoples in the areas that later became Nigeria, they also further developed the diverse relationships, which had existed among the various peoples in these areas, "before the coming of

the *Bature*", if I may borrow from the title of one of Richard W. Hull's books on this subject.

Long before the birth of Nigeria, there had been various forms of relationships (economic, social, cultural, etc) between the various peoples that lived in the areas that became Nigeria. Although we are right to speak of "forced union" when recounting the events of 1885 to 1914, we would be wrong to say that the peoples within this "forced union" were "strange bedfellows". This was one of the points the late Yusufu Bala Usman - together with the young intellectuals he inspired - vigorously made, elaborated and defended in his various combats on the interpretation of Nigerian history.

That I do not want to live with you does not mean we are strangers to one another; conversely certain factors (including persuasion, education or just your conduct) may make me want to live with you even if I have not known you for long. More directly, what you make of the fact of relations between our peoples "before the coming of the *Bature*", and the political proposition you advance on that basis (and other bases) are entirely yours. But facts are facts; and they are different from opinions and choices. For instance, I did not, and still do not, agree with all of Bala's opinions and political choices even though I accept most of his factual premises. (At a point, Bala sent me, through a very costly process and unsolicited, a big package containing many of his publications on the subject).

In the second part of his book earlier cited, Ikime tells specific stories of how the British conquered and occupied several Nigerian towns and peoples including Lagos, Calabar, Oyo, Ilorin, Brass, Benin, Aroland, Tivland, Borno, Zaria, Kano and Sokoto. These are stories of resistance and inevitable capitulation. But the next wave of anti-colonial struggle - after the *fait accompli* of conquest and occupation - was essentially within the context of Nigeria: to free Nigeria from foreign occupation, to gain self-government and independence for Nigeria and not for the entities Europeans had conquered and integrated. Later, still under colonialism, other struggles developed within this anti-colonial struggle.

The "struggles within struggle" included, in particular, ethnic minority, ethnic - hegemonic, constitutional, gender and ideological class struggles. But all the struggles - main struggle

and the "struggles within struggle" - were waged within the context of "One Nigeria". When independence was granted on October 1, 1960, it was not granted to autonomous territories that were individually conquered by the British prelude to unification, but to Nigeria as an entity. The ethnic minority "struggles within struggle" before and after independence, were for self-determination and autonomy within Nigeria. If they, at times, went outside this framework, it was out of frustration. The ethnic-hegemonic "struggles within struggle" have always carried implicit threats of separation. Between independence and January 1970, the struggles led to mass murders, assassinations, secession and civil war.

The merger of the British Colony of Lagos and the British Protectorate of Southern Nigeria - with Lagos as the capital of the new entity (1906); the loss of status by Calabar and Lokoja and their replacement by Enugu and Kaduna and Ibadan; the creation and strengthening of the Northern, Eastern and Western Provinces (1936 and 1946); movement of the military headquarters of the territory that was to become Southern Protectorate from Asaba; and the confirmation of Nigeria as a federation of three regions - were all stages in the geopolitical structuring of the new British colony of Nigeria.

The colonial structuring was essentially for the convenience of the colonial administration. It is not that the British did not "consult" the "natives". They "consulted" some traditional rulers (some of whom they created or upgraded) and some "natives" they regarded as having, by some criteria, attained the status of Europeans. But this "consultation" was merely cosmetic. The colonial regime knew what it wanted and knew what it was doing. For the people of the colony, the "natives", however, the foundation was being laid for a twin-problem that was to remain and expand: the ethnic nationality question and the ethnic minority problem.

Between 1946 and 1954, the colonial power with minimal input from the nationalists who supported the federal idea or were indifferent towards it, but against opposition from some nationalists (especially militant nationalists), consolidated the federal structure and what I have called the tripod arrangement, that is, the construction of Western Region (around Yoruba core), Eastern Region (around Igbo core) and Northern Region (around Hausa-Fulani core).

