



John Igbino

Britain's Killing Fields

Southern Nigeria 1900 - 1930

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Introduction

In 1851 Britain occupied Lagos, and in 1861 it declared the government of the Settlement of Lagos and installed H. S. Freeman as its Governor. Between 1861 and 1893, it marched inland, and by 1894 it had concluded Protectorate agreements with the Obas and Chiefs of Yoruba City States¹ to the west of the confluence of the rivers Benue and Niger. In 1897 it advanced on the southwest and attacked and destroyed the Kingdom of Benin.²

Although Britain subsequently occupied and consolidated its hold on the above territories, it could not, by the close of the nineteenth century, impose the status of a Colony and Protectorate on the entire landmass that became Southern Nigeria. The reasons for that state of affairs were because it had not occupied the eastern and western Niger deltas, the eastern hinterlands, and the land and people on the eastern, western, and south-western banks of the River Niger. Therefore, with the exception of Asaba, which had been the headquarters of the Royal Niger Company (RNC) until 1900 when its Royal Charter was revoked, eastern and western Niger deltas, the eastern hinterlands, and the people on the eastern, western, and south-western banks of the River Niger were, by 1900, independent states and were largely unknown to Britain. Thus, the Aro Expedition, 1901–1902 (chapter 1); Ogoni Expeditions, 1901–1913 (chapter 2); Asaba Hinterland Operations, 1902–1904 (chapter 3); Ibibio Expeditions, 1903–1919 (chapter 8); Kwale Expeditions, 1903–1914 (chapter 10); Onitsha Hinterland Expeditions and Patrols, 1903–1918 (chapter 11); and Munshin Expeditions and Punitive Patrols, 1903–1912 (chapter 12), were some of the opening campaigns of more than three decades of Britain's military attacks, expeditions, patrols, and political propagandas³ whose principal objectives were the occupation of the above hinterlands, deltas of the Niger, and the subjection of the people who knew and called those places their homeland.

Thus, the principal aim of this book is to compute and document the number of people who were killed and the associated political circumstances as Britain deployed different military methodologies to impose and consolidate its rule over the people and land that became Southern Nigeria. The book is the first volume of a projected two volumes covering Southern and Northern Nigeria. This volume covers Southern Nigeria during the period 1900–1930. Therefore, the book is a pioneer because it is the first attempt to explore some of the, hitherto, unexplored aspects of the history of Britain's occupation of Southern Nigeria. It is also the first to raise questions about the consequences of Britain's governance in Southern Nigeria and to situate those questions within the current renditions of British history and the

history of the British Empire because the experiences of the Indigenous people of Southern Nigeria were diametrically different from those of the people of Northern Nigeria, particularly under the government of Brigadier General Sir Frederick Lugard before and after Amalgamation in 1914.⁴ In other words, the book argued that Britain was biased against the Indigenous people of Southern Nigeria, whom it saw as troublemakers, because they put up determined resistance to the imposition of its rule, and therefore it was more violent towards them and killed and maimed more of them compared to the Indigenous people of Northern Nigeria, whom it saw as a superior race to the people of Southern Nigeria.

Additionally, some of those unexplored aspects of the history of Britain's occupation and governance in Southern Nigeria with which the book is concerned includes the methods Britain used to impose and sustain its rule, the impacts of those methods, and some of the consequences of British rule for the Indigenous people of Southern Nigeria. And in its explorations, the book probed, posed, and directed attention to the following questions: How many Indigenous people of Southern Nigeria were killed by the British Army between 1900 and 1930, as Britain used its army, the Royal West African Frontier Force (WAFF) and troops of the West African Service Brigade (WASB) to impose its rule? What were the prevailing political circumstances when they were killed? Under what military circumstances were they killed? Was there a state of war between the Indigenous people of Southern Nigeria and Britain when they were killed? What were the names of the people who were killed? How old were they when they died? Were there women, children, the old, and the infirm among the dead? Where were they buried? And who buried them there?

The foregoing questions and their answers were central to our explorations, and we will use two examples from 1902 to show their centrality. First example: on the 30th of January 1902, Captain G. G. Hewitt and his troops of the Aro Field Force attacked the town of Inokun on the left bank of the Cross River (chapter 1). When the attacks came to an end, sixty people were confirmed killed, and between 100 and 120 people were, according to Captain Hewitt, wounded. When Captain Hewitt reported to Colonel Montanaro, his Commanding Officer, he stated that he verified the number of people he killed during his attacks on Inokun. Therefore, Captain Hewitt was reporting to his Commanding Officer that he had the people who died laid out in rows and counted and verified that he and his troops did, indeed, kill sixty people in January 1902. Additionally, he told Colonel Montanaro that, at the conclusion of his attacks, he completely subjugated the surviving inhabitants of Inokun.

Second example: on the 22nd of November 1905, Major Hugh Trenchard, DSO, Royal Scots Fusiliers, left Bende at the head of 525 Rank and File armed with five Maxim Guns, five Squadrons of Maxim Gunners, and two subdivisions of Royal Artillery Gunners armed with two 2.95-inch Shrapnel Guns. He was on a mission to bring under British control the unknown territories, estimated at 1,100 square miles (1,770 square kilometres), that were thought to lie southwards of latitude 6':30" up to the countries bounded on the south by the South-Owerri-Afikpo Road, on the east on a line drawn between Ezza country and Afikpo, on the west by Oka-Oguta Road, and on the north by latitude 6':30" (chapter 11). On the 15th of April 1906, Major Trenchard completed his mission and reported to Sir Frederick Lugard and his Lordship the Earl of Elgin, MP, Secretary of State for the Colonies, that he had brought the above territories under Britain's control; but he did not tell Sir Lugard and the Earl that he killed 1,409 Igbo people and wounded an unknown number of them.

Therefore, to restate the above questions in the light of the foregoing examples, who were the 60 people and the 1,409 people killed by Captain Hewitt and Major Trenchard? What were the prevailing political circumstances when they were killed? Under what military circumstances were they killed? Was there a state of war between them and Britain? What were the names of the people who were killed? How old were they when they were killed? What were their occupations? Were there women, children, the old, and the infirm among the dead? Where were they buried? And who buried them there? Above all, to what extent have these questions been addressed within the subsisting versions of the history of Britain's occupation of Southern Nigeria? And to what extent could they be address within the ongoing debates surrounding the renditions of British history and the history of the British Empire?

In order to address the above questions and the issues they have raised, the book identified and analysed (see appendix 1 for sources and appendix 2 for data sets), first, the prevailing political motives and circumstances underlying the political opposition of the Indigenous people of Southern Nigeria to the imposition and consolidation of colonialism or British rule—hereafter British rule and colonialism will be used interchangeably, but we will mostly use British rule. And there are several reasons why we have preferred to use British rule instead of colonialism. One of the reasons was that much of the current arguments, discussions, discourses, analyses, and protests about colonialism have been focused on individual colonialist and hence the consequences of individual acts for surviving Africans. While the actions and decisions of individual colonialists like Cecil Rhodes were violent, and many Africans

suffered and died as a result (see chapters 21 and 22), current arguments, discussions, discourses, analyses, and protests have not given attention to Africans who did not survive or to Africans who died resisting the implementation of the principles and practices of British rule by individual colonialists. Put differently, how many of the Indigenous people of Southern Nigeria, for example, died at the hands of a certain Captain Frederick Lugard (later Brigadier General Sir Frederick Lugard)? Above all, the current analyses and protests have not paid attention to the role of the English Crown as personified, for example, by Edward VII, who wrote to congratulate Brigadier General Sir Frederick Lugard on the success of Aro Expedition, during which 3,808 Aro-Igbo people were killed,⁵ and successive British Governments, without whose policies and approval and readiness to deploy the Imperial Army, colonialists like Cecil Rhodes; Brigadier General Sir Frederick Lugard; A. G. Boyle; Sir Ralph Moor; Sir Walter Egerton; Sir Hugh Clifford; Winston Churchill, MP; the Earl of Crew, MP; the Earl of Elgin, MP; and Andrew Bonar-Law, MP, to name a few, would have been unable to function. In other words, current analyses and protests are too narrowly focused on individual colonialists because they have largely left the Crown and the government out of the arguments. Accordingly, the book has attempted to shift arguments, discussions, discourses, analyses, and protests to new grounds.

Additionally, current discourses and analyses of colonialism have not paid attention to some of the subsisting consequences of the subject of their analyses, particularly the compelling evidence that Britain incepted, nurtured, condoned, and institutionalised official corruption in Southern Nigeria through its Warrant Chieftaincy policy, its appointed native administrators (see for example chapters 8 and 17), the administrative institutions it established (see for example chapters 13 and 14), and its readiness to use the British Army to maintain and keep corrupt administrators and institutions in place. Thus, our preference for British rule instead of colonialism enabled the Crown, the British Government, Colonial Office, colonial officials, and British Army Officers to be made responsible and liable for the deaths exemplified above. Accordingly, one of the book's principal arguments was that the descendants of the people who were killed by British troops have the right, in international law, to sue the Crown and Britain (see for example chapters 1 and 13) for damages, because since a state of war did not exist between Britain and the Indigenous people of Southern Nigeria, Britain's occupation of Southern Nigeria was extraterritorial; and extraterritorialism was illegal in the 20th century as it is today in the twenty-first century. It was land piracy, and like its counterparts in the air and on the sea, land piracy was illegal in international law.

Second, the book identified and discussed the political issues, which Indigenous political opposition raised for the British Government, and identified and discussed the British Government's responses to prevailing political circumstances and opposition together with the types of military operations that Britain constituted and directed at addressing the issues raised by Indigenous political opposition.⁶ In these discussions, the book directed attention to Britain's use of physiological and psychological violence to destroy the people's humanity by using its troops to scorch the earth, raze towns and villages, carry out mass removal and deportation of entire communities, and destroy food reserves, crops, cattle, and other worldly goods and chattels.

Third, the book identified the names of the dates and the places the prevailing political and military circumstances occurred⁷ and the people who were involved in the circumstances, including the names, rank, and the Regiments of the British Army from which the Officers and Non-Commissioned Officers who commanded troops during the circumstances came. And where possible, the book identified and named the Indigenous political opposition leaders and those of the civil population who were killed and wounded alongside their leaders during military operations. Additionally, where possible, the book identified the places of burial of the people who were killed during the period.⁸

Thus, in chapter 1, the book described the prevailing political and military circumstances prior to the Aro Expedition. The chapter estimated that 3,808 people were killed by Aro Field Force under the command of Colonel Arthur F. Montanaro. The chapter argued that because Britain did not accord any value to the lives of natives, it disregarded native casualties and instead accepted Colonel Montanaro's arguments that the natives were engaged in illegal resistance, that native resistance constituted impediments to His Majesty's force, and that while he had a duty to crush their resistance to His Majesty's Government, he was not duty-bound to account for their death. The chapter went on to discuss the political circumstances in Agbedi in the Lower Niger and the subsequent military campaigns under the joint command of Major Hedson, Indian Staff Corps, and Lieutenant Commander W. H. D'Oyly, RN. The chapter reported that Major Hedson and Lieutenant Commander D'Oyly killed forty people during their campaigns in the Lower Niger. Lieutenant Commander D'Oyly was criticised for his lack of duty of care because, although he had medical facilities at his disposal, he refused to provide medical care to unarmed civilians who were wounded by his guns and instead left them to bleed to death. The chapter argued that Britain's occupation of Southern Nigeria was illegal in international law because Protectorate treaties and agreements between Britain and

the subsisting sovereign states of Southern Nigeria between 1900 and 1930 did not grant Britain the right to claim jurisdiction over the territories of the co-signatories to the treaties and agreements. Thus, it was argued that military expeditions, patrols, and escorts were not equivalent to a declaration of war or the existence of a state of war between Britain and natives, and therefore Britain could not justify its occupation of their territory on the grounds of the Rights and Privileges of Conquest. The chapter argued that the descendants of the more than 3,800 people who were killed have the right to sue the Crown, the British Government, and the estates of British Army Officers and colonial officials under international law.

The next chapter focused attention on Ogoniland and discussed the objectives of the military operations in Oron under the command of Captain Venour. Questions were raised about Sir Ralph Moor's attitude to Ogoni people. And it was argued that the force he deployed was in excess of the gravity of the prevailing political circumstances, that he overreached himself because, in 1901, when he authorised military operations against the people of Oron, they were an independent nation. The chapter progressed to discuss the disputes on Ikwe territory over the right to navigate and trade on Awayong River and argued that the subsequent military campaigns against the people of Ikwe were instigated by Sir Moor in order to wrest control over navigation and trade on the river from the people of Ikwe and hand them, exclusively, to domiciled European agents of European firms who had been complaining to him about barriers to trade because of the levies the Ikwes had imposed on trade traffic on the river. The chapter examined the methodologies of some Political Officers and concluded that while they had unshakeable belief in the mission to establish British rule in Southern Nigeria, they preferred dialogues with natives to the use of force. The chapter criticised Sir Ralph Moor, Major Cockburn, and Captain Grayson for their careless disregard for record-keeping that has made it almost impossible to account for the number of people who were killed in Ogoniland between 1900 and 1930. The chapter reported that 1,673 people were killed.

Chapter 3 recounted the political and nationalistic stances of Ekumeku (Silent One) Society in Asaba Hinterland and Agbor areas of Benin City district and the military operations that were conducted against the society between 1902 and 1904 under the commands of Major Harry Claude Moorhouse, DSO, Royal Field Artillery, and Captain Ian G. Hogg, 4th Hussars. The chapter briefly described the history of Ekumeku Society and its opposition to Britain and argued that British rule was inherently overbearing, that it did not listen to reasoned arguments on the part of the Indigenous people of Asaba Hinterland because it considered listening to the perspectives of natives a sign of weakness, which it regarded as detrimental to

imperial prestige. The chapter argued that Britain's inability or refusal to listen and understand the arguments of the people were in themselves a fundamental weakness because it meant that it resorted to force, violence, death, and destruction, even for minor disagreements, when listening and dialogues could have done. The chapter argued that Britain invariably resorted to violent force because it had no reasoned arguments that were inherently persuasive and intellectually powerful enough to convince the people whom it regarded as intellectually inferior to accept its right to rule over them. The chapter employed Captain Milne-Home's method to determine that British troops killed 1,503 people during the campaigns in Asaba Hinterland between December 1902 and February 1904.

