

7-11-66

Leader in Nigerian Coup Rose, Fought, Disappeared

By ROBERT LEE

KADUNA, Nigeria — one of the enigmas of Nigeria's recent coup d'etat is the 29-year-old army officer who apparently masterminded it.

In one day Maj. Chukwu-ma Nzeogwu rose from oblivion in the middle ranks of the army to regional and even national herodom. Four days later he left Kaduna for Lagos and official oblivion.

The military government says Nzeogwu is being held in "protective custody" in a Lagos prison.

BUT IN KADUNA capital of the North, he is not forgotten. His name still evokes awe among local residents for the daring murder he committed.

Nzeogwu personally shot the Sardauna of Sokoto, Sir Ahmadu Bello, premier of the Northern Region.

"The general reaction was that only God could have done that job," says a Kaduna newsman who saw the Sardauna's body. "It was said that the Sardauna, if attacked, would stretch out his legs and they would shoot fire."

As president of Nigeria's majority party, the Northern People's Congress (NPC), Bello was regarded by many as the most important political boss in Nigeria.

The Federal premier, Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa, who also was assassinated during the coup, was vice-president of the party.

Seven hours after putting a bullet through the Sardauna's head, Nzeogwu, himself wounded, proclaimed martial law in the Northern Region in the name of the Revolutionary Council of Nigeria.

Analysis:
**WHAT THE
NEWS
MEANS**

the list of those to be killed gained the upper hand. General Johnson Aguiyi-Ironsi announced his loyalty to the government.

Later he said the government had entrusted him with the fate of the country, as Supreme Commander of the Revolutionary Council.

NZEOGWU WAS on the spot. He considered the possibility of war against south. Detachments were sent to be ready to blow up the bridges over the Niger at Jebba and over the Benue at Makurdi.

With large military establishments at Kaduna, Zaria and Kano, the North had more soldiers than all the rest of Nigeria.

But the Kano garrison announced support for Ironsi, and Nzeogwu felt isolated.

He began negotiating with Ironsi. One reliable source maintains he gained satisfaction of five of seven points, but what those points were the source declined to say.

Then Nzeogwu nominated for military governor, and Ironsi approved, a man whom he had held at gunpoint on the morning of the coup. "I am with you," Major Hassan had replied.

IN ANNOUNCING Hassan's appointment, Nzeogwu said: "I made it clear a few days ago that it was not my job to rule. My job was to keep order."

That he had done. In Kaduna you couldn't go more than a hundred yards in a car without being stopped.

Consequently people walked to work in the 100-degree heat. No one dared go out without identification papers. There was a 9 p.m. curfew.

When Ironsi asked Nzeogwu to come to Lagos, he hesitated. A friend counseled him to tell Ironsi he could not leave just then but would be able to come in a week or so.

"But it is the Supreme Commander who is asking me to come," he is said to have replied.

AN OFFICER friend with whom he had been trained at Sandhurst in England came

5-foot-6-inch frame in civilian clothes, Nzeogwu told a reporter his "only worry" was that he had not had time to tell his men he was leaving.

It was Wednesday, Jan. 19. "I will be back in time for polo on Saturday," he said.

He didn't make it. Newspapers reported that he circulated freely in Lagos the following day and that he was then hospitalized for further treatment of his wounds.

The press has not been allowed to see him since.

ROBERT LEE is a Minneapolis Tribune staff writer on leave under a William P. Gray foreign correspondent's fellowship.



Nzeogwu

Continued

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Usually soft-spoken, he was now firm, not at all the sociable young bachelor he could be on occasion.

ALTHOUGH a member of the Ibo tribe from Eastern Nigeria, he spoke in perfect Hausa, acquired during years of schooling at St. John's College in Kaduna.

He had been expelled before graduation for organizing a student protest.

In his quarters at the military barracks, Nzeogwu had a library full of books on the world's great revolutions.

"That was all he wanted to talk about," remembers one close friend. "He would never agree to discuss politics."