The tripod was doubly unequal in the sense that the North occupied more than two-thirds of the total land area of Nigeria and accounted for about half the population, and the minority ethnic nationalities, which were estimated to be more than two hundred in number, together accounted for less than half of the total population of the colony.

It must, however, be stated that this "inequality" was not, and is still not, unique to Nigeria in the geopolitical history of the world. The issue was the relationships (of power) between the members of the tripod, the relationships between them on the hand, and the centre on the other, and the relationships between the regional centres and "their" minorities.

The attitudes of Nigeria's political elite in this period - and even beyond, up to independence in October 1960 - can be sketched like this: Some of the "constitutional political leaderships" (that is, those that eventually succeeded the British) were unambiguously in support of federalism as a principle, and opposed to the tripod arrangement, preferring a simultaneous creation of several regions (or states) across the country. Some others were ambivalent or inconsistent in their attitude to both federalism and the tripod arrangement - swinging from one extreme to the other. Some were firmly in support of federalism and the retention of the tripod arrangement. The ethnic minority constitutional leaderships were in support of federalism and the breakdown of the tripod arrangement.

However, the militant ("non-constitutional") nationalists were opposed to the tripod arrangement - preferring the creation of several smaller regions or states preferably along non-ethnic or linguistic lines. They would also want a federation of several states with a strong centre - but within the context or framework of socialist Nigeria. This arrangement has been called a unitary system - which is correct. Two factors are of critical importance here: First is that the position of militant nationalists was qualitatively different from all the other positions listed above; second is that the colonial rulers were irrevocably committed to handing over power to the leaderships of the tripod arrangement.

*The continuation of this series will resume later in the year. In the meantime, another subject will occupy the attention of the column.*



# Opinion

## The country 'we wish to see' (3)

By Edwin Madunagu

THIS series was suspended after the second part (November 15, 2012) to discharge an urgent obligation. We may now return to this series. Our narrative up to, and including, that second part appears not only historical, but also chronological. We shall retain the historical method, but will be now be more thematic than chronological. Either way, what I have said so far brings us logically to the historical period we now know as *Crisis and Civil War* (1966-1970), that is, the period beginning from the January 15, 1966 military coup and ending with the initial phases of *post-war re-integration* sometime in 1970. Deliberatively proceed by means of anecdotes, questions and propositions, but never losing sight of the core objectives of this series: sketching the country "we wish to see."

When Chinua Achebe's latest book, *There was a country: A personal history of Biafra*, appeared - or, more precisely, when the news of the book's appearance broke out - I had to quickly advise my comrades, especially the younger ones, to steer clear of the emotionally-charged controversy I expected the publication to immediately provoke. Beyond this advice - deliberately framed as advice, since *leftist intervention* must be made one day, sooner than later - I warned (rather than advised) that no comrade should make enemies on the basis of this book or the controversy following it, or make new friends or acquire new allies on that basis. I acted instinctively; but I later explained my reasons to myself and then to some comrades.

There are at least three reasons for my advice and warning. First, I remember the devastating and tragic impact of the *Nigerian Crisis and Civil War* on the Nigerian Left. This was a Civil War that officially ended in January 1970; but 13 years later, in March 1983, that war made Nigeria's leading leftists - including frontline Marxists - literally come to blows at an international Marxist Conference (to mark the first centenary of Karl Marx's death) in the presence of foreign delegates.

Six years later, in 1989, this same war became the decisive factor in the abortion of a "coup" hatched in Calabar to come up with a strong and

united formation to confront the Ibrahim Babangida dictatorship electorally and extra-electorally. I pay attention to the *Nigerian Left* - which exists, I continue to repeat - because it is the only social force that can prevent a second edition of *Crisis and Civil War*.