Chapter 4 opened with criticisms of Sir Lugard's government with regard to the issues that led to the rebellion in Ogwashi-Oku in October 1909. The chapter argued that Sir Lugard's indifference and dismissal of the rebellion as a tribal war allowed the uprising to spread beyond Ogwashi-Oku and subsequently resulted in deaths and injuries that could have been avoided. The chapter briefly reviewed the underlying politics and argument that led to the rebellion and found that they were only sufficiently explored after 1,542 people had been killed and after a large-scale destruction of properties, farms, and looting of food storage by British troops subsequently led to famine, hunger, and starvation, during which an unknown number of people starved to death. The chapter criticised Britain for its failure to collect and keep statistics on the number of people who died as a result of the famine and starvation that followed the operations.

Similarly, chapter 5 began with a critique of Sir Ralph Moor's misleading titling of his correspondence and despatch to the right honourable Secretary of State for the Colonies. The chapter argued that Sir Moor's title was misleading because he told his readers that Afikpo was fallow and that it was being discovered and settled by Britain for the first time in history. The chapter went on to review the political arguments, which led to confrontations and hostilities between the people of Afikpo and Britain. The chapter then discussed and analysed the military assaults on Afikpo under the command of Major W. G. Heneker, DSO, of the Canadian Militia and Connaught Rangers. Additionally, the chapter reviewed the rivalries between the Afikpo towns of Abini and Akunakuna and between Afikpo and Itigidi and argued that Britain actively stoked the rivalries between the Igbo population in those districts and towns and that Britain was biased against Abini and Afikpo because Akunakuna and Itigidi were imperial possessions, whereas Abini and Afikpo refused to place themselves under imperial protection. The chapter charted Britain's subsequent military attacks

on Abini and Afikpo, which killed 519 people in Abini, 110 people in Afikpo, and 110 people in Ineagada and Akaravo.

Chapter 6 opened with a critique of the deficiencies of some of the original Correspondences and Despatches within Colonial Office Document series CO520 (Southern Nigeria) and CO583 (Nigeria) because of their failure to record and preserve information on the political philosophies of individual leaders of the Indigenous people of Southern Nigeria during the period. The omission of Indigenous political leadership, the chapter argued, was deliberate, and that it was rooted upon one of Europe's theories of Africa and Africanness, which was that Africans were unable to manage themselves; that they were docile, both intellectually and physically; and that because of these deficiencies, a few Europeans were able to occupy, dominate, and administer the entire British West Africa. The chapter then discussed Chief Akparanga, a Kwa nationalist and opponent of British rule, and Britain's military operations against him and his supporters under the command of Captain Ian Hogg, 4th Hussars. The District Officer was criticised for accusing Chief Akparanga and his people of cannibalism without proof because the accusation and similar representations of the Indigenous people of Southern Nigeria transformed them into subhuman species and enabled the use of violent force against them to become a scriptural duty of Britain. The chapter argued that such representations enabled the claims that Black people are inherently violent to be perpetuated. The chapter then raised the issue that there is no evidence that Africans have ever sailed or flew from their Continent with express objectives to commit violence against Europe and its people; instead the chapter argued that throughout the history of the current era, the only evidence available showed European violence against Africa and its people.⁹ The chapter reported that British troops killed 1,425 Kwa people in 1902.

Chapter 7 discussed the case of an Igarra nationalist called Adukukaiku and his opposition to British rule as well as his opposition to the Attah of Idah, whom he saw as an illegitimate Attah, a collaborator, and British puppet who was put on the throne of Idah by the British Government in contravention of the law of succession to Idah Kingship. The chapter discussed the military expedition authorised by Leslie Probyn, Acting High Commissioner of the Protectorate of Southern Nigeria, against Adukukaiku and his supporters, under the command of Major Heneker, DSO, Canadian Militia, and Connaught Rangers. Attention was drawn to Major Heneker's and the Political Officer's attitudes towards Igarra people, and they were criticised for their disregard for the lives of Igarra people because of their failure to collect casualty statistics, even when the opportunities to do so presented themselves. Additionally, attention was drawn to some of the methods Britain implemented in

order to impose its rule and criticise Britain and its field Officers for incessant use of physiological and psychological violence. Thus, the chapter argued that the human costs of British rule in Southern Nigeria embraced wider physiological and psychological consequences, which extended beyond physical killing and wounding and destruction of properties. The chapter concluded by arguing that Britain pre-empted the future and deliberately created documentary vacuums within the annals of its occupation of Southern Nigeria in order to prevent uncomfortable issues being raised about its rule by future generations. Major Heneker and his troops killed nine-two Igarra people.

In chapter 8, the book sets out some of the political circumstances that obtained on Ibibioland and recounted British military expeditions, patrols, and numerous punitive military campaigns against the Ibibios and the casualties that were inflicted on them between 1903 and 1919. The chapter criticised some of the methods of propagandas employed by Political Officers to secure authorisation for punitive military operations and hence justify the consequent levels of violence. The chapter reiterated the book's criticisms of the Political Officers because of their use of cannibalism to dehumanise the Ibibios and hence intensified the levels of violence that resulted in the death of 4,813 Ibibio people between 1903 and 1919. The chapter argued that claims of cannibalism were used to perpetuate and reinforce the ideologies that underpinned Britain's definition of the hierarchy of humanity with Britons at the apex, while the Indigenous people of Southern Nigeria were below the foot of the hierarchy, and that propaganda using cannibalism continuously pinned the Indigenous people of Southern Nigeria under the foot of the hierarchy. Sir Walter Egerton's representation of the entire Ibibio people as simpletons, debased, and aboriginal was criticised. And in response to Sir Egerton, the chapter argued that there was nothing simplistic, debased, and inferior in being aboriginal; that it meant that the land over which Ibibio people were resisting Britain's control was not empty and fallow; that there were original inhabitants on the land when Britain arrived; that Sir Egerton and the British Government he represented were, according to the perspectives of Ibibio people, invaders; and that the Ibibios subdued and made the land habitable and established trading in produce on the Cross River whose control Britain was trying to wrest from them and hand over to domiciled agents of firms in Europe.

In November 1903, R. D. Napier Raikes, acting District Commissioner of Ifon, and his escort were ambushed by the inhabitants of the village of Ndoto on the outskirts of Uromi in Ishanland. During the ambush, four British soldiers were killed and three were wounded. Chapter 9 examined the origins of the political circumstances

surrounding the ambush and argued that the ambush was not an attack of opportunity on an unsuspecting British Officer of the Crown by violent and lawless people as Britain claimed. Instead the chapter contended that the origins of the ambush lay in the history of the people's opposition to Momodu, King of Agbede, and that history was in turn linked to the destruction of Benin Kingdom in 1897 and the subsequent detachment of Ndoto and neighbouring towns and villages from Uromi by the District Officer of Benin City and ceded to Momodu as rewards for his loyalty and assistance during Britain's attacks on the people of Ishan and subsequent banishment of his rival, the Enogie of Uromi, and the destruction and occupation of Uromi. The chapter discussed the punitive military assaults on Ndoto and neighbouring districts under the command of Captain Hogg, 4th Hussars. Additionally, the chapter described the punitive expedition to Irua under the command of Captain Vassall of the Southern Nigeria Regiment during which he and his troops killed 287 people.

Chapter 10 opened with the arguments that Britain's attacks on Kwale people were not because the Kwales were engaged in cannibalism and human sacrifice or that they were instigated to rebel against Britain by the Germans, as J. Davidson, District Officer of Sapele; F. S. James, Provincial Commissioner of Central Province; and subsequently, Sir Frederick Lugard have claimed. Instead the chapter argued that Britain's attacks on Kwale people were motivated by economic issues surrounding control over the flow of trade in palm oil and palm kernel from the hinterland to the coast. The chapter discussed how the underlying trade disputes between Resident English traders and Resident agents of British and European firms and Kwale traders and middlemen led to confrontations between Britain and Kwale people during which two major punitive military expeditions—first, under the command of Captain Hogg, 4th Hussars, and second, under the command of Captain Wilson, Royal Dublin Fusiliers—were conducted against Kwale people, leading to the death of 269 people. The chapter reviewed and criticised two of Sir Lugard's central policies in Southern Nigeria, namely (a) indirect guilt,¹⁰ under which Chiefs were tried and hanged not because they acted in opposition to Britain but because they were deemed to be weak Chiefs because they failed to control the political demands of their people and hence prevent them from resisting British rule, and (b) Collective Punishment Ordinance (CPO)¹¹ under whose provisions entire population of towns and villages were punished by fines and destruction of homes, farms, crops, and food reserves for the political activism of an individual or groups of individuals.

The focus of chapter 11 was the political circumstances in Onitsha Hinterland and the military expeditions that were directed at those circumstances under the commands

of Major H. C. Moorhouse, DSO, Royal Field Artillery (1904–1905); Major Hugh Trenchard, DSO, Royal Scots Fusiliers (1905); Lieutenant Colonel H. C. Moorhouse (1906); Major Hugh Trenchard (1907–1908); Lieutenant Colonel Hugh Trenchard (1908–1909); Major George Tagore Mair, DSO, Royal Field Artillery (1910); and Captain B. E. W. Taylor, South Staffordshire Regiment (1910–1911). The chapter discussed the changing attitude in Britain during the opening decades of the 20th century and argued that the changing attitudes led to criticisms of Britain's incessant military patrols and expeditions, the violence and destruction they entailed, and the number of natives who were killed. The chapter computed the casualties inflicted on the Indigenous people of Onitsha Hinterland and found that between 1904 and 1914, 7,440 people were killed between 1904 and 1911. The chapter argued that in the wake of criticisms, Political Officers increasingly relied on the politics of cannibalism and human sacrifice to dehumanise the people in order to justify and made the violence and destruction of the Indigenous people of Southern Nigeria acceptable to the people of Britain. Additionally, some of the political issues involved in the delimitation of the boundary between Northern and Southern Nigeria were reviewed, and Sir Lugard was criticised for amalgamating two disparate entities, namely, the Northern and Southern Provinces, to form Nigeria.¹² The chapter argued that the people's resistance to the imposition of British rule posed problems for Britain because they raised imponderable issues that undermined Britain's conception of itself as a great power, on the one hand, and its conception of the Indigenous people of Southern Nigeria as inferior people, on the other hand. The chapter argued that those state of affairs were because the people's resistance were underpinned by political thoughts, namely, political freedom and self-determination, both of which Britain thought were its exclusive preserve. The chapter argued that the above military expeditions and resultant deaths occurred because Britain had no philosophical replies to the political and philosophical challenges posed by resistance to the imposition of its regime.

Chapter 12 began with a review of Sir Lugard's and the Earl of Crewe's rejection of the Southern Munshi's offer to voluntarily and unconditionally surrender to Sir Walter Egerton's government between 1908 and 1909 during the negotiations leading to the demarcation of the frontiers between Northern and Southern Nigeria.¹³ The chapter described how, in the wake of the rejection of their offer to surrender unconditionally, Southern Munshi people subsequently reopened their resistance to the British Government. The chapter reviewed some of the possible reasons underlying the Munshi's unconditional surrender and argued that Sir Lugard and the Earl of Crewe preferred to militarily conquer Southern Munshis in order to

justify the occupation of their territories under the Rights and Privileges of Conquest. The chapter discussed Britain's despatch of punitive expeditions and patrols against Southern Munshi population between 1912 and 1914 under the commands of Major George Tagore Mair, Royal Field Artillery;¹⁴ Major J. N. Sheffield, 3rd Battalion Essex Regiment;¹⁵ and Captain J. Fane, Gloucester Regiment.¹⁶ The chapter criticised Britain's lack of foresight and its unstinting belief in Sir Lugard's judgements when it failed to heed the warnings issued by Sir Walter Egerton in 1908 regarding the proposal to cede Southern Munshi and their territories to Northern Nigeria and subsequent partition of Southern Munshi together with all the attendant resistance in which 1,428 Southern Munshi people were killed. The chapter discussed the destruction of Munshi fields and food storages in Okpoma and the subsequent famine during which an unknown number of people died. The chapter discussed Sir Lugard's reactions and condemnations of the excesses of Lieutenant Hepworth, the Officer commanding, and G. S. Podevin, the Political Officer and Civil Authority. The chapter questioned Sir Lugard's motives for his show of concerns for the Munshi people of Okpoma and argued that his show of concerns was forced on him by circumstances beyond his control and not because he cared about what happened to the people of Okpoma; otherwise, he would have taken steps to relieve the famine, investigate its extent, and establish the number of people who died of hunger and starvation.

The subject of chapter 13 is the 1915 uprising in Egbaland. Thus, the chapter began with a review of the origins of the Independent Egba United Government between the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and the 1893 agreement between Britain and Egba people.¹⁷ The chapter discussed the origins of the uprising and argued that Britain reneged on the 1893 agreement and its promises to Egba people that it would not interfere with their Constitution and the workings of the Independent Egba United Government and that the seeds of the subsequent mass civil disobedience were sown by the abrogation of the democratic Independent Egba United Government in 1914 in the wake of the promulgation of the Native Court Ordinance. The chapter argued that the Native Court Ordinance and its concomitant Native Administration destroyed ancient Yoruba jurisprudence and Civil Administration in Egbaland and that the Ordinance resulted in a fundamental dislocation of pre-British Constitutional settlements in Egbaland, particularly the Constitutional relationship between the people and the Alake of Abeokuta, on the one hand, and between the Alake and Ogboni Chiefs,¹⁸ on the other hand. The chapter argued that the dislocation of ancient Egba Constitutional settlements shifted the balance of power in favour of the Alake, that it transformed the Alake from a semi-monarch and titular

head into a tyrannical and paramount ruler,¹⁹ that it took away the people's ancient Constitutional rights to remove the Alake for unConstitutional behaviours,²⁰ and that the Constitutional shifts together with the grievances linked to the death of Chief Shobiyi in British custody²¹ and the Ijemo massacre;²² and the continuation of unpaid labour Ordinance in the wake of increases in direct taxes established the grounds for the civil unrest, which erupted in Abeokuta on the 13th of June 1915,²³ during which British Regiments of the West African Frontier Force and West African Service Brigade, commanded by Brigadier General Cunliffe, killed 564 people.²⁴ The chapter argued that a state of war did not exist between Britain and Egba people, that Sir Lugard's declaration of a state of emergency, Martial Law, and subsequent military operations were illegal in international law in 1915; that they are illegal in contemporary international law; and that Britain, the Crown, and the estates of colonial army Officers and civil officials and administrators are liable to claims for damages by contemporary Egba people.