WHETHER NZEOGWU actually planned the military takeovers effected simultaneously in the Eastern and Western Regions and in the Federal District of Lagos, is not certain.

His role may only have been co-ordinator, or signal caller. He apparently had only four close associates in the North, all officers younger than he.

In the south, things went badly for the Young Turks

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AN OFFICER friend with whom he had been trained at Sandhurst in England came to give him Ironsi's assurances of safe conduct to the Federal capital, and Nzeogwu agreed to go.

In the airplane, his slender,

HEADS AFRICAN FARM

Peace Corps Volunteer Wants Extra Year at 72

By ROBERT LEE

KATSINA, Nigeria — John H. McNeil, formerly of Westport, Conn., and 320 Park Ave., New York, N.Y., left his jeep on a dusty knoll and walked the remaining hundred yards to his stone ranch house despite 95-degree heat.

There he sat down to explain why, at 72, he was signing up for a third year with the Peace Corps as manager of an 800-acre sheep ranch.

"I like the people I work with here," he said between sips of cool, boiled water. "They are kindly, sociable, friendly, gentle people. They are not crude, rough people at all. They have a bearing and poise that many college graduates back home don't have."

PERSONS who know John McNeil use many of the same adjectives to describe him. Local children count on him for a ride home from church in his jeep every Sunday, and their parents come to him with all sorts of problems.

Friends tell how he was sitting down to dinner with Nigerian guests one noon when a farmer came to say his wife was having a baby.

Would McNeil please come quickly to take her to the hospital in his jeep? The man said it was just a mile or so to his house.

The white-haired American left his guests and started out. One mile stretched into 10 over a trail of ruts and logs that barely resembled a road.

WHEN HE reached the woman, she was in severe

pain, and a few minutes later she died.

McNeil continued to the hospital with her body, and it was 6 p.m. before he returned to his own dinner party.

Thirty years of work in radio, television and advertising had not prepared him for such tasks. But neither had he been prepared to manage a sheep farm near the northern border of Nigeria.

Although McNeil was born in Antigo, Wis., reared in Wausau, Wis., and graduated from the University of Wisconsin (economics major, journalism minor), he spent all his "working" life in New York.

About 15 years ago, he retired to a farm near Bishop, Ga., where he raised Angus cattle. But he tired of that after 10 years, sold the cattle and made a start in the real estate business. Then the Peace Corps took his fancy.

IT WAS NOT until he arrived in Lagos, Nigeria's capital, that he found he would be managing the Livestock Investigation and Breeding Centre at Katsina.

"You see, this is what we are trying to produce," he said, picking up a thick sheepskin from the floor beside him. "The native African sheep has only hair, like that rug over there, so we are crossing them with European sheep."

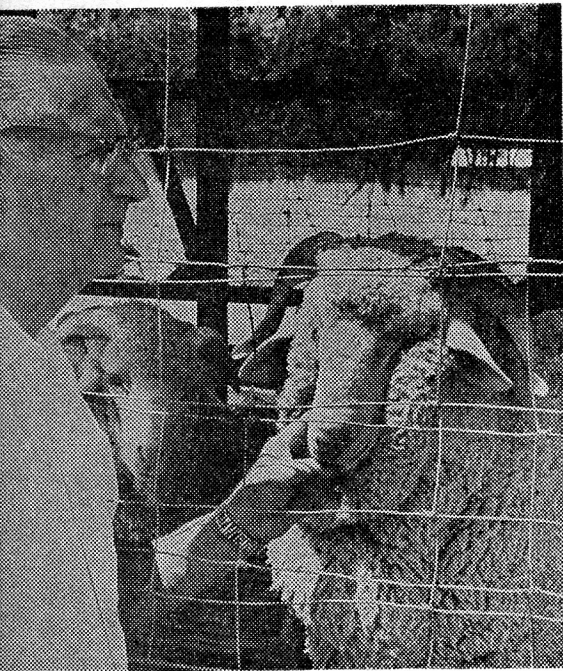
A British geneticist has charge of the cross-breeding program. McNeil looks after the buildings, equipment, feed, employes — in short, everything except the 700 sheep.