One of the reasons for this resilience of the scars, pains and mere memories of the *Nigerian Crisis and Civil War* is that there is simply no way of mapping a genuinely revolutionary way forward for Nigeria in decades to come without encountering, and settling accounts with, that tragic incident. How do you map a way forward, without reviewing our history? How do you review Nigeria's relatively short history without encountering the Civil War? How I wish there was a way! Going beyond the Nigerian Left: For Nigerians, in general, the controversy provoked by Achebe's book is just a measure of the resilience of the scars, pains, and memories I am talking about. A friend and compatriot says that what I have now called "resilience" will weaken as "truth" overcomes "lies" and that he is more interested in the future. I agree, but then I say: This triumph of truth, this durable future, will be the prize for vigorous (or merciless?) confrontations with the past in all its ramifications. There is a dilemma here; yes, a dilemma.

In October/November 1978, about 15 months after the very successful Second All-Nigeria Social Conference in Zaria and barely a month after some of us (including my spouse and I) were removed from the university system over "Ali-Must-Go" struggle, we gathered in Lagos for a meeting that could have resulted in the announcement of the emergence of a united revolutionary party around a Marxist core. But that dream had collapsed even before the conference opened. Several issues were responsible; but I shall recall two of them in which I was directly involved.

In several meetings preceding the October/November meeting I had insisted that in the context of Marxist history and Marxist politics, there was a fundamental difference between the concept of *Secretary of the Party* and that of *Secretary of the Central Committee of the Party*. It was a distinction, which sought to emphasise the princi-

ples of "collectivity" and "first-among-equals" (rather than *first*) and guard against the substitution of leader for leadership, and eventually that leader for the masses. Supported by a comrade (now dead), I argued that our position was supported by our own history. We lost that battle.

Whereas we consciously waged this first battle - and lost - we were not aware of the reason for losing the second battle. Let me summarise it. Some of us had argued that the new attempt to re-group must be prefaced with a confrontation with the past. We could not, at that time, understand why the older comrades (I was only 32 then) so resisted what we idealistically and naively regarded as a mere formal requirement in an inaugural political declaration or announcement. Later, we knew: Our leaders did not want a reopening of the past because they did not want to re-visit, before us, what happened to the *Nigerian Left* and in the *Nigerian Left* immediately before, during and immediately after the *Crisis and Civil War*.

Our older comrades feared, I believe, that such discussion could end or damage that particular attempt at re-grouping. But I ask: Which is preferable: to confront the past - together with the lies, truths and half-truths, that would emerge - and risk the collapse of that particular attempt at re-grouping, or to run away from the past and face the *certainty* of recurrent abortions of new attempts? We also lost this second battle and many of us literally ceased to be members of the new group by the end of 1978.

The second reason I advised, and then warned, my comrades not to rush into the controversy being generated by *There was a country* is that the *Nigerian Crisis and Civil War* was very complex - with multiple, rather than, singular causation. It was over-determined, as Louis Althusser would say. I must admit at once: I feared that this controversy could become a severe test for our individual and collective revolutionary consciousness - or even for our grasp of, and reflection on, the Nigerian history. To blame the war on "tribalism" would be childishly simplistic. And to blame capitalism and imperialism for it and stop there - as I almost rudely told a com-

rade of my generation shortly after the controversy broke out - would be lazy, evasive, unhistorical and undialectical. Is that how you would "explain" the tragedies of the Soviet Union, Yugoslavia, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Rwanda, Somalia, the "Arab Spring", DR Congo, etc?

A day after I sent out my frantic message to comrades, a young lady of about 28, of Akwa Ibom extraction, who is fully aware of my ethnic origin, whom I had known since she was 12, phoned me and asked without preamble: "Is it true that in Biafra, during the Civil War an Igbo soldier, or even a civilian, could arrest anyone and demand to know where the person came from and then summarily execute the "prisoner" if he or she was non-Igbo?" I thanked and invited her over for a chat. When she came, I placed myself as if before an inquisitor. I recounted my own personal experiences during the war, the horrors that I saw and heard then, and what I have learnt, and my further reflections, since then. I concluded in words like these: "Under the conditions I have sketched, although I am unable to confirm what has been alleged, I can say that such a thing could as well have taken place during certain periods in the war." The girl relaxed, satisfied with my narrative. This was a girl who was born in July 1984, more than 14 years after the end of the Civil War.