Chapter 14 described the political uprising in Iseyin, Oyo Province, in October 1916.²⁵ The chapter opened with a review of the historical events that preceded the uprising and went on to examine the causes of the uprising and concluded that the uprising was the result of a combination of Britain's repression of the people's opposition to the corruption and excesses of the bench of the Native Court sitting at Iseyin and Britain's undifferentiated political approach to the people because it was incapable of adapting its policies to different political circumstances. Instead it proceeded to implement the Native Court Ordinance together with its attendant institutional corruption that had already led to uprising, death, and destruction in neighbouring Egba Province in Oyo Province. The chapter described Britain's military operations to crush the uprising under the command of Captain Waters. The chapter reported that British troops under the command of Captain Waters killed sixty people in Iseyin in October 1916. The chapter described the arrests and trials of eight dissenting Chiefs and their public execution by hanging. The chapter contended that it was the repressive measures implemented by Britain in order to preserve the Native Court's Bench, which the people saw as corrupt and anti-democratic, as well as humiliating to their Chiefs, which eventually triggered the civil unrest on the 19th of October 1916.²⁶ In its concluding section, the chapter criticised Britain for its inability or refusal to carry out post-military operations reviews of complaints and grievances and the roles of two of its flagship policies—namely, Warrant Chieftaincy and Native Court systems and their corruptive practices—in stoking the people's complaints and grievances and modify or formulate alternative policies.

Chapter 15 began with descriptions of the allegations of murder and misappropriation of cattle, which the inhabitants of Ezzago, Abakaliki, preferred against Lieutenant J. Cyril Routh of the 3rd Battalion Nigeria Regiment and his troops. The chapter argued that Lieutenant Routh's behaviours were because he was incensed and offended that the Ezzas had been disrespectful because they disobeyed standing instructions that stipulated the natives must prepare camp, water, and food for any 'Whiteman' who visited their towns and villages and that because they did not make the prescribed preparations and did not come out to welcome him and his party when they arrived in Ezzago, they did not demonstrate submission to Britain. The chapter argued that Lieutenant Routh's anger was explicable within one of the principal ideologies that underpinned British rule in Southern Nigeria, namely, the superiority of Britons and the inferiority of the Indigenous people of Southern Nigeria. The chapter addressed the 1915 boundary disputes between Abakaliki and Afikpo and disagreed with A. G. Boyle, the deputy Governor-general of Nigeria, that the origins of the disputes were tribal animus between Abakaliki and Afikpo. Instead the chapter argued that the 1914 survey and arbitrary delimitation of the boundaries between Abakaliki and Afikpo were the principal causes of the disputes, which subsequently led to the death of 45 people at the hands of a patrol commanded by Captain G. H. Walker, Police Commissioner of Owerri. The chapter went on to review the political circumstances that led to the patrol commanded by R. C. A. Cavendish, Assistant Commissioner of Police (ACP), during which 115 people were killed. The chapter discussed the destruction of Ezzas' cultural heritages, particularly the Nkemoha Mound, which was sacred to the Ezzas because it housed the tomb of their ancestor who founded Abakaliki and settled the surrounding areas. The chapter concluded with an examination of the political circumstances that led to the patrol to Ogunangu under the command of ACP Cavendish during which six people were killed and ten people were wounded.

In chapter 16, the book discussed the reports that were filed to Dr J. C. Maxwell, Provincial Commissioner of Owerri, by Warrant Chief Vandigo of Obete in which he complained that he had been expelled from Obete, that he had been threatened with execution if he returned, that he had been expelled because he had tried to procure Carriers to carry telegraphic equipment that were needed by the British Army on the German Cameroon frontier, that the two Court Messengers who were sent to Obete to serve summons were arrested as British collaborators and executed, and that Obete and the neighbouring town of Abala were acting in breach of the Unlawful Societies Proclamation of 1904.²⁷ The chapter described the patrol to punish the people of Obete and criticised Sir Lugard and Captain Walker, who

commanded the patrol, for their failure to compile casualty statistics in accordance with the Standing Order in Council 1909.²⁸ The chapter then proceeded to review the political circumstances underlying the protest against Britain by the people of Onicha. The chapter pointed to the history of injustice that the people of Onicha felt about Britain's Collective Punishment Ordinance (CPO), which resulted in total abolition of commercial activities in Onicha in revenge for the death of Dr Stewart and the people's perception that Britain does not listen to their viewpoints. The chapter described the military operation against the people of Onicha under the command of Captain Beamish, during which 45 people were killed. In its final section, the chapter discussed the military patrol to Omoakpo under the command of Lieutenant Osborne, during which 45 people were killed.

Chapter 17 began with a review of the prevailing political circumstances in Ogu, Okigwi, in 1914. The review focused on the dissent by the inhabitants of the compound of Chief Olori of Ogu and argued that British Officers habitually resorted to the use of force and its attendant violence because they did not carry out even modest analyses of the political perspectives of men like Chief Olori and hence the motives underlying their resistance to Britain. The chapter proceeded to describe the military operations against Ogu, under the command of Captain Ambrose of the West African Frontier Force, during which 560 people lost their lives. The chapter moved on to Lengwi in Okigwi in 1915 and discussed the simmering political undercurrents that finally burst into open dissent on the 3rd of July 1915. The chapter discussed the inevitable British military operations, commanded by Captain Beamish of the 4th Battalion Nigeria Regiment, during which 1,600 people were killed. The chapter then discussed the political circumstances in Lengwi in 1917 and the consequent punitive military operations leading to the death of 878 people. The chapter raised issues as to why Britain insisted on creating and imposing the Native Administration, Warrant Chieftaincy, Native Court, and Native Council (Native Court's Bench) under the Native Court Ordinance 1914 everywhere it went in Southern Nigeria, irrespective of the fact that they degenerated into conduit pipes for corruption and extortion and that they led to confrontations between the British Government and the people. The chapter argued that Britain refused to countenance the examination of the above institutions because the principles upon which they were founded were appealing, because they evoked and mirrored the workings of feudal England. The chapter used the case of Warrant Chief Okoro Eleke, who became one of the most notorious and corrupt people to hold British warrants in Southern Nigeria, to exemplify how the above institutions and Native Court

Ordinance 1914 incepted, nurtured, and institutionalised corruption in Southern Nigeria's body politics.

In chapter 18, the book charted the political circumstances that culminated in the 1918 punitive patrol to Ekwi on the New Calabar River and Cross River during which 792 people were killed and thirty-eight people wounded. The chapter argued that the political circumstances that were obtained in 1918 in Ekwi were unrelated to Sir Lugard's claims that he had no options other than authorised the punitive patrol because the Ekwis were attacking their neighbours who were friendly and loyal to Britain and were under the Crown's protection. Instead the chapter argued that he deliberately planned the punitive attack and the resultant bloodbath because the question needed to be asked—and addressed—as to why the people of Ekwi would suddenly decide in 1918 to attack the neighbours they had lived peacefully alongside from time immemorial. The chapter argued that Sir Lugard and his deputy, A. G. Boyle, attacked Ekwi because their assertion of political independence and self-determination challenged Britain's perception of itself as an imperial power and that the challenge undermined its ambition to occupy and dominate the areas on the New Calabar and Cross rivers and seize control of Ekwi resources, which Sir Lugard conceded were abundant, enormous, and wealthy. In its concluding sections, the chapter argued that Sir Lugard and A. G. Boyle were excessively cruel because they conceded that they deployed a large force and armamentaria and methods similar to those that Britain deployed against its enemies in European theatres in order to inflict maximum damage in human and physical resources on the Ekwis and hence drive home the messages to all potential political opponents of British rule in Southern Nigeria that irrespective of the fact that Britain was at war in Europe, it had, in reserve, the military wherewithal to ensure that His Majesty's Government orders must obeyed at all times.

Chapter 19 charted some of the prevailing political circumstances in Awka Division between 1915 and 1924. The chapter described some of the events that led to the military operations during which seventy-eight people were killed in Umunze and during which four people were killed and three people wounded in Awka-Igbo. The chapter then discussed the political circumstances that led to death of Major Rewcastle, DSO, MC, in Ochima on the 27th of January 1924 and the subsequent punitive expedition to Ochima under the command of Major Walker, DSO, acting inspector general of Nigeria Police, during which twenty-one people were killed and nine people were wounded. The chapter argued that while the death of Major Rewcastle was tragic, the philosophical, political, and religious circumstances that led to the Constitution of armed Police escort under his command were part of the

people's legitimate demand for freedom of expression and worship; and that had Roberts, Acting Lieutenant-Governor of Southern Nigeria, taken steps to examine the philosophies espoused by the old Priestess of Onyilora²⁹ and why people far and wide throughout Awka and Nsukka Divisions were willing to risk death and injuries to defend the Igbo philosophies underlying Onyilora, the resulting deaths and destruction could have been avoided. The chapter concluded with a critique of Britain's undifferentiated methodology in which it pejoratively defined everything as a dark and sinister Juju that must be destroyed and its adherents arrested, tried, and jailed or hanged.

Chapter 20 described the circumstances that led to the deaths of MOba, a canoe man, and Onuora, a fisherman, as they fished on the River Niger during a punitive military patrol to Achengwa under the command of Lieutenant F. K. May.³⁰ The chapter charted the political arguments that led the people of Achengwa to boycott the Native Court and refuse to allow District Officer C. N. Mansell to arrest and remove one of their members from Achengwa. The chapter argued that the military patrol had been unnecessary because the people had not attacked anyone. Instead the chapter contended that District Officer Mansell was incompetent and that his incompetence transformed genuine complaints against Achengwa's corrupt Warrant Chief, Native District Head, and Village Headman into a full-blown military patrol under the command of an inexperienced Subaltern, which led to the death of two innocent men, the subsequently mass movement of fleeing refugees, and the destruction of properties, farms, crops, food storages, cattle, and other livestock.³¹ The chapter reviewed the conclusions of the Roberts Commission of Enquiry into the deaths of MOba and Onuora and some of the political manoeuvres at Whitehall over the sanctions imposed on District Officer Mansell, Divisional Commissioner Lieutenant Colonel Sydney Soton, and Provincial Resident Edwardes by Sir Hugh Clifford.³² The chapter examined the conducts of Divisional Officer Sydney Soton and Provincial Resident Edwardes and concluded that they were disinterested and that their disinterest was linked to the poor quality of some of the human resources Britain employed and deployed to Southern Nigeria.

Up to this point, the book has focused on the discussions of prevailing political and military circumstances involving Britain and the people and the casualties inflicted on the people of Southern Nigeria as a result of British military operations. But there were also acts that were perpetrated by individual Colonial Officials and Officers, Civil and Military, that were not only equally violent but had serious consequences for individuals as well as groups and communities in Southern Nigeria. Some of the violent acts were no less physically, physiologically, and psychologically injurious and

destructive of life and properties, as well as humiliating in their outcomes for the people, than state-organised military violence. Some colonial officials paid with their lives for their ill-treatment of natives as the natives retaliated in self-defence. Thus, in chapters 21 and 22, the book exemplified the violence committed by individual colonial officials and their consequences for individuals and for whole communities because the British Government invariably intervened and imposed punishment on behalf of colonial officials who committed the initial acts of violence.

Accordingly, chapter 21 described the violence and aggression of Offley Stuart Crewe-Read, District Officer of Agbor, towards Eka people that eventually led to attacks on him and subsequently his death.³³ The chapter exemplified some of Crewe-Read's acts of violence and disregard for the lives of the people with whom he came into contact. The chapter discussed Britain's subsequent punitive expedition under the command of Captain W. E. Rudkin, Royal Field Artillery, to avenge the death of Crewe-Read during which 200 people were killed and five people were subsequently hanged.³⁴ The chapter argued that the voices of the people were silent because in subsequent correspondences, despatches, and reports in the British press, both the initial acts of violence perpetrated by men like Crewe-Read and the punitive expeditions and patrols that inevitably followed the Officers who initiated the cycle of violence were never seen and reported as violent towards natives. Instead violent men like Crewe-Read were eulogised as promising young pioneers who were carrying out their lawful Christian duties on behalf of King and Country and were permitted to use all possible means to carry out their duties but whose young and promising lives were cut short by the savages they were trying to civilise. The chapter argued that rather than examine Crewe-Read's personality and violent conduct as parts of the prevailing political circumstances, it was the retaliation and self-defence by the people that were seen as violent acts. Because the people were deemed to be engaged in illegal resistance and in acts leading to the impediment of His Majesty's force, because British rule was the legal order, and it was illegal to resist British rule. In other words, resistance to British rule was interpreted to mean resistance to the legal order.³⁵

Chapter 22 described a different kind of individual violence, namely, the sexual violence of rape. The chapter discussed the circumstances surrounding the rape of a young Ezekwe girl called Jodi by Captain J. Savage, West African Frontier Force, in October 1911. The chapter criticised Sir Lugard for arguing that the crime of rape in Southern Nigeria was not comparable in gravity to the crime of rape in England³⁶ and for his subversion of the course of justice by deliberately committing Captain Savage for trial before a summary Court Martial instead of trial before the Supreme Court.³⁷

The chapter rejected Sir Lugard's arguments as to why he committed Captain Savage for trial before a summary Court Martial and instead argued that Captain Savage did not need to have been tried before the Supreme Court in Lagos as Sir Lugard claimed, because Captain Savage committed the crimes of rape and arson in Ezekwe, Ogoja District, which was nearer to the Supreme Court sitting in Calabar than to the Supreme Court sitting in Lagos. The chapter argued that Sir Lugard planned the acquittal of Captain Savage when he charged him before a Court Martial for misconduct and for conduct unbecoming of an Officer and a gentleman instead of rape and arson. The chapter criticised the Court Martial for compelling Jodi to face her rapist in court. The chapter also criticised Greenwood, who was the legal counsellor to Moorhouse Commission of Enquiry into the allegations against Captain Savage and observer of the Court Martial proceedings,³⁸ for rejecting Jodi's testimony as falsehood when she stated before the Court Martial that she had been frightened at 'Bansara' (Whiteman or soldiers?).³⁹

Chapter 1: Aro

Britain and the Aros

By the turn of the nineteenth century, Britain had not occupied the entirety of the Southern Provinces of Nigeria. It annexed Lagos in 1851, and by 1893 it had signed treaties with the entire Yoruba City States to the west of the Niger.⁴⁰ But an independent Kingdom of Benin lay across its landward routes from the west to the east and the south-east. Thus, in 1897 it attacked and destroyed the Kingdom of Benin.⁴¹ Thus, by the close of 1897, Britain had occupied Lagos and the entire Western and South-Western Provinces. But it was still unable to declare the Colony and Protectorate of Southern Provinces until 1906 because it had yet to occupy the hinterlands and the people beyond the eastern and south-eastern banks of the River Niger. Similarly, by 1900 Britain had not occupied the land and people on the River Niger's eastern and western deltas. Therefore, in 1900—and for the purposes of occupying the above-mentioned land, deltas, and people—it assembled one of the largest concentrations of military capabilities in West Africa in Asaba. And the Aro Expedition (1901–1902) was the first of three decades of Britain's relentless military campaigns whose sole aim was the conquest and occupation of the above-mentioned hinterlands and deltas and their inhabitants.