What qualifies him for the

job? McNeil finds his Georgia farming experience helps. And then there is his professional degree.

A little white sign at the entrance to the farm reads: "John H. McNeil, P.C.V." (That's for Peace Corps Volunteer.)

ROBERT LEE is a Minneapolis Tribune staff writer on leave under a William P. Gray foreign correspondent's fellowship.



McNEIL WITH A MERINO RAM
A Peace Corps veteran at 72

RANGE IS MANAGED

MPHS TRIBUNE
4-10-66

These Nigerians Roam No More

By ROBERT LEE

RUNKA, Nigeria — About this time every year cattle raisers in extreme northern Nigeria used to start walking their herds south in search of water.

Usually they found it 300 or 400 miles to the south, deep in territory still infested with the deadly tsetse fly.

This year, although the hot season has begun, the Fulani, the traditionally nomadic cattle-raisers of the region, are staying home.

THE REASON is a program of range management that has made food and water available to cattle during the driest months of the year.

Overgrazed pastures have been replanted to the best of native grasses. Nearly a dozen dams have been built to create reservoirs. Wells have been dug, salt licks established and pastures fenced to protect calves.

The projects, spread over some 950 square miles in the Katsina-Sokoto range of the north, all are under supervision of the regional government and are administered by traditional rulers, known collectively as the Native Authority.

The United States, through its Agency for International Development (AID), has spent about \$680,000 on range management projects in northern Nigeria since

This has brought great new wealth to the Fulani, who equate cattle with riches. Although they depend chiefly on the sale of milk for a cash income, they sell a few animals for slaughter each year.

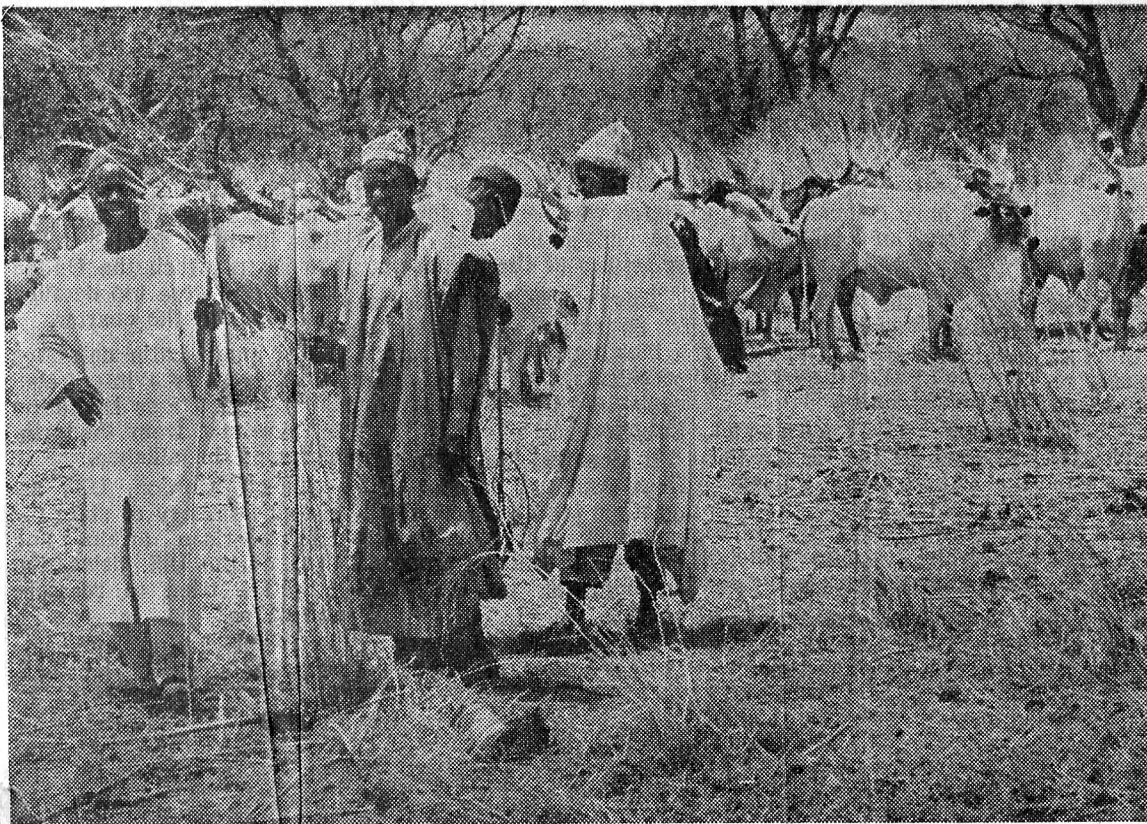
However, AID officials estimate that a farmer with a herd of 30 cattle can sell only two animals a year and still maintain the size of his herd. Cattle normally are sold at 5 years of age, compared with an average marketing age of 18 months in the United States.