Shortly after this, a younger comrade, male and much older than the young lady, and of my own ethnic extraction, called and asked me if Marxism was opposed to self-determination. Although I did not know where my comrade was "coming from", I answered directly. No; Marxism upholds the right to self-determination philosophically and in principle. You cannot claim to be a Marxist if, confronted with this question, you hesitate to answer it categorically. But, posed as a political question, the answer is not Yes or No; the answer depends on time and space, on the concrete historical setting. I proceeded to give him two historical illustrations: the historic argument between Vladimir Lenin and Rosaline Luxemburg on the national question and the violent debate between Marxist intellectuals on both sides of the Ethiopian Civil War. We agreed to continue the discussion on this question.

(To be continued next Thursday).



# Opinion

## The country 'we wish to see' (4)

By Edwin Madunagu

In this concluding segment, as we are approaching the end of the year, I shall merely summarise what I still have to say. Elaborations will follow in the weeks and months ahead.

Suppose a known Nigerian, in publicly reviewing the political history of the country in the period 1950 to 1966, that is, from the beginning of decolonisation up to the collapse of the First Republic, irreverently but evenly indicts Tafawa Balewa, Obafemi Awolowo, Nnamdi Azikiwe, Ahmadu Bello, Ladoko Akintola, Michael Okpara and Dennis Osadebay: what reactions would you expect from each of the present six geopolitical zones and the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja? Would you expect variations in public reactions across the country? How would you explain these differences?

In Turkey today, it is a criminal offence, bordering on treason, to refer to what happened to Armenians in 1915, as the Ottoman Empire was collapsing, as genocide. Why? The state of Turkey, the successor to the Ottoman Empire, is ready to go to war, or at least threaten a break in diplomatic relations should a foreign state make such a declaration or tacitly approves such a declaration. (Recent example: France) Why? And in Israel, as well as Germany, it is a criminal offence to deny the holocaust, that is, to deny that what happened to millions of Jews in Nazi Germany (1933-1945) actually took place or that it is actually genocide, rather than something else. In the event that this denial is made outside the borders of Israel by a state or non-state entity, it would immediately enter the *black book* of the state of Israel. Retribution will be carried out in the fullness of time by whatever government is in place. It is as serious as that. Why?

Probably the BBC radio programme I enjoy most and struggle not to miss is called *Witness*, a 10-minute programme broadcast every weekday between 8:50 p.m. and 9:00 p.m. *Witness* re-visits actual historical events that took place fairly long ago. On November 23, 2012, I think, *Witness* revisited the assassination of the American President, John F. Kennedy, exactly 49 years earlier. This was almost four years before the start of the Nigerian

Kennedy re-visit to the BBC and its listeners when the man in question died almost half a century ago? Did the BBC intend to "re-open old wounds" or sabotage the current attempt at compromise between the Democrats and the Republicans? Finally, was every BBC listener expected to agree with everything that the BBC said on the assassination of President John Kennedy?

This essay is about *The country 'we wish to see'*. Hitherto, my picture of the country that I would wish to see emerge from the present has been implicit rather than explicit. I now wish to be explicit. Before 1986, or more explicitly, before I was appointed into General Ibrahim Babangida's Political Bureau on January 13, 1986, my propositions on the national question had been ideological education and socialist transition. It was while in the Bureau, in the course of touring the country, observing the "national debate", reading thousands of memoranda and discussing with colleagues, that the idea of geopolitical restructuring came to me. My concrete propositions on this question, as well as allied questions, were included in my own report - some called it *Minority Report* - at the end of the year-long national debate on the political future of the country.