But as it assembled its forces and armamentaria and commenced its military campaigns, it faced a number of major problems. And one of the most intractable of the problems was the Igbo's and their neighbours' systems of governance. Because, unlike Lagos, Benin Kingdom, and Yoruba City States, which had structured and centralised systems of public administration, the Igbos and their neighbours did not evolve large and centralised systems of public administration that Britain could have attacked and collapsed by destroying their centres and seizing their Obas, Kings, and Chiefs as hostages. Instead, the Igbos, Ibibios, Munshis, Ogonis, and Ijaws of the eastern delta had small and localised systems of public administration. Therefore, the problem for Britain was that although the systems were decentralised and were not organised into large public administrative management structures, they and their numerous tributaries were, nevertheless, connected and rooted upon common belief systems. In other words, in precisely the way the precolonial systems of public administration on the western and south-western banks of the Niger derived their legitimacies from common belief systems, the systems of public administration on the eastern bank and eastern deltas of the Niger derived their legitimacies from common belief systems, which were rooted upon ancestral worship in precisely the same way Judeo-Christians rooted their belief systems upon the worship of their

ancestors. Among the Indigenous peoples of precolonial Southern Nigeria, the belief systems were the perpetual reference sources that not only legitimised their systems of government and every aspects of life—including family structure, social justice, Law and Order, agriculture, economy, environment, religion, and war and peace—but also they established and legitimised the rules of engagement within the systems. The systems of government were, in other words, small, localised and communal. Thus, on the hinterlands of the eastern bank and deltas of the Niger, the loosely coupled and yet linked systems were problematic for Britain because in order to impose the status of Colony and Protectorate, it had to attack and destroy each town, each village, each hamlet in turn and kill considerably a large number of their people and made the rest homeless refugees. It also meant that since there were no heads of state and large and centralised governments, Britain had to return and attack the same people and destroy the same towns, villages, and hamlets again and again in order to ensure that its Colony and Protectorate took root.

The other major problem was Aros' belief systems because, while their belief systems had and was overlaid by a monothetic being called Chukwu⁴² and was similar in every respect to those that had existed among the Indigenous people of Southern Nigeria⁴³ for millennia, there was a fundamental difference that posed considerable problems for Britain. The problem Chukwu posed was that unlike its equivalents in the west and south-west, Chukwu was not entirely abstract. Instead it was abstract and yet potent and palpable. It gave its name to their capital, namely, Aro-Chukwu. It permeated the entire aspects of Aros' life, including commerce and industry. And like other religions and belief systems, it proselytised. It had priests and representatives throughout the entire eastern hinterlands and eastern deltas. In other words, everywhere Britain went throughout the land and delta on the eastern bank of the River Niger, there was already an Aro representative directing and managing affairs on behalf of Chukwu by the time Britain arrived. Britain, thus, pejoratively referred to Chukwu as the Long Juju.⁴⁴ The origin of the term 'Long Juju' is unclear from the document, but we believe Britain used the term because Chukwu was not only accepted as divine and worshipped in Igboland, but it was also accepted as divine and worshipped throughout neighbouring non-Igbo communities. In non-Igbo communities, the Aros had travelling and domiciled traders and Chukwu priests. Thus, to Britain the Aros were the purveyors as well as the masters and Chief worshippers of Chukwu, or Long Juju (hereafter we will use the terms 'Chukwu' and 'Long Juju' interchangeably and of equivalent significance).

To a Britain that saw the inhabitants of every city, town, village, and hamlet as fragments of people and disparate tribes, the fact that the Aros built a confederated

nation and were rapidly extending its frontiers without the need to use force other than the coordinating power of thoughts, namely the divine Chukwu, was threatening to Britain's imperial objectives. British field Officers and at headquarters in Old Calabar were deeply suspicious of the Aros. Indeed, they were in awe of the Aros' organised power and dominance over some of their neighbours. And while Sir Ralph Moor, the erstwhile high Commissioner of the Niger Coast Protectorate and now high Commissioner of the nascent Protectorate of the Southern Provinces, and his officials saw the Aros as slavers⁴⁵ and retrograde cannibals, they were nevertheless amazed by their trading and business acumen and their control of the palm oil and palm kernel trade where they acted as middlemen and levied excise duty. They levied toll and collected taxes from traders plying their trade on the numerous creeks and waterways within their territory. Britain wanted control of the lucrative palm oil and palm kernel trade. In particular, Britain was irked because the Aros extended their tax regimes to local European agents of European firms at home in Britain and Europe. Therefore, to Britain, Chukwu's potency and palpability were problematic. It saw Chukwu as an aberration and hence an obstruction to His Majesty's free trade. Accordingly, it accused the Aros of using Chukwu to oppress and terrorise their neighbours. It accused them of holding up trade by using Chukwu to intimidate their law-abiding neighbours in order to force them to sell their produce cheaply while they, in turn, charged their neighbours exorbitant prices for their own produce. Thus, the principal reasons Britain attacked and destroyed Aro Confederacy was not because they were cannibals or Long Juju worshippers or slavers as Sir Moor charged; instead Britain attacked and destroyed Aro Confederation together with a sizeable proportion of Aro population because it wanted to occupy Aro territory and wrest political and economic control over palm oil and palm kernel trade from the confederacy.

Who Were the Aros?

But who were the Aros? Britain thought they were a different tribe. But the Aros were in fact Igbo people, and they were one of a group of communities who had lived on the land that extended from the Cross River to Anambra and Imo rivers through Old Calabar and from the eastern deltas of the Niger to Igboland.⁴⁶ Indeed, there were no specific people, tribes or otherwise, known as Aros who were culturally different and spoke a different language from Igbo. Instead Aro was a geographical area and a place name, and the people who lived in the area knew themselves as Igbo, even though they referred to themselves as Aros in much the same way the Igbo people who lived in Abakaliki and the surrounding areas referred to themselves as Ezzas and called their land Ezzago or Ezzama.⁴⁷ This misconception

led Sir Moor to see the Aros as an enclave in Igboland, inhabited by an alien tribe, and hence claimed, erroneously, that they were intellectually and physically superior to their neighbours. Thus, in one of his Correspondences and Despatches to Downing Street, he counselled Chamberlain, MP, Secretary of State for the Colonies, that provisions must be made for a considerably large force because the Aros were highly organised and were likely to make determined efforts to retain the socio-economic, political, and religious influence that the fetish of the Long Juju has given to them over the country from the Niger Delta to Upper Benue. He accused the Aros of arrogance and dastardly acts. He informed Chamberlain that he had received intelligence reports that showed the Aros had, during the past few months, been preparing for the possibility of British attacks; that they had been sending insolent replies to his demands that they cede their territories to Britain; that, through their defiance, they have emboldened neighbouring tribes to defy His Majesty's Government; and that they were responsible for instigating the Orons' attack (chapter 2) on the Travelling Commissioner on the Bonny-Old Calabar Road between August and September 1901.

A Concentration of Force

The foregoing were some of the prevailing political circumstances in 1900 as Britain concentrated its Regiments in readiness for the attacks on the Aros. Thus, to Britain the Aros constituted one of the leading obstacles to its occupation of the hinterlands and peoples on the eastern bank of the Niger and beyond. Therefore, Sir Moor anticipated that the Aros would turn out to be a formidable enemy and that they would put up a determined struggle. He had been counselled by Colonel Arthur Montanaro, the Commanding Officer of the 3rd Brigade, West African Frontier Force, and the newly appointed Commanding Officer of the newly formed Aro Field Force, that intelligence reports indicated that the Aros were militarily organised and that they would stand and fight back. Therefore, Sir Moor was apprehensive that the Colony and Protectorate of Southern Provinces could be overwhelmed because it would not have sufficient troops, that the Southern Nigeria Regiment could be overextended, and that the operations could turn into a protracted war of attrition, leading to considerable British casualties. Accordingly, he sought permission from Downing Street to authorise Colonel Montanaro to assemble a force large enough to subdue the anticipated resistance from the Aros. Downing Street accepted his arguments and authorised the assemblage of one of the largest British force ever assembled in the Colony and Protectorate of Southern Provinces, with contingents

drawn from the colonies and Protectorates of Lagos and Northern Provinces, as well as the Southern Nigeria Regiment.

The force that was assembled and subsequently designated as Aro Field Force consisted of four columns as follows:⁴⁸

No. 1 Column consisted of troops from Northern Nigeria Regiment. It had 30 European Officers, 600 Rank and File, and 900 Carriers. The column included five Maxim Guns and five Squadrons of Maxim Gunners. Additionally, the column was armed with a twelve-inch pounder. The column brought 150 rounds of small arms ammunition (SAA) per man. All reserved SAA and gun detachment and shells, and rations for Europeans were prepared and waiting for the column in Onitsha. The column started its campaigns from Onitsha.

No. 2 Column consisted of troops from Southern Nigeria Regiment. The column had 11 European Officers, 200 Rank and File, and 500 Carriers. The column started its campaigns from Emuramura.

No. 3 Column were troops from the Colony and Protectorate of Lagos. It had 14 European Officers, 250 Rank and File, and 400 Carriers. The column was armed with a twelve-inch pounder (supplied by Southern Nigeria since Lagos was still a separate territory and was yet to become part of Southern Nigeria), 2 Maxim Guns, and 2 Squadrons of Maxim Gunners. The column brought 150 rounds of small ammunition per man. All reserved SAA, gun detachment, and shells, as well as rations for the Europeans, were assembled in Akrika. The column commenced its campaigns from Akrika.

No. 4 Column were also troops from the Southern Nigeria Regiment. The column had 25 European Officers, 500 Rank and File, and 250 Carriers. The column was armed with a twelve-inch pounder and included five Maxim Guns and five Squadrons of Maxim Gunners. Before the column commenced its campaign, it would be reinforced with 5 European Officers, 100 Rank and File, and 500 Carriers drawn from the No. 2 Column, which was hoped would have completed its campaign in Emuramura. The No. 4 Column commenced its campaign from Itu.

Headquarter staff: 7 European Officers and 50 Carriers.

Thus, the total fighting strengths of Aro Field Force were 87 British Officers, 1,550 Rank and File, and 2,100 Carriers.⁴⁹

Sir Ralph Moor: Operational Instructions

As we have seen, Britain defined the Aros as slavers, worshipers of Long Juju, truculent, arrogant, and insolent savages who sacrificed some of their members to Long Juju. But more importantly, it regarded them as powerful rebels, who would neither cede their territories to the Crown nor submit to it nor relinquish their hold on trade within their territories and between them and neighbouring territories. The latter was Britain's main reasons for the Aro Expedition. The expeditionary operational instructions⁵⁰ formulated by Sir Moor, who had been on leave in England and had recently returned to Nigeria, an ennobled knight of the realm, stated, in unambiguous terms, that the expedition was to subjugate the Aros and force them to cede their territories to the yet unstructured Colony and Protectorate of Southern Provinces. Thus, he set out the following expeditionary instructions for Colonel Montanaro: first, all the towns and villages whose Chiefs and inhabitants formally submit, unconditionally, to Colonel Montanaro and Aro Field Force were to be treated as semi-friendly, and they and their properties were to be given protection. But the people must perform unpaid labour making roads and constructing government fortifications and Rest Houses. Additionally, they must supply chop (foodstuff, including cows and other livestock to be slaughtered for troops' rations) to the market for sale not at prices freely determined by supply and demand; instead they were to be sold according to the prices that had been set by Colonel Montanaro. And ominously, he warned that failure to supply proper chop to the market would mean that troops would live on the land and that raiding parties would raid food storages and farms and confiscate chop. And second, any towns and villages whose Chiefs and inhabitants refused to submit when they were required to do so or did not submit when they were given the opportunity to do so were to be treated as hostile. In such towns and villages, Colonel Montanaro must give soldiers freehand to forage for chop, and he must not pay for supplies, chop or otherwise. The towns and villages were to be razed and destroyed. In other words, Sir Moor authorised the looting of towns, villages, fields, farms, cattle, and other livestock; and after the looting, he authorised Colonel Montanaro and his field commanders and the troops under their command to burn and destroy towns and villages.

More importantly, he instructed Colonel Montanaro to disarm the people by imposing and enforcing confiscation levies for Sniders (breech-loading carbines capable of firing five rounds) and cap guns throughout the Colony and Protectorate. Additionally, he empowered Colonel Montanaro and his commanders to impose confiscation levies of arms and ammunition on towns and villages at the rate of 25 per cent of the number of households in each town and village. He ordered Colonel

Montanaro to implement confiscation levies in every town and village, irrespective of whether or not the Chiefs and their people had submitted peacefully to Britain. He ordered Colonel Montanaro to use threats of violence to impress on natives and their Chiefs that unless they complied with confiscation levies, their towns and villages would be burnt and troops would live on the towns and villages until the specified arms and ammunition levied on 25 per cent of the number of households in each town and village were produced. In other words, Sir Moor was effectively putting the towns and villages under siege, with marauding soldiers looting towns and villages as they foraged for supplies.

More importantly, Sir Moor instructed Colonel Montanaro not to accept or offer terms of surrender to Chiefs and inhabitants of towns and villages who have submitted until all the Elders of Aro tribes who might be hiding in the towns and villages were identified and the leaders of the raiding party who were responsible for the attack and massacre of the friendly and loyal inhabitants of Obagu had been given up for trial by a military Commission to be established under authority of Royal Judicial Warrants issued to Colonel Montanaro and the column commanders. And if found guilty, they must be hanged on the spot, and the inhabitants of the towns and villages from which the leaders came must be brought to see their leaders hanged and thence marched to Obagu under military escorts, where they must be compelled to rebuild Obagu.⁵¹

The Campaign and Its Plans

According to Colonel Montanaro, the No. 1 Column started their campaigns from Onitsha on the eastern banks of the Niger on the 1st of December 1901. The column's immediate objective was Bende.⁵² The column would advance on and seize Bende by the 8th of December 1901. Therefore four weeks' supply of ammunition and rations were requisitioned and stockpiled in Warri, and from there they were transported by launch to Onitsha. Thenceforth, Onitsha became the main storage and supply depot. The 3rd Battalion, West African Frontier Force (WAFF), currently garrisoned in Asaba on the western bank of the Niger, were moved from Asaba to Onitsha on guard duties at the base. Colonel Montanaro anticipated that the column may have to fight its way from Onitsha to Bende and may, in consequence, take more than the planned seven days to reach Bende. Accordingly, he directed that eight weeks' supply of ammunition and rations were stockpiled at Emuramura on the right bank of the Cross River for 42 Europeans, 600 Rank and File, and 1,400 Carriers.