Authorities hope the Fulani will be able to increase the number of animals they sell for meat, as a result of the range management projects, thus alleviating Nigeria's meat shortage.

The Fulani at first showed a certain resistance to the range management scheme but since have rallied to the cause and are bearing an increasing share of the cost.

"SOME FARMERS thought they couldn't bow to the rules and fled," says Alhaji Tijjani Mallamashi, the regional government's animal husbandry expert. "Now most of them have come back. But whether they will be allowed into the scheme depends on the wishes of the present members."

The members' chief worry is illegal grazing. This was



FULANI, TRADITIONALLY NOMADIC CATTLE-RAISING PEOPLE, ARE STAYING

Range management is keeping them in northern Nigerian homeland

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The United States, through its Agency for International Development (AID), has spent about \$680,000 on range management projects in northern Nigeria since 1961, mostly for earth-moving equipment. AID also has provided 12 man-years of technical assistance.

THE RESULTS are particularly striking on the Katsina-Sokoto range, which represents about half the total acreage under development. For instance, the population of Runka, headquarters for the eastern half of the range, has grown from just a few families to about 3,000 persons in five years.

Some 700 families living in the eastern half now report owning 23,000 cattle, compared with only 9,000 at the start of the program.

A part of this apparent increase in cattle numbers is due to better reporting procedures. Farmers who wish to pasture their cattle on range lands must register their animals and pay a \$1 head tax and a 15-cent grazing charge. In the past, it was quite simple to evade the head tax.

But rising fertility among the hardy Zebu cattle has also contributed to the growth of herds. Cows that would calve only once in three years outside the grazing scheme now are calving every year, and calf mortality, which once approached 80 per cent during the dry season, is declining.

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The members' chief worry is illegal grazing. This was the principal subject of a meeting last week of Native Authority, regional government and Fulani representatives from the eastern half of the range.

Seated in lawn chairs under a tree near the Runka headquarters, with 300 men, women and children gathered around to watch, the group decided that interlopers would face fines of \$15 to \$75 and prison terms of up to six months.

Tijjani noted when the meeting was over: "One thing we can't measure is the amount of happiness this scheme has brought.

"Imagine what it was like for these people to take their families and walk 300 miles south and 300 miles back and then you can imagine how it seems to them now that they can stay home."

ROBERT LEE is a Minneapolis Tribune staff writer on leave under a William P. Gray foreign correspondent's fellowship.

How Many Nigerians?

By **ROBERT LEE**

LAGOS, Nigeria—A favorite pastime in Nigeria is guessing how many people there are in the country.

A 1961 census showed there were 36 million. Another taken two years later reported 56 million.

If the first figure was conservative, the second is surely exaggerated. Since representation in the federal Parliament under the First Republic was based on population, it was in the interest of each region to inflate its statistics.

The North apparently did the best job of it, assuring itself of political dominance in the federal government. One Briton who was living at Kano during the 1963 census stoutly maintains he was called on 10 times at home and several times more at his place of business.