This idea of geopolitical restructuring - which I shall come to presently - was further developed in 1990 after the abortive coup d'état of April 22 and the unstructured national debate on the national question. In the course of this latter debate, I encountered the late Chief Anthony Enahoro. Later, I encountered the views of Dr. Anthony Akinola on rotational presidency, whose historical and political premises are closer to my views on this aspect of the national question as I had previously thought. From the very beginning, from 1986, my proposition on the national question has been inseparable from my proposition on the socialist transformation of Nigeria. Although my views on both issues have individually developed over the years, their inseparability has remained.

I may now sketch the integral picture: Nigeria should become a 5-tier governmental structure: federal, regional, state, local government and

corresponds to the following geopolitical restructuring: The Federal Republic of Nigeria; 8 regions; 36 states and the Federal Capital Territory; 774 Local Government Areas; and as many neighbourhoods as there are Council Wards in the country. To those who may immediately shout that this is a crazy idea given that the cost of running the current 3-tier structure is considered too high and ultimately unsustainable, I respond that within the framework of socialist transformation (or at least popular democracy) the cost of running the proposed 5-tier structure will actually be much lower than the per cent cost of running the existing 3-tier structure.

**Clarification and Elaboration 1:** What is being proposed here is a 5-tier presidential, secular, federal, and republican democracy, broadly following the "federal principle" as enunciated by K.C. Wheare in his book *Federal Government*: "By the federal principle, I mean the method of dividing powers so that the general and the regional governments are each, within a sphere, co-ordinate and independent" (Fourth Edition, 963, page 10). I did not worry to check up the latter editions of the book or latter reviews of this author. What is given here completely satisfies my needs in this essay.

Where based his principle on a two-tier federal structure: general and regional? What I am, however, proposing here is a creative extension of the principle to a 5-tier Nigerian structure. In other words, there will be five federating levels of governance. The question of "stronger" or "weaker" level or levels does not arise here. In the general principle of federalism that I subscribe to, (there are rival principles, in fact) there is no "stronger" or "weaker". The spheres of each tier should, however, be clearly spelt out and inscribed in the country's Constitution. If you push me to the wall and demand that I must introduce the term, I will reluctantly say that in my scheme, the federal should be "stronger". Finally, there will of necessity be a Constitutional Court, as distinct from the Supreme Court.

**Clarification and elaboration 2:**

To obtain the 8-tier structure, you only need to split the present South-South geopolitical zone

each. This, I call the principle of triple balancing: between Lugard's North and South; between East and West; and between "majorities" and "minorities".

**Clarification and elaboration 3:** There will be an Executive Presidential Council of 8 members, one representing each zone or region. The Headship Chairship of this council rotates every six months between the members - so that in four years (presidential council term of office), the position would have gone round the 8 members. The members are equal in status except that in the case of a tier, the head or chair has a casting vote. The same arrangement is creatively replicated at the other levels of governance. The philosophy of revenue allocation and the principle of derivation remain but their applications are to be adjusted according to the responsibilities and functions allocated to the various levels. Matters such as state police or even state army will make sense and will cease to be a shouting match only after the basic structure and some other fundamental questions have been settled.

The other "fundamental questions" include People's rights and freedoms, political economy, state and religion, principles of state policy and duties of citizens. My views and arguments on each of these questions have remained the essence of this column since it started early in 1985. I don't need to repeat them here. You may have a glimpse of the social transformations I am talking about, together with the cost of its administration (relative to what we have now), by visiting or re-visiting what we did in Calabar (the present Calabar Municipality and Calabar South and Akpabuyo local council areas) under Bassey Ekpo Bassey's headship between March 1988 and May 1989.

I am passionate about the unity of Nigeria; but not unity at all costs. It must be unity on the basis of the interests of the long-suffering, long-cheated and long-abused masses of Nigeria; not the unity of the cemetery or the unity of predator and state robbers against the masses. However, I am painfully aware that Nigeria can disintegrate. But should that tragic eventuality come to pass, let it not be because of the failure of the *Nigerian Left* to do its duties; let it be in spite of its strivings.

(Concluded)