No. 2 Column concentrated in Emuramura. The column's objective was to transport stores from the advance depot in Bende. On the 10th of December 1901, columns 1 and 2 would carry out simultaneous reconnaissance demonstration in strong force towards the village of Ama-Oge and occupy it. Once the village had been occupied, it would be put in a state of strong defence and garrisoned by 200 troops of No. 1 Column. Following the occupation of Ama-Oge, the 200 troops of No. 1 Column and the whole of No. 2 Column would coordinate their efforts and escort the stores from Emuramura to Bende, with No. 1 Column working between Emuramura and Ama-Oge and No. 2 Column working between Ama-Oge and Bende. When the stores have been concentrated in Bende, Ama-Oge will continue to be held by No. 1 Column as a forward base in readiness for the general advance on Aro-Chukwu on the 20th of December 1901. At the same time, No. 2 Column would detach 50 men to support the troops of No. 1 Column who are holding Ama-Oge. The 50-man detachment would subsequently garrison Ama-Oge. Additionally, 50 men out of the remaining 150 men of No. 2 Column would be used to garrison Emuramura, while the remaining 100 men would reinforce No. 4 Column in Itu.

Colonel Montanaro directed that by the 1st of October 1901, he wanted three weeks' supplies to have been stockpiled in Opobo for 14 Europeans, 250 troops, and 400 Carriers. The supplies, including a 2.95-Inch Gun and 2 Maxim Guns must then be taken from Opobo and placed in storage in Akwete, where No. 3 Column, under the command of Lieutenant Colonel Festing, Northern Province's Regiment, would be in concentration by the 10th of December 1901. Additionally, Colonel Montanaro expected that by the 11th of December 1901, Lieutenant Colonel Festing and his column would have completed concentration, and that by the 12th of December 1901, he would have reconnoitred Akrika in a demonstration of force.

Lieutenant Colonel Festing expected severe fighting as he marched on Akrika because, first, before he could occupy Akrika and establish a depot there, he would have to clear the country between Akwete and Akrika in readiness for the general advance, which was scheduled to commence on the 20th of December 1901, and second, on that date, he would break out of Akrika and advance northwards to Oboihio and then strike eastwards and seize Aros' capital, Aro-Chukwu. Accordingly, he ordered a tight-fighting marching order on Akwete and Akrika. Thus, between the 20th and the 28th of December 1901, Lieutenant Colonel Festing and the Aros collided in battle, and as Sir Moor anticipated, the Aros put up such a determined resistance that the battle raged nonstop between the 24th and the 28th of December 1901, with casualties on both sides. But by the 28th of December 1901, the Maxims and the 2.95 gun of No. 1 Column had done their jobs, and Aros'

resistance was eventually broken; and Lieutenant Colonel Festing seized and occupied Akrika, established a forward depot there in readiness for the arrival of the supplies from Opobo, and subsequently on the same day, the 28th of December 1901, he entered and occupied Aro-Chukwu without further opposition. Thus, after eight days of intense fighting, Lieutenant Colonel Festing occupied Aro-Chukwu and promptly implemented Sir Moor's operational instructions and destroyed Aro-Chukwu by fire.

On the 3rd of January 1902, Sir Moor was able to write to Chamberlain, in brimming confidence, that the Aro Expedition was progressing satisfactorily and that successful conclusions to Active Military Operations were within reach because the power of the Aros had, to all intents and purposes, been destroyed. However, he cautioned that the destruction of Aros' power was only a beginning because considerable amount of work remained to be done before their entire country could be considered to have been brought under effective British control. In other words, in asking for the exercise of caution, Sir Moor was saying that the destruction of the power of the Aros by military expedition does not, on its own, guarantee the successful establishment of a peaceful future on Aro territory; instead the government must take steps to establish civil and administrative dominance over the Aros and their territory. He was right. Because, although the Aros could not successfully defend their country against British occupation, they were to torment Britain for nearly three decades afterwards because, prior to Britain's arrival, the Aros had traders and representatives of Chukwu throughout the hinterlands, the eastern deltas, and up to the upper reaches of the River Benue. The traders and representatives became integrated and respected members of the communities amongst whom they lived, and they were to use their membership of those communities to instigate and foment ongoing rebellion against British rule.

By the 14th of January 1902, there was a growing belief that the main objective of the Aro Expedition, namely, the destruction of the power of the Aros was within Sir Moor's grasps. That belief had been strengthened on the 28th of December 1901 when Lieutenant Colonel Francis Festing and No. 1 Column occupied and destroyed Aro-Chukwu. The fall of Aro-Chukwu signalled the commencement of the second phase of the Aro Expedition. And the aims of the phase were to demonstrate to the natives that a greater power had arrived, that that greater power had vanquished the Aros, and that the greater power had broken the Aros' power forever. Accordingly, since the intensity of Aros' resistance had been weakened, the policy was to demonstrate the power of the force, which had so successfully destroyed the independence and self-determination of the Aros to the people. Therefore, the main

objective of the demonstration of force was to implement the third strand of Sir Moor's operational instructions, which was to disarm the entire population of the Colony and Protectorate of Southern Provinces. Thus, on the 12th of January 1902, Colonel Montanaro and his columns began a regime of harassment by marching up and down the country in a demonstration of force, and by that date, 1,000 to 2,000 Snider rifles and cap guns had been confiscated.

The disarming of the people had become a matter of utmost importance to Sir Moor because the Aros had put up such a determined fight that to ensure they would not ever again be in a position to threaten Britain's authority through armed hostilities, he insisted on a total disarmament such that the population should thenceforth only be allowed to own muzzle-loading Dane guns for hunting. Additionally, he estimated that there were thousands of war guns (magazine-loading five-round carbines) in the hands of the people and that although they probably had little or no ammunition left for them in their armoury, as long as they had such rifles and had any ammunition left, they would try to fight and would continue to challenge the British Government by force of arms. Therefore, no war guns must be left in the possession of the Aros. The guns and their ammunition must be confiscated and destroyed.

Nevertheless, irrespective of Sir Moor's apprehension over war guns, Colonel Montanaro felt confident enough by the success of the attacks on the Aros of N'Doti and Obinkita and the destruction of the power of their commander-in-Chief and Head Chief, Wosu Torti, at his headquarters and subsequently his stronghold of Oloko together with the Long Juju, on the 30th of December 1901, that on the 12th of January 1902, he ordered his columns to begin mopping up operations and demonstration of force throughout Aro territory. The columns were to storm out of Aro-Chukwu and sweep the entire operational theatre, which extended from the Cross River to the hinterland of New Calabar District. The columns would then make a general sweep northwards and advance on and occupy Bende whence they would commence the campaigns to deal with Oguta and Onitsha. But the Aros were not very obliging because though they may have lost Aro-Chukwu, they were not yet beaten; they resisted the advance from Aro-Chukwu with such ferocity that they brought the advance to Akwete, Bende, Itu, and Oguta to a complete halt on numerous occasions. But by the 15th of March 1902, the combined weights of Lieutenant Colonel Festing's No. 1 Column, Lieutenant Colonel Heneker's No. 2 Column, and No. 4 Column under the personal command of Colonel Montanaro eventually broke Aros' resistance at Bende. On that day, the Aros lost their independence, and their confederation was formally abrogated.

Casualties: 3,808 (62) Killed

Between 1851 and 1909, Britain operated a double standard in the matter of collecting and reporting casualty statistics. It collected and accounted for its own casualties, but it did not collect and account for natives' casualties. Thus, Colonel Montanaro collected and transmitted, in meticulous details, reports of the casualties inflicted on his troops to Sir Moor, Sir Lugard, and Whitehall and regretted every one of them on behalf of the Colony and Protectorate of Southern Provinces.⁵³ Other than stating in his copious situation reports that his columns inflicted heavy casualties on the Aros, Colonel Montanaro said nothing about the number of Aros who were killed and wounded by the troops under his command. Thus, for instance, on the 1st of February 1902, he reported to Sir Moor as follows:

Column No 1 fighting in Obinkita and Kwa countries under the command of Lt Col Festing DSO, suffered the following casualties: Lieutenant Cockerell, Royal Berkshire Regiment, and Lieutenant Sabine severely wounded, Sergeant-Major Jordan, Royal Berkshire Regiment, severely wounded, Sergeant Bramwell slightly wounded, 3 'Native' soldiers killed, 2 'Native' soldiers dangerously wounded, 2 were severely wounded and 2 slightly wounded, 1 Guide killed, 2 Carriers severely wounded and 2 slightly wounded. The 'enemy' resisted on several occasions and suffered heavily.⁵⁴

He continued:

No 2 column under the command of Lt Col Heneker, Canadian Militia, also met with severe fighting in the Kwa country. Here again the enemy suffered severe defeat owing to their obstinate and stubborn resistance. This column was supported by No 4 column under my personal command and I was able to judge for myself the necessity for returning to this country to inflict further punishment upon the inhabitants. No 2 column suffered the following casualties: 11 Native soldiers wounded (2 since dead), 1 Carrier killed, 6 Carriers wounded.⁵⁵

The fact that he said nothing about Aro casualties did not mean he did not know about Aro casualties, because his field commanders submitted some semblance of Aro casualties in their daily reports. And there is evidence that Aro casualty reports did arrive at his headquarters in Aro-Chukwu, but he ignored them in the numerous operational reports he sent to Sir Moor, Downing Street, and the Ministry of Defence in London. For example, the following two casualty statistics were filed by field

commanders: the first report was filed by Lieutenant Campbell of the 19th Hussars. According to Lieutenant Campbell, he and the troops under his command killed twenty-two people and wounded an unknown number of people between the 29th and 30th of January 1902 in Obiakpa.⁵⁶ The second report was filled by Captain G. G. Hewitt. According to Captain Hewitt, on the 30th of January 1902, he and his troops attacked and killed sixty (verified) Inokun people and wounded between 100 and 120 people on the left bank of the Cross River.⁵⁷

Those were the only casualty statistics that were reported by Colonel Montanaro throughout the Aro Expedition. The fact that Colonel Montanaro did not report the casualties his troops inflicted on the Aros was due to his and Britain's beliefs that the people's lives were worthless and that it was not part of the remit of British Officers, civil or military, to account for the life and death of natives. Because, as Colonel Montanaro stated in one of his numerous field reports when he ordered large districts of Aro-Chukwu to be destroyed by explosive charges, he considered that natives were engaged in unlawful resistance and were engaged in acts that endangered His Majesty's force,⁵⁸ and as such, they deserved to be killed. Thus, irrespective of whether they were fighting men or were women and children and the old and infirmed, caught in the middle of the conflict, it did not matter to him because they were all natives. All of them were the same, and as such, they were all implicated in the resistance and were collectively guilty and were collectively being punished; and their deaths were not worth mentioning in despatches and correspondences to London.

Therefore, as we have mentioned in the introduction, we have had to rely on Captain Milne-Home's method and Lieutenant Bush's report in order to determine the casualties inflicted on the Aros during this expedition and beyond. We must, however, point out that Captain Milne-Home's method and Lieutenant Bush's report are limited in their abilities to determine actual casualties because, first, they were based entirely on small arms ammunition (SAA); second, they excluded those natives who were wounded and subsequently died of their wounds; and third, they excluded those who were killed by artillery fire. Therefore, within that boundary, Captain Milne-Home's method was meant to understate the actual number of casualties relative to number of SAA expended. Accordingly, our computations of the casualties inflicted on the Aros by Aro Field Force are necessarily affected by the above limitation because they were based entirely on the SAA expended by columns 1, 2, and 4 during the operations between Aro-Chukwu and Akwete between 15th of January and 1st of February 1902. Thus, our casualty figures do not cover the entire Aro Expedition, and they excluded artillery rounds. However, by projection, we have

produced casualty figures that covered the entire Aro Expedition. The SAA statistics we have used in our calculation were extracted from Colonel Montanaro's report dated the 1st of February 1902. In the report, which covered his advance from Aro-Chukwu to Akwete, he wrote as follows:

Column 1 left Aro-Chukwu on the 16th January 1902 and arrived at Akwete on the 1st of February 1902. During the Column's march between Aro-Chukwu and Akwete the Column met with determined resistance from the enemy. Ammunition expended: 1 double common, 12 cases, 3 Star, 40 shrapnel shells, and 6700 small arms' rounds . . . Column 2 and 4 left Aro-Chukwu on the 15th of January 1902 and arrived at Itu the same day. The Columns left Itu for Enan on the 16th of January 1902 and ran into fierce enemy opposition in Kwa country. The Columns arrived at Akwete on the 1st of February 1902. Ammunition expended: 5 cases, 4 Star, 6 shrapnel shells, and 2860 small arms' rounds.⁵⁹

Thus, the total SAA expended by the two columns was 9,560 rounds. And at the rate of 12 SAA rounds per kill, it follows that Colonel Montanaro and his columns killed 797 Aros between the 15th of January and the 1st of February 1902. The actual casualties inflicted on the Aros by Colonel Montanaro and his columns during the period and, indeed, throughout the entire Aro Expedition may never be known. But they would have been considerably higher than 797 because of the large number of shrapnel shells (forty-six rounds) that were expended during the advance from Aro-Chukwu to Akwete. Shrapnel shells were anti-personnel. They were designed to kill and maim as many people as possible because when they explode, they spread lethal shrapnel indiscriminately over a considerable area of towns and villages. Thus, our calculations of the actual casualties suffered by the Aros during the entire expedition excluded the casualties inflicted by artillery rounds. Therefore, based on SAA rounds and the duration of the Aro Expedition, our projection showed that 3,808 Aros were killed by columns 1, 2, and 4. We arrived at that figure as follows: (i) The duration of the entire Aro Expedition was eighty-six days (active operations were from the 20th of December 1901 to the 15th of March 1902). (ii) According to Colonel Montanaro, columns 1, 2, and 4 conducted joint operations from the 15th of January to the 1st of February 1902. (iii) The number of days from the 15th of January to the 1st of February 1902 was eighteen active operational days. (iv) Therefore, we have assumed that Colonel Montanaro and his columns operated precisely the same way as they did from the 15th of January to the 1st February 1902 and that they killed at the rate of 797 every eighteen days (there is no evidence that Colonel Montanaro and his columns did not operate at the same rate as they did between the 15th of

January to the 1st of February 1902), then during the eighty-six days, columns 1, 2, and 4 killed $(86/18)797 = 3,808$ people.