In the Eastern region, explorers have never

located one village the census takers say exists.

The lack of reliable statistics handicaps those trying to plan for the future of the country.

A British magazine, *West Africa*, recently suggested that Nigeria may face a food shortage by 1980, assuming a 1963 population of 56 million and a growth rate of 2.5 per cent. This gives a 1980 total of 86 million.

However, the projection for that year would be only 61 million, if a current population of 40 million were used as a base.

The obvious solution is another census. But that would cost several million dollars that might otherwise be spent on housing, schools, hospitals and other pressing needs.

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3-27-66

Imps Tribune & Music-Drama

Page

Nigerian Theater in Round (Racetrack) Ignites Nostalgia

By ROBERT LEE

LAGOS, Nigeria — I felt a full 6,000 miles away from Broadway the other night as I bought a 70-cent ticket and climbed into a racetrack grandstand for a preview performance of a Nigerian musical comedy called "Danda."

There seemed to be little resemblance between a wooden platform erected down there where the horses run every Sunday in Lagos and, say, the stage of the Shubert.

The 6-piece orchestra had thumped and jangled its way from overture to finale, singers and dancers had exhausted themselves in the 90-degree heat. And Danda had successfully resisted all efforts to make him obey the social rules of Iboland (that area of Nigeria occupied by the Ibo people).

Then I felt not all that far away from the American theater.

"Danda" could conceivably open on Broadway billed as "the great new musical hit, featuring the most spectacular choreography since 'West Side Story,' costumes to rival 'My Fair Lady' and tunes

that throb with the vitality of 'The Music Man.'"

ALL THAT matters little to Nigerians. What counts is how "Danda" fares at the Festival of Negro Arts that will open Friday in Dakar, Senegal. The play will be one of two Nigerian entries in the theatrical division.

It should fare well, not only for the spectacle of its dance numbers but also for its trenchant wit.

One scene that drew convulsive laughter in Lagos pokes fun at Christian efforts to win converts.

The village catechist, backed up by a hymn-singing choir and a raving old woman, asks Danda if he is ready to share in the body of the Lord.

"Whenever there is something to share, count me in," replies Danda, an incurable playboy.

THE CATECHIST points out that Danda will need a Christian name if he is to be baptized. The choir suggests Noah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, etc., but Danda decides to leave the choice to the catechist, who immediately drops to his knees and beseeches divine guidance.

"Robinson," the catechist declares.

"That's fine," says Danda casually, "but will my mother be able to say it?"

Danda backs out of baptism and into all sorts of troubles with his father and the other village elders. He likes to drink palm wine and dance and everyone loves him for it.

His father buys him a wife, but Danda soon tires of her and proposes to take her back home and collect the bride price.

"TROUBLES that started with Danda have broken my head," laments his father.

Then suddenly Danda's wife presents him with a baby. He takes a quick look and jumps for joy. "He's got my hair," he shouts, "he's got my eyes, he's got my nose. Why it's another Danda!"

Nigerian audiences were hoping there would be lots more "Dandas" to cross their stages in years to come.

ROBERT LEE is a Minneapolis Tribune staff writer on leave under a William P. Gray foreign correspondent's fellowship.

3-30-66

Foreign Oilmen, Nigerian Regime Find Rapport

By ROBERT LEE

LAGOS, Nigeria — Foreign oilmen are finding it easy to work with Nigeria's new military government.

They say they can obtain opinions and decisions from the ministries more quickly now that the ministers have all been dismissed and administration is in the hands of permanent secretaries, the top ranking civil servants.

THEY SEE no reason to believe the new government will alter the basic prescription of co-operation with private enterprise that has kept foreign investment flowing into Nigeria. Seven oil companies alone have plowed more than \$500 million into the country since 1958.

Another encouraging sign as far as all businessmen are concerned is evidence of improved coordination among the ministries.

"Obviously the permanent secretaries are talking with each other," says one foreigner whose work gives him close day-to-day contact with the government. "For a time (under the government that was forced out of office Jan. 15 by the army) I don't think the finance minister talked with the minister of development."