The Aftermath: The Court Martial of Aro Chiefs

Throughout the volumes of despatches and correspondences, which flowed between the Colony and Protectorate of Southern Provinces and the Colonial Office during the arrest, trial, and execution of Aro Chiefs, Sir Moor and Secretary of State Chamberlain did not question the legality of the Royal Judicial Warrant and hence the authority, competence, and jurisdiction of the special Tribunals and military Commissions that were established under the warrant to try the Chiefs. And as shown in documents 1 and 2, the trials and executions of Aro Chiefs were swift. Sir Moor and, indeed, the British Government endorsed the types of military trials of civilians that were carried out under the supervision of British Army Officers because he wrote to Colonel Montanaro to emphasise his position that the leaders must be tried on the field by military Commission and Tribunals and that those who were found guilty should not only be executed publicly without delays but also their people must be brought to witness their execution.⁶⁰ Public executions, according to Sir Moor, would have very good effect on the country if the guilty were dealt with on the spot and the towns were rebuilt by those who participated in the murders. Sir Moor was an Englishman, therefore public hangings and beheadings were parts of his cultural heritage. He would have known that to the Indigenous people of Southern Provinces, hanging was a cultural abomination, that the people regarded hanging as a desecration of the land, that people who hung themselves were never buried on public burial grounds, and that they were taken and buried deep in the forest where their graves would never be found. Therefore he authorised public hangings and brought ordinary people to witness the desecration of their culture.

More importantly, the Chiefs who were hung were not soldiers, and Sir Moor and Chamberlain did not seek legal opinions as to whether they were subject to British military law and whether they could be Court Martialled, because that, in essence, was what the military Commissions and special Tribunals were since they were presided over by British Army Officers. Additionally, and again more importantly, Chamberlain and Sir Moor did not think whether or not the Chiefs should be given legal representations, particularly as they were unable to understand the proceedings of a Court Martial being held in English language. Crucially, there were no rights of appeal; and the rules of evidence as they were known in civil criminal cases did not apply because some of the Chiefs were arrested, tried, and executed

for what was nothing other than that they were unable to command the loyalty of their people and order them to lay down their arms and surrender. For example, Chief Alige, the Head Chief of Obinkita-Aro, was tried and executed because he was unable to command his people to surrender. Up to the time of his arrest on the 16th of January 1902, Chief Alige had been well-known for his loyalty to both the British Government and the government of the Protectorate of Southern Provinces. But Lieutenant Colonel Festing, commanding No. 1 Column, subsequently accused him of 'broken faith with the Government'.⁶¹

Chief Alige's case demonstrated how British justice worked for native people because he was not arrested for any offence, treasonable or otherwise. Instead on the 16th of January 1902, he voluntarily presented himself to Lieutenant Colonel Festing at his headquarters as he was required. Upon arrival at his headquarters, Lieutenant Colonel Festing promptly ordered his arrest. He was put on trial before a special tribunal on the ground that as the Head Chief of Obinkita-Aro, he failed to command his people to surrender and accept British rule⁶² and thereby knowingly impeded the progress of His Majesty's Armed Forces.⁶³ He was found guilty and executed on the 26th of January 1902. There was no evidence that he ever took up arms against the British Government or that he encouraged or instructed his people to do so.⁶⁴ The only evidence was that he was in Iyugor—an Obinkita-Aro town—when the troops of No. 1 Column were attacked. Therefore, the tribunal concluded that he knew of the attack and that he was one of the Chiefs who planned and led the attack. There was no evidence of defence or pleas on his behalf that he could have gone to Iyugor to try to persuade his people to surrender or that he was a loyal Chief and a free man, that he had the right to go to Iyugor any time he wanted, and that, for that matter, he could have gone to Iyugor for reasons unrelated to the attack on the column.

Antrobus of the Colonial Office

As the trials and executions and hangings progressed apace, the only disquiet about the legality of trials by military Commissions and special Tribunals was expressed in minutes written by a certain Antrobus at the Colonial Office. Antrobus seemed to have been very close to many secretaries of state for the colonies, because he summarised and minuted, copiously, all the Correspondences and Despatches that arrived at the Colonial Office from the Colony and Protectorate of Southern Provinces during the period. In one such correspondence and despatch on which he minuted on the 15th of February 1902, he pointed out to Chamberlain that military

Officers and all the special service Officers (SSO) did not have sufficient knowledge of local politics that would have enabled them to deal adequately with issues of the kind where native Chiefs had been accused of indirect opposition to the Aro Expedition.⁶⁵ However, he qualified his disquiet by arguing that Sir Ralph Moor could be trusted to weigh and consider the importance of all the prevailing political circumstances and that Sir Ralph Moor should be informed that Chamberlain agreed with his thinking that, at the close of operations, he would carry out careful review of any sentences imposed by a military tribunal on native Chiefs.

The indirect opposition about which Antrobus wrote and which led to the arrest, trial, and execution of Chief Alige of Obinkita-Aro also underpinned the charges brought against Chiefs Abiakari and Ekpenye-Ama of Ikorama by Captain G. G. Hewitt on the 22nd of January 1902. Captain G. G. Hewitt was the president of the military tribunal that subsequently tried the Chiefs. Therefore, he was the accuser, prosecutor, and judge. The charges he filed against Chiefs Abiakari and Ekpenye-Ama were as follows:

Knowingly doing acts calculated to imperil the success of a portion of His Majesty's forces—in that they (1) Did fail to forward despatches to the Officer commanding Uwet Column without delay—and in that when they were asked by Mr James, Political Officer Aro Field Force, for information concerning a road from Ikorama to Inoken country and provide guides for the road, did conceal the existence of such road and did fail to provide guides for the road when called upon to do so.⁶⁶

Like Chief Alige, Chief Abiakari and Chief Ekpenye-Ama did not, at any time, take up arms against the British Government and the government of the Protectorate of Southern Provinces. Instead their offences were that they did not help Aro Field Force when they were required to do so. In particular, they were accused of deliberately delaying to forward despatches and provide information and guides that would have assisted Aro Field Force in the occupation of their neighbours, the Uwets. Thus, while Antrobus might have been uncomfortable with the fact that the Chiefs were arrested and tried by special Tribunals and military Commissions because of their neutrality, he nevertheless did not see anything questionable regarding the legal foundations of Royal Judicial Warrants and the special Tribunals and military Commissions established under the power and authority of Royal Judicial Warrants. Instead he saw special Tribunals and military Commissions and the cases over which they presided as localised political issues, in a nascent British Protectorate in West Africa. Accordingly, he wanted his readers to accept that the trials and executions were integral parts of the birth pangs of the Protectorate of Southern Provinces and

asked them to leave the complicated and matured questions about the legality of Royal Judicial Warrants and issues of the competence of special Tribunals and military Commissions to the excellent judgements of Sir Ralph Moor.

Risley of the Colonial Office

But not all of Antrobus' readers agreed with him because he was fatally faulted by a certain Mr Risley. Risley was probably Antrobus' superior at the Colonial Office because he reviewed his minutes and counter-minuted on them. He faulted Antrobus for lack of evidence. Because he argued that Antrobus must first of all show whether or not Chiefs Abiakari and Ekpenye-Ama were subject to the jurisdiction of British military court. He argued that they could only be subjected to British military law if they were in the British Army and have committed offences under British military law, and that as things stood, the Chiefs had not committed any offence against the Admiralty's laws of war. He argued that if the territory in which the Chiefs lived was not part of the Colony and Protectorate of Southern Provinces, then it would mean that it was within neutral or enemy territory, therefore the Chiefs could not be interfered with and could only be tried before a British military court if they actively helped the enemy, provided that the Aro Expedition was an effective conquest of Aro territory. More importantly, he argued that under the prevailing legal circumstances, the assumption that the Aro Expedition could be construed as a conquest and an occupation of Aro territory was not tenable because irrespective of whether or not the territory was regarded as being part of the Colony and Protectorate of Southern Provinces, the Chiefs could only have been arrested and tried by a military court if there was a subsisting Martial Law in force. Accordingly, he concluded that since no Martial Law had been proclaimed at the time, it follows that the arrest and trial of the Chiefs were illegal. And we would add that on the basis of Risley's analyses, the trials of Chiefs Alige of Obinkita-Aro, Wosu Okoro-Torti of N'Doti, and Ochi-Endo of Akano by British military court were illegal and that their execution was therefore murder. They were publicly executed by hanging on the 1st of March 1902 for indirect opposition. Chiefs Wosu Okoro-Torti of N'Doti and Ochi-Endo were hanged for the so-called massacres at the treaty town of Obagu,⁶⁷ even though no evidence was ever adduced, which showed that they were at Obagu when the so-called massacres occurred, or that they even knew of it beforehand.⁶⁸

Risley's arguments were subsequently accepted by Chamberlain. Chamberlain's acceptance meant that the Chiefs who were executed by firing squad and those who were publicly hanged were murdered. It also meant that those who were imprisoned

in hard labour (IHL) were illegally imprisoned. Belatedly, Sir Moor was forced to accept that the legality, proceedings, and sentences imposed by special Tribunals and military Commission were flawed. Thus, in a despatch dated the 15th of February 1902, he conceded that careful revision of any sentences imposed by the special Tribunals and military Commissions would need to be carried out at the end of operations. More importantly, he conceded that the proceedings of the special Tribunals and military Commission were conducted in a hurry, and as such, it might have been impossible for them to have considered all the prevailing political circumstances and issues connected to the cases. In particular, he accepted that they did not give due consideration to the friendly relations that had existed between the people of Ikorama, Uwet, and Aro and that had Chiefs Abiakari and Ekpenye-Ama of Ikorama taken the actions they were required to take, it would have meant they were being compelled to betray people who had been their friends and neighbours for years and between whom there had been intermarriages.

But Chiefs Abiakari and Ekpenye-Ama did not deliberately refuse to get involved and withheld despatches in order to assist the enemy. Instead the Chiefs' defence was that they did not know where the despatches were to be sent because they could not read. Therefore they didn't know who the addressee was or where to send the despatches as their assistants who read letters for them were away at the time and that they only knew who the addressee was after their assistants returned and read the address to them. And for that, Chief Abiakari was sentenced to five years in hard labour. Chief Ekpenye-Ama was acquitted for lack of evidence. And as we have seen above, Sir Moor was an early convert and supporter of special Tribunals and military Commissions. Colonel Montanaro and his field commanders construed his support as a standing operational instruction authorising them to conduct summary trials and apportion punishments without further reference to him. Thus, to try to distance himself from the Tribunals and Commissions by instituting reviews of their proceedings at the conclusion of Aro Operations and in some cases after the death sentences imposed by them had been carried out was meaningless. Summary trials⁶⁹ and hangings were rampant and frequent occurrences in Southern Nigeria under Sir Lugard's Governorship.⁷⁰

Politics in the Lower Niger in 1902

While the military operations against Aro Confederation were still in progress, European agents of European firms and traders on the Lower Niger began to petition Sir Moor. In the petitions, the agents wanted the British Government to act on their

behalf because several of the towns around the main trading town of Sabagrega in the Lower Niger were in continuous state of unrest that serious cases of piracy were taking place, that their lives and properties have been made unsafe, and that trade in the surrounding towns has been brought to a halt. The unrests, they informed Sir Ralph Moor, were centred on the town of Egbedi—a town situated just below Sabagrega on one of the creeks leading to the main water highway, the Amasama Creek.⁷¹ The petitioners claimed that some of the natives of Egbedi travelled to another water thoroughfare called Taylor Creek and intercepted a canoe carrying people who were travelling from the treaty town of Zachrama⁷² to Sabagrega to sell their produce; that they seized four of the people in the canoe, killed and decapitated them; and that they subsequently exhibited the decapitated heads in Sabagrega and in the towns on the neighbouring creeks. The petitioners claimed that during the exhibition of the decapitated heads, they and the inhabitants of Sabagrega and the neighbouring towns were threatened and were told that the decapitated heads exemplified the method they intended to adopt in the settlement of all future disputes and that thence forward they would deal with their own disputes because they do not accept that the authority of the British Government applied to them and their land. The petitioners claimed that the inhabitants of Egbedi have kept the decapitated heads as trophies and that, in addition to the general unrest they have caused in the Lower Niger, they were implicated in other issues, particularly the issues relating to a pirate called Bibi-Cila,⁷³ who was wanted on charges of the murders he committed during numerous acts of piracy.

On the 23rd of February 1902, the agents sent further petition to Sir Moor. On this occasion, they complained that the unrests in the Lower Niger have spread to the towns of Kayama, Otuwa, and Amasama. They told Sir Moor that while they thought it was vital that these towns must be dealt with in due course, the most pressing case was Egbedi. They argued that Egbedi and its inhabitants needed to be taught some harsh lessons. Accordingly, Sir Moor issued ultimatums to Egbedi Chiefs to the effect that they must surrender the people who were responsible for the murders of the people from Zachrama; that they must surrender the heads of the murdered victims, which they were holding as trophies, in order that they may be handed over to their families for proper burials; and that the Chiefs must arrest and surrender the pirate, Bibi-Cila, who was reported to be hiding in the town.

Major Hedson, Indian Staff Corps

The people of Egbedi ignored Sir Moor's ultimatum and instead threatened to arrest and execute any more messengers he sent to Egbedi. Therefore, Sir Moor authorised Colonel Montanaro to plan and implement military operations to punish the inhabitants of Egbedi, Kayama, Otuwa, and Amasama and re-establish British control. Colonel Montanaro recommended Major Hedson as the commander of the operations because, as a member of Aro Field Force, Major Hedson made a name for himself as a fanatical and ruthless commander. He had no regard for the lives of the natives with whom he came into contact. He had been mentioned in despatches and correspondences, and according to despatches and correspondences, he fought a good war as a column commander on Aro Field Force and inflicted heavy casualties on the enemy on numerous occasions. He had been recommended for the award of Victoria Cross for inflicting heavy casualties on unarmed people who were picketing their water supply and had prevented his column's Carriers from taking water and thereby denied his troops access to water. On the impending operations, Major Hedson was accompanied by Captain Beverley, Lieutenant Whigham, Divisional Commissioner R. Granville, District Commissioner C. E. Harrison as the Political Officer, and Dr McCraith, district Medical Officer.