THE OIL companies have been particularly eager to know if the new regime would follow the examples of oil-rich nations in the Middle East and attempt to squeeze higher rents, royalties and taxes from foreign operators. The companies now pay half their profits less rents and royalties in taxes to the Nigerian government — a rate they regard as reasonable but near the limit for profitable exploitation.

Nigeria's oil fields are rich, and production may some day hit 800,000 or 1 million barrels a day, putting the country alongside Canada as an oil producer, the oilmen estimate. But they point out that development of fields either offshore or in the swampy delta region of the Niger River

tation costs to major markets are high.

NIGERIA'S chief petroleum engineer, M. O. Feyide, for whom foreign oil executives have the highest regard, says he recognizes all these facts.

"In Kuwait, the chances of your finding oil are much greater than those of not finding it," he says. "We can't quite say that here yet. If we imposed more conditions (on the oil companies), we wouldn't attract anyone."

As it is, Nigeria has attracted seven companies, four of them American. All seven have found oil, but only two, Shell-BP and Nigerian Gulf, are producing.

Shell-BP, a joint British-Dutch venture, currently is collecting about 330,000 barrels a day at its Bonny terminal through a 140-mile pipeline that extends north to Port Harcourt and then northwest to the Warri region.

GULF'S WELLS are all offshore straight west of Warri in about 35 feet of water. Production is limited to about 50,000 barrels a day by storage space, which is 250,000-barrel tanker anchored farther offshore. The company plans to begin construction of storage tanks on shore this year.

Both Tennessee Nigeria, a subsidiary of Tennessee Gas Transmission Co., and Saffrap, a French group, have plans to begin producing late this year.

The other two American companies in the field, American Overseas Petroleum Ltd (Caltex) and Mobil Exploration Nigeria, Inc., have drilling licenses.

Oil became Nigeria's largest export item in 1965 bringing total receipts of \$190 million compared with \$90 million just a year earlier.

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Nkrumah Stirs Fear, Disdain

By ROBERT LEE

LAGOS, Nigeria — The boast of Kwame Nkrumah, former president of Ghana, that he will return to "save" his people from their new military rulers has provoked two sorts of reaction in Nigeria, where a military government is itself only two months old.



Nkrumah

One school holds that Nkrumah's dreams of regaining the Ghanaian presidency are sheer fantasy.

That they are not sufficiently within the realm of possibility to warrant worry.

A **SECOND** school believes that Nkrumah's plans to raise an army in Guinea and lead it through the Ivory Coast into Ghana represent a serious threat to world peace.

It is an assumption of both viewpoints that the military government that seized power in Ghana February 24, while Nkrumah was on his way to Peking, Communist China, is a popular one.

His appeals for support from his former followers in Ghana are falling largely or deaf ears.

According to those Nigerians of the "fantasy" view, Nkrumah is a "mental" who simply is unable to rec-

oncile his sudden misfortune with his own estimate of his importance.

NIGERIANS who hold this opinion doubt that Guinea could put together an army of 50,000 men, as President Sekou Toure has said it will to "liberate" Ghana.

And even if it could, President Houphouet Boigny of the Ivory Coast would never let the "liberation force" cross his borders. Thus, the argument runs, Nkrumah can shout all he likes but will never achieve his objective.

The Nigerian press has taken a more serious view of the situation. "Threat of a Global War Looms," screamed a front-page headline in the Lagos Sunday Times.

The story reported the arrival of a "mysterious Soviet mission" in Conakry, Guinea, and an "American build-up" in Accra.

"Clearly, therefore, the over-riding issue that may escalate the Ghanaian situation was seen in Accra as the ideological conflict—the Cold War," the story concluded.

LATER IN the week the Nigerian president, Gen. J.T.

U. Aguiyi-Ironsi, made a statement in which he seemed to subscribe simultaneously to the "fantasy" and "danger" schools of thought.