Sir Moor's instructions to Major Hedson were that he should explore opportunities for peaceful settlement. He was to try to convince the people to give up their opposition and comply with Britain's demands. If they complied without conducting Active Military Operations, then they must be dealt with by District Commissioner Harrison, who had been issued with a Royal Judicial Warrant authorising him to establish a special court to try the perpetrators of the crimes. However, if Active Military Operations had to be undertaken in order to arrest the culprits, their trials would be conducted by a military tribunal presided over by Major Hedson, the Officer commanding troops. In addition, Sir Moor authorised Major Hedson to use force to compel all the towns that were involved in the unrests to make restitutions and to exert severe punishments on the towns to the extent that they would be deterred from resisting Britain in the future. He was also authorised to determine the nature of the punishments to be exerted in consultation with District Commissioner Harrison. He was instructed that once he had decided upon the punishments, he must ensure that they were carried out without delay. More importantly, he was instructed that he must, on no account, allow the operations to extend beyond the areas between Kayama to the north, Otuwa to the south, the Amasama Creek to the west, and the left bank of the River Niger to the east. All the towns within those areas that were implicated in acts of piracy must be severely punished, and examples

must be set such that people in the area would be deterred from such action in the future.

On the 23rd of February 1902, Major Hedson and his force of fifty Rank and File of the 3rd Battalion West African Frontier Force left Forcados for Asaba and thence along the creek some distance to the north of Sabagrega. While he was thus en route, friendly and loyal informers told him that the pirate, Bibi-Cila, and his supporters attacked the treaty people on Taylor Creek to the south of his position. Major Hedson immediately sent messages to the Chiefs of the surrounding towns, summoning them to a meeting. The Chiefs arrived armed in their canoes and made demonstration in front of Sabagrega, but they kept to the opposite bank of the River Niger. At that stage, although they were armed, they did not attack Major Hedson and his troops. Their only wrongdoings were that they were armed and that they demanded that the meeting be held with the River Niger between themselves and Major Hedson and his troops. However, the facts that they refused to cross from their side of the River Niger and that they were armed were interpreted by Major Hedson as hostile acts, which imperilled His Majesty's force.⁷⁴ What Major Hedson's interpretation meant was that the Chiefs and their people would have to be attacked, arrested, and put on trial; and if found guilty, hanged. Thus, if the Chiefs would not come to him, he would go to them and force them to comply with Britain's demands. However, he did not fire on the Chiefs because he had been informed by friendly and loyal people that Egbedi people held both banks of the Egbedi Creek, exactly opposite Sabagrega; that they had dug rifle trenches on both banks; and that they intended to prevent British troops from navigating Egbedi Creek in order to land and attack Egbedi. Egbedi was a town that was built on both banks of the creek.

Lieutenant-Commander D'Oyly, RN

In February 1902, when the operations in the Lower Niger were being planned, it had been impossible to send a larger force because the troops of the Southern Nigeria Regiment were all deployed to the Aro Expedition. Thus, there were no alternatives other than to request the assistance of the Royal Navy to cover the landing areas and maintain bases on the water. At the time, a Royal Navy ship, the HMS *Thrush*, was lying at Akassa, and its captain, Lieutenant Commander W. H. D'Oyly, was asked to render any assistance he could if Major Hedson were to request assistance. And Major Hedson was informed that he must send any request for assistance directly to Lieutenant Commander D'Oyly at Akassa. More importantly, Major Hedson was told

that he must not request assistance that would conflict with Lieutenant Commander D'Oyly's current instructions because his instructions did not permit him to operate on land. Accordingly, on the 23rd of February 1902, Major Hedson contacted Lieutenant Commander D'Oyly for assistance in men and guns because he was unable to obtain reinforcement and guns as the Aro Operations were still in progress. Additionally, he asked for stretchers, medical and surgical supplies, and a paramedic to assist Dr McCraith, the patrol's Medical Officer. On the receipt of Major Hedson's message, Lieutenant Commander D'Oyly immediately left Akassa to rendezvous with Major Hedson and his troops at Sabagrega, bringing with him two seventy-foot, twelve-knot launchers from the marine superintendent of the Southern Nigerian Protectorate, two steel canoes (fitted with awnings), a steam cutter, and a sailing cutter. With him as the Officer commanding, he took sub lieutenant D. F. Moir, RN; S. McCulloch, RN; twenty-three Blue Jackets; eight marines; an engine room artificer; Chief Stoker, heading stoker; two stokers; an armourer; a carpenter's mate; the ship's steward, and a Mr Negus, a volunteer from Akassa. Additionally, he brought 1 Maxim Gun and 1 Squadron of Maxim Gunners, a Maxim Gun, two three-pounder Hotchkiss guns mounted on steel lighters, and two five-barrelled Maxim Nordenfelts guns, with one mounted on the steam cutter and the other on the sailing cutter.

On the 25th of February 1902, Lieutenant Commander D'Oyly, in consultation with Major Hedson, decided to force a passage through the creek in order to destroy Egbedi. On entering Egbedi Creek, the three-pounder Hotchkiss guns were brought to bear on the portion of the town on each bank. There was no opposition until the flotilla was half way up the creek and the cutter had been dropped alongside one of the launches and two dinghies filled with soldiers preparing to land as flanking party on the bank were approaching the town. Heavy fire from some muzzle-loading cap guns was poured into the launches from both banks. The flotilla opened fire with the three-pounders, Nordenfelts, the Maxim, and rifles, driving the defenders from both banks. The launches pressed home the attacks, clearing the surrounding forest before them with the Maxim and five-barrelled Nordenfelts fire on each bank. Once both banks and the surrounding forest were cleared, troops with the Maxim Gun were landed on the left bank, and the advance on inner Egbedi commenced. As the troops advanced towards the town, the launches opened fire from a range of about 700 yards, driving the town's defenders out of the town. At the same time, the flanks opened fire and thereby rendered further defence of the town impossible. Egbedi was taken and destroyed on the 25th of February 1902.

As soon as the portion of the town on the left bank of the creek was opened up, Lieutenant Commander D'Oyly brought all his starboard guns to bear on it from 800 yards (732 m) range. The destruction of this portion of the town was scheduled to signal the completion of the first phase of operations because the plan was to partially raze portions of the town on the right bank and break off the operations. The objective was to convey false impression to natives that the British Government had finished with them and hence deceive them into a false sense of relief that they had weathered the British Government's onslaughts and therefore would not expect further attacks, only for the troops to then return and launch surprise attacks two days later. As Major Hedson and Lieutenant Commander D'Oyly and their troops left for Sabagrega, the people of Egbedi opened fire from both banks. They kept the firing up all the way along the creek until Lieutenant Commander D'Oyly again deployed his heavy armaments to suppress the fire from the banks and ensure the troops' safe passage to Sabagrega.

On the 27th of February 1902, the entire troop, in launches, moved at full speed up Egbedi Creek to resume the attack and destruction of Egbedi. The attack took the people by surprise, with many of them on the banks going about their ordinary business, and some in their canoes on the creek fishing when Lieutenant Commander D'Oyly and Major Hedson and their troops arrived on the scene and opened fire on them. According to Lieutenant Commander D'Oyly, panic ensued, with people jumping into the River Niger and some fleeing into the surrounding forest. The portion of Egbedi on the right bank was soon brought within the ranges of the guns and shelled, causing more panic. At the same time, the launches sped to attack the portion of the town on the left bank. The town, according to Lieutenant Commander D'Oyly, was full of people when the launches arrived and opened fire. The people quickly fled out of the town. As the steamboat was deployed to clear the bank with its Nordenfelts guns, the launches were anchored and troops immediately disembarked. The troops entered the portion of Egbedi on the left bank and completely demolished it until not a single wall was left standing. The next day, the 28th of February 1902, Lieutenant Commander D'Oyly and Major Hedson and their troops attacked the portion of Egbedi on the right bank. As of that date, the town was completely deserted, but the troops, nonetheless, demolished it in precisely the same way they had demolished the portion on the left bank the previous day.

On the 1st of March 1902, Major Hedson and Lieutenant Commander D'Oyly and their troops sailed northwards to attack Kayama District. The attacks on Kayama were easier because the creek was wider. Therefore during the attacks, the launches could manoeuvre more freely, and they were soon manoeuvred into range and

anchored. And from their anchored position, they opened fire on Kayama and the surrounding forests with Maxim and Nordenfelts guns. The troops were immediately landed without opposition because by then the people had fled, and the towns were deserted. The troops visited each of the towns in the district and burned them to the ground. The people had fled in a hurry, leaving a great quantity of livestock behind as well as seventy large canoes, three small cannons, and some muzzle-loading cap guns. The canoes, guns, and cannons were destroyed. The livestock were rounded up and confiscated. The next day, 2nd of March 1902, four Chiefs went to Sabagrega to surrender. They were ordered to go back home to collect and bring in guns and ammunition from their people, which, in essence, meant that they were sent home to go and disarm their people. That was the same thing as sending the Chiefs home to go and commit collective suicide because unless they had been authorised by their people to surrender to the British Government on their behalf, they automatically became collaborators and would be shot. Major Hedson and Lieutenant Commander D'Oyly did not need to sail westward because on the 2nd of March 1902, the Chiefs of the towns on Amasama Creek arrived in Sabagrega and capitulated voluntarily. Therefore, the occupation and destruction of Otuwa on the 3rd of March 1902 concluded the operations in the Lower Niger.

Casualties: 40 Killed

On the 9th of March 1902, Lieutenant Commander D'Oyly formally reported to Captain Ed. P. Ash, RN, senior naval Officer, West Coast of Africa, on board HMS *Pearl*. In the report, Lieutenant Commander D'Oyly declared that he and the force he commanded killed forty people. He reported that he did not know the exact number of people who were wounded during the operations, but that he and his party came upon several wounded persons lying about in the bush. Major Hedson had Dr McCraith, district Medical Officer, in his party and Lieutenant Commander D'Oyly brought Royal Navy's paramedics and stretcher bearers at Major Hedson's request; yet when they came upon people who were wounded as a direct result of the military operations, they commanded they did not stop to offer humanitarian medical assistance. There is no evidence that the persons who were lying there in the bush, wounded and bleeding to death, were armed or that they posed any danger to His Majesty's force before and after they were shot and wounded by His Majesty Edward VII's force. If the wounded people had been armed, the memoranda of field operations directed that they were to be disarmed, that their arms and ammunition were to be confiscated, and that the Commanding Officer must account for the exact number of guns recovered in his report.⁷⁵ Accordingly, since Lieutenant Commander D'Oyly said nothing about guns being recovered from any of the wounded people,

we must conclude that they were unarmed and were non-combatants. And it seems quite odd that District Commissioner Harrison, the Political Officer, did not write any reports on a military operation on which he was the leading Civil Authority, that he was a participant-witness, and that as the Civil Authority and leader of the patrol, he did not instruct the Officer commanding and his Medical Officer to render medical help to wounded people, combatant or non-combatant.

Summary of Casualties 1901–1902

Row 1 of table 1 shows the casualties inflicted on the Aros by British troops commanded by Colonel Arthur Montanaro. Row 2 shows the casualties inflicted on the people of Agbedi, Kayama, and Otuwa by British forces under the commands of Major Hedson of the Indian Staff Corps and Lieutenant Commander D’Oyly of the Royal Navy.

Killed	Wounded	Where	When
3,808	Unknown	Aro	20 December 1901–15 March 1902
40	Unknown	The Lower Niger: Egbedi, Kayama and Otuwa	25 February 1902–3 March 1902
Total: 3848	Unknown	Aro and Lower Niger	December 1901–March 1902

Table 1.1: Total casualties in the Aro Expedition and Lower Niger, 1901–1902.

Destruction of Aro Towns and Villages

On the 28th of December 1901, Lieutenant Colonel Festing and his troops occupied Aro-Chukwu. And true to Sir Moor’s operational instructions, he razed Aro-Chukwu.

On the 2nd March 1902, Lieutenant Commander D’Oyly told Major Hedson that he had completed his mission, that he and his flotilla were returning to Akassa because the waterways had been cleared, and that all resistance and opposition to British rule had been crushed. He informed Major Hedson that the people had fled their homes, that they were scattered in the bush, and that he had destroyed the following towns: Egbedi, Amasama, Kayama, and Otuwa.

A Report to Downing Street and the Admiralty

On the 13th of March 1902, Sir Ralph Moor wrote to Lieutenant Commander D'Oyly to commend him and his force for the assistance they gave to Major Hedson. He told Lieutenant Commander D'Oyly that the manner he and his men carried out their expedition to the Lower Niger was of the highest standard characteristics of His Majesty's Navy. He informed him that his action will meet the approval of the commander-in-Chief and the Lords of the Admiralty and that the circumstances of the action will be reported to the Colonial Office from where particulars of his expedition will be forwarded to the Admiralty.

On the 16th of March 1902, Sir Moor reported to Chamberlain to reiterate the reasons he authorised the operations in the Lower Niger when the Aro Expedition was yet to be concluded. In the report, which was a summary of the reports written by Major Hedson and Lieutenant Commander D'Oyly, he censored the sections of the report in which Lieutenant Commander D'Oyly described the casualties he inflicted on the people, the confiscation of livestock, and the destruction of towns, homes, and property. Instead he informed Chamberlain of his belief that the events taking place in the Lower Niger required urgent and decisive action, otherwise the lives of European agents in charge of the factories in the Lower Niger and their properties and those of the Royal Niger Company in their stations would have been rendered insecure. He claimed that had he not taken immediate steps, the whole of the tribes of the Lower Niger would have risen and engaged in acts of piracy, that they would have attacked one another, that they would have revived ancient feuds, and that the whole of the trade in the Lower Niger would have been stopped for the entire season.

Sir Moor was at pain to justify not only his action in authorising the campaigns in the Lower Niger and calling on the Royal Navy for assistance, but also he was at pain to justify Lieutenant Commander D'Oyly's involvement in the operations. Because he felt the need to inform Chamberlain that it had been impossible to send a larger contingent of troops because all the troops available to the Southern Nigeria Regiment was deployed in the interior to the Aro Expedition, that there had been no alternatives other than to request assistance from HMS *Thrush* to cover the landing areas and maintain bases on the water, and that he hoped that were the circumstances to be made known to the Lords of the Admiralty, they would approve of the action taken by Lieutenant Commander D'Oyly. Additionally, Sir Moor stated that the operations in the Lower Niger were conducted under the direction of Colonel Montanaro, the commander of Aro Field Force, and that the operations

would come within the scope of any recognition, which may be accorded for the work done in connection with that force.

Sir Moor said nothing to Chamberlain about the alleged lawlessness, piracy, and murders, which European petitioners claimed were taking place and which led him to authorise the patrol and the death of forty people and the destruction of the towns of Egbedi, Amasama, Kayama, and Otuwa. Yet in his despatch to Downing Street dated the 6th of February 1902, and subsequent memoranda of operational instructions to Major Hedson dated the 15th of February 1902, Sir Moor catalogued the crimes that were being perpetrated by the inhabitants of the above towns against treaty towns and villages. He catalogued the deleterious impacts of the crimes on trade and European lives and assets. In particular, he thundered that the murderers of the four people from Zachrama must be arrested and brought to justice and that the pirate, Bibi-Cila, who was hiding in Egbedi, should be hunted down and arrested and his depredations brought to an end. The Chiefs of Egbedi, Amasama, Kayama, and Otuwa were to be deposed, arrested, and put on trial. If they submitted without formal military operations against them, they were to be arrested and tried by Political Officer Harrison, who had been issued with a Royal Judicial Warrant that authorised him to establish a special court for their trial. However, if they refused to submit and formal military operations were conducted against them, they were to be arrested and tried by a special tribunal presided over by Major Hedson; and if found guilty, they were to be hanged in front of their people.

Therefore, it was odd that Sir Moor wrote an entire despatch titled 'State of Affairs in the Lower Niger' to Downing Street to justify the operation in the Lower Niger in order to depose, arrest, and try the Chiefs of the Lower Niger and then wrote an entirely new despatch titled 'Operations in the Lower Niger' in which he reported the outcomes of the resolution of the unacceptable state of the Lower Niger without informing Chamberlain whether or not Bibi-Cila⁷⁶ and the offending Chiefs were arrested, tried, and deposed or executed by hanging or imprisoned in hard labour or found not guilty and freed from detention. The issue here is that no Chiefs were ever arrested or tried. And many of the negative and gory tales of severed human heads displayed as trophies that Sir Moor detailed in the state of the Lower Niger never occurred in the first place; instead they were for the consumption of White British audiences. And they helped to condition White Britons and convince them of the barbaric natives Britain was fighting and pacifying on their behalf. For evidence that the so-called natives of the Lower Niger were not committing the barbaric acts Sir Moor used to justify his authorisation of military operations in the Lower Niger, we point to Lieutenant Commander D'Oyly's report. In his report, Lieutenant

Commander D'Oyly stated that when he returned with his flotilla on the 27th of February 1902 to resume the attacks on Egbedi, the attacks took the people by surprise because they were going about their daily lives on the banks of the River Niger, and others were sitting in their canoes fishing peacefully when the launches and gunboats arrived on the scene and opened fire with the Maxim and the five-barrelled Nordenfelts guns. He wrote that people jumped into the Niger, that they fled into the bush, and that the troops landed and destroyed the town until all the walls were flat on the ground.⁷⁷ He did not, anywhere in his report, state that he saw and found the severed heads Sir Moor said must be recovered and given to their families for burial. Accordingly, if acts of piracy, violence, and lawlessness, which resulted in killing and destruction of properties and livelihoods, were committed, they were committed by His Majesty's Government. And we believe that acting under the mandate of the British Government, Lieutenant Commander D'Oyly and Major Hedson killed more than forty people and that they wounded many more.

The Illegality of British Rule in Southern Nigeria

In our chronology, the period 1900–1930 corresponded to the period when Britain began the political and military processes that eventually culminated in the establishment of the Colony and Protectorate of Southern Nigeria. The processes included the merger of the Colony and Protectorate of Lagos with Central, Eastern, and Western Provinces to form the Colony and Protectorate of Southern Nigeria in May 1906. Therefore, it is appropriate to use this opening chapter to briefly examine the legality of some of the methods that enabled those processes and hence Britain's occupation and imposition of its rule on Southern Nigeria.

British rule involved occupation; and in the opening decade of the 20th century when Britain's Empire was at its zenith of expansive power, its occupation of the independent people, countries, and territories in what became Southern Nigeria was illegal in international law. During the 20th century, a foreign power could occupy foreign peoples and their countries and territories and establish jurisdiction over them under international law in accordance with the Rights and Privileges of Conquest. But the occupying power could only claim the Rights and Privileges of Conquest under strict legal conditions. The first condition was that war must have been declared between two countries or territories. In other words, there must have been a subsisting state of total war between two countries or territories. Second, the countries or territories would have had to have prosecuted the war to the end. Third, one of the countries or territories would have had to have prevailed over the other

and subsequently impose Martial Law which, under international law, permitted the conquering power to claim the Rights and Privileges of Conquest and occupy and establish legal jurisdiction over the conquered people and their countries and territories. Fourth, the exercise of the Rights and Privileges of Conquest must occur within the recognised and subsisting borders of the countries or territories prior to conquest and occupation. What the latter condition said was that in exercising its Rights and Privileges of Conquest, the occupying power must not alter, change, expand, contract, minify, or merge the borders of the countries or territories with those of other countries or territories. Fifth, the occupying power must subsequently relinquish jurisdiction and grant independence to the conquered countries or territories within their pre-war borders.

Under the above conditions, British rule in Southern Nigeria was illegal because when Britain began its military operation that led to the occupation of Southern Nigeria, war had not been declared⁷⁸ between it and the independent Indigenous people of Southern Nigeria; and throughout Britain's occupation, war was never declared. Therefore a state of war did not exist between Britain and the people, countries, and territories that became Southern Nigeria throughout the duration of British rule. This was because British military patrols and punitive military expeditions such as the Benin Punitive Expedition of 1897, Aro Expedition of 1901–1902, Asaba Hinterland and Ekumeku Expeditions of 1902–1904, Onitsha Hinterland Expeditions of 1903–1909, Munshi Punitive Patrols 1910–1912, and the entire British military expeditions, escorts, and patrols that were conducted throughout Southern Provinces between 1900 and 1930 did not amount to a declaration of war and the existence of a state of war between Britain and the Indigenous people, pre-British countries, and territories of Southern Nigeria. Because military expeditions, patrols, and escorts, punitive or otherwise, had no basis in international law, then and now, and they do not enable Britain to impose Martial Law and claim the Rights and Privileges of Conquest as, for example, Sir Lugard did during the Egba Uprising.⁷⁹ Therefore British occupation of Southern Provinces was illegal in international law because the occupation amounted to land piracy, and like its counterpart on the high seas, it was illegal and criminal in international law.

As we have shown above during our discussions of the minutes to Secretary of State Chamberlain by officials at the Colonial Office following the conclusion of the Aro Expedition and the subsequent trial of the Aro Chiefs by 1902 as Aro territories were being occupied and Aro Chiefs were being tried and hung, it had become increasingly clear within British legal establishment that Britain's occupation of Southern Nigeria and the methods it had used to achieve that occupation were illegal. But it was not

until 1911 that the Attorney General became concerned enough about the legality of Britain's occupation and jurisdiction in Southern Nigeria and the methods it had used—and was still using—to achieve occupation and jurisdiction, namely, the punitive military expeditions, patrols, and military or armed Police escorts, that he wrote to A. G. Boyle, the acting Governor of Nigeria, about his concerns. He had also become concerned about the future, particularly the legal consequences of the above mentioned military operations for the British Officers who commanded them, because a state of war did not exist between Britain and natives.⁸⁰ Accordingly, he impressed his legal concerns on A. G. Boyle. He counselled that British Parliament should pass legislation to legalise military operations and the collateral damages flowing from those operations in the Colony and Protectorate of Southern Provinces. Thus, in a despatch dated the 14th of August 1911, Boyle informed Lewis Harcourt, MP, the Secretary of State for the Colonies, of the need to for such legislation. He wrote:

My attention has again been called by the Attorney General to the fact that the necessity still exists for the passing of legislation to legalise military patrols and operations. In order to justify such action against tribes and villages a state of war must exist or have been declared. Officers in command of these patrols would still, despite the limitations of the Supreme Court jurisdiction, be liable to action for damages in the Supreme Court, seeing that its jurisdiction would extend to any case where a non-native is concerned.⁸¹

It is not clear whether the legislation was eventually passed because there is no record of such a legislation being passed within Nigerian documents, but what was clear, however, was that Westminster expended a considerable amount of energy and time grappling with the issues raised by the Attorney General.⁸² But the Attorney General was wrong in his interpretation. Therefore his counsel was illegal in international law because, first, he based his legal counsel on the prevailing thoughts in Britain that pre-British Southern Nigeria was terra nullius. The question then is if the land was indeed terra nullius, there would have been no resistance to occupation, and the need for military operations of any kind in respect of which he counselled legalisation in English Law would not have arisen. In other words, he was saying that Britain needed to use legislation to legalise its continuing occupation of fallow and uninhabited land, which it had acquired through the use of illegal military operations. Second, and more importantly, the Attorney General was wrong because by counselling legislation, he accepted that war had not been declared between Britain and natives and that, since a state of war did not exist, there was no subsisting Martial Law in force. Britain therefore needed to use legislation to give

legal sanctity to its military operations to enable it to establish its Rights and Privileges of Conquest. This raises the question: Was the British Parliament competent to pass legislation to enable the British Government to legalise its jurisdiction over independent people and their countries and territories in Southern Nigeria? The answer is no. Because the passage of the type of legislation the Attorney General had counselled amounted to legislating in order to legalise illegal acts that had already occurred, whereby jurisdiction had been established in contravention of the conditions set out above under international law. It was—and still is—illegal in international law because such legislation amounted to extraterritorialism, because it meant the enforcement of laws passed by domestic parliament, in this case the House of Commons, in order to establish jurisdiction over independent people in foreign countries and territories. In other words, it was illegal because it was equivalent to piracy in the air, land, and sea, because Britain relied on Ordinances, passed by the House of Commons, to establish jurisdiction (extraterritorial) over the airspace, land, and territorial waters of the areas that became Southern Nigeria without formal declaration of war and conquest. And the existence of Protectorate agreements and treaties between Britain and the Indigenous people of Southern Provinces does not include permission to establish jurisdiction.

Thus, the Attorney General wanted to use legislation to place Britain's military expeditions, patrols, and escorts operations in the Colony and Protectorate of Southern Provinces on legal footing according to existing international law. Therefore his aim and method were to use English Law to shield British Army Officers, who commanded illegal military operations, from legal responsibilities for the consequences of the operations they commanded for the Indigenous people of Southern Provinces. Again, the Attorney General was wrong in his interpretations and hence his definition of the scope of liability for damages because he limited the scope of liability to British Army Officers and excluded civil colonial officials, administrators, and above all, their employer, namely, the Crown and its representative, the British Government. And contrary to the Attorney General's belief, the Crown, the British Government, the colonial army, the Civil Officers and administrators, and the contemporary of the Colonial Office, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, are liable for damages for deaths and destruction at the hands of British troops during the period. The descendants of the people who were killed had and still have the right to sue the Crown, the British Government, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, the Crown's Estate, and the surviving estates of

British Army commanders and Sir Lugard et al. for damages under contemporary international law.

Chapter 2: Ogoni

Politics in Oron, 1900–1901

Leslie Probyn, the Acting High Commissioner of the Protectorate of Southern Provinces, authorised the Oron punitive expedition in September 1901.⁸³ According to Probyn, the people of Oron District were being punished because they refused to pay the fines that were imposed on them by the British Government. The fines were imposed because the people of Oron refused to accord recognition to the authority and jurisdiction of the British Government on their land. The people had summarily rejected British insistence that they should cede themselves and their land to the protection of His Majesty's Government and had denied F. S. James, Britain's Acting Divisional Commissioner and Political Officer, entry to Oron's territories. The political circumstance under which the people of Oron prevented F. S. James from exercising the authority of his office on their territories was that up to 1900, when Britain began to infringe on their land, they considered themselves to be an independent nation, having successfully seen off British pressures to force them to enter into a Protectorate agreement and cede themselves and their territory to Britain. Britain, for its part, had strategic interests in occupying Oron because, first, Oron lay across its way from Old Calabar to Bonny, and second, and more important, an independent Oron constituted an impediment to the communication network it planned to install to link occupied Old Calabar to occupied Bonny and beyond. Thus, by January 1901, Britain and the people of Oron were headed, inexorably, towards confrontation because, without telling the people, Britain proceeded to incorporate Oron District into Central Division and appointed James Watts as acting District Commissioner. But since the people of Oron continued to assert their independence and continued to bar British Government's representatives from their territory, District Commissioner Watts was limited to exercising control and jurisdiction by proxy,⁸⁴ sending messages to Oron Chiefs through their neighbouring friends. The expectation was that they would gradually come round and accept the realities of the new political order that was unfolding around them.

But the problems with Watt's arrangements and expectations were that no one had informed the people of Oron that they were no longer an independent nation, that they had become imperial subjects, that their country had become a district under the jurisdiction of Britain's Central Division, that a British District Commissioner had been appointed to rule over them on Britain's behalf, and that the messages being delivered to their Chiefs were sent by their newly appointed British District

Commissioner. Nevertheless, issues subsequently came to a head in May 1901 when F. S. James, Acting Divisional Commissioner of Central Division, set out from Old Calabar headquarters on a grand tour of his division. At the conclusion of his tours of the other districts of the division, he decided to visit Oron on his return journey to Old Calabar. But the news of his impending visit and journey via Oron to Old Calabar preceded him to Oron. The people of Oron promptly took steps to close their borders. Thus, when James arrived at the border, the people refused to grant him passage. James applied for assistance, and troops were sent to the district in a show of force. The people were eventually brought under British jurisdiction and control, fines were imposed, and one of the town's prominent people was taken hostage⁸⁵ and conveyed to Old Calabar as a guarantee of future behaviour on the part of the people and also as a guarantee that they would reopen the roads they had blocked. The conditions having been fulfilled, the hostage was restored to his family. But the people refused to pay the fines and reimposed border control.

That was where matters rested until the 5th of September 1901, when James' report reached Probyn. Probyn considered the matter to be more serious than James had taken it because the most militant Oron districts whose inhabitants refused passage to James lay on the main routes, which carried Britain's communications lines between Old Calabar and Bonny and were used for the despatch of messages and mails. Therefore, Probyn decided that the people in those districts had to be punished; otherwise they could, in the future, rise up and disable the telegraph lines and disrupt the communication links between Old Calabar and Bonny. Additionally, he complained that before the amount of the fines, which the Orons refused to pay, was set, he sought the advice of the native Political Agent and the District Commissioner of Old Calabar; and on the basis of their advice, he was assured that the amount of the fines was within the means of the inhabitants of the districts. The amounts of the fines were not stated but non-payment convinced Probyn that the towns' refusal to pay was a deliberate act of defiance and not because they were poor and were unable to pay. Probyn also consulted Colonel Montanaro, the commander of Aro Field Force, as to the impact military operations against Oron District would have on the forthcoming Aro Expedition. He was reassured because