He said he was "concerned about certain pronouncements attributed to some African leaders" and about "reported consultation between them with a view to mounting a military intervention in a sister country" — as if Nkrumah might really not have said anything at all.

"Should this report be true," the general continued, "a serious threat which no true African can ignore would have been created."

"To contemplate such action would not only entail repudiation of the principles of the Charter of the OAU (Organization of African States), but will amount to the abandonment of the overall interests of Africa."

THE OFFICIAL Nigerian newspaper, the Morning Post, noted that 2½ million Nigerians live in Ghana, constituting more than a third of that country's population.

"This means that Nigeria

must be alert to protect her nationals, who might be caught in this web now being woven by Nkrumah and his associates," the paper said.

Revelations of Nkrumah's personal wealth and that of his ministers have caused Nigerians to identify still further with the new Ghanaian regime.

The Nigerian government has itself launched an all-out campaign against the corruption that plagued the First Nigerian Republic, and disclosures of shortages or announcements of embezzlement arrests are almost daily occurrences.

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Nigeria Moves Toward Sense of National Unity

3-25-66

By ROBERT LEE
Special to the Minneapolis Tribune

LAGOS, Nigeria — Many Nigerians believe their country is on its way to becoming a single nation in fact as well as in theory for more than five years. They take the recent symbolic of this development — two appointments announced recently by the country's two-month-old military government.

**Analysis:
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A traditional leader in the Northern Region, the Emir of Kano, was appointed chancellor of the University of Nigeria, located at Nsukka in the Eastern Region, while a southerner, the Oba of Benin, was named to head Ahmadu Bello University at Kaduna in the North.

"This would never have been possible before," notes a thoughtful Nigerian. "It goes a long way to convince one that Nigeria is actually shaping into one country."

BEFORE the army seized control in January, and ever since the nation gained independence in October 1960, Nigeria had been as much four states as one.

It was divided into four semiautonomous regions — the North, the West, the Midwest and the East—each with its own Parliament, its own ministries, its own representatives in London, England, its own variety of corruption.

One variety was election rigging, which was so blatant in the Western region last October that it touched off widespread lawlessness and violence. Cars were being wrecked and persons burned alive almost daily just a few miles outside the federal territory of Lagos right up until Jan. 15, the day of the coup.

THE INABILITY of the federal government to control this regional disturbance revealed its weakness. Three days after the army takeover, all was again peaceful in the Western Region.

The prestige of the government headed by the late Prime Minister Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa also was damaged by the general belief it favored the Northern Region.

His was a coalition government, but the prime minister was a member of the Northern People's Congress, which, like the rest of the country's major political parties, has strong regional ties.

The army was one of the few elements of Nigerian society whose loyalties clearly lay with the nation. It lost no time in abolishing re-

gional institutions after bringing to an abrupt end the First Republic and establishing a military government.

All ministers, regional and federal, lost their jobs. The Parliaments were disbanded. Political parties were dissolved, but their activities were suspended. The regional "agents-general" in London found themselves without governments to represent.

THE MAN who emerged as the head of the military government, Gen. J. T. U. Aguiyi-Ironsi, thinks of himself first as a Nigerian, not as an Ibo, the ethnic group to which he belongs. He has served every region and speaks, besides Ibo, the two other most important Nigerian languages, Hausa and Yoruba plus English.

Likewise, the men he has appointed military governors of the four regions, now called provinces, have made it clear they are not just replacements for the deposed regional governors.

THE GOVERNOR of the North was asked whether he was continuing a policy of the former regional government, that employers could hire only Northerners. Northerners were available. The policy was known as "northernization."

"I don't know anything like northernization," the governor replied. "If you want a job in the North, come let me give you one."

IRONSI IS pursuing his fight against corruption on a province at a time. He began with the troubled West and has recently moved to the East, where the former governor and a number of his ministers have been imprisoned on charges of corruption.

The Nigerians have inherited from the British a sense of judicial propriety, rare in Africa, that prevents them from imprisoning for political reasons. But Ironsi has been able to round up most of his potential enemies on criminal charges, since there are few politicians of the former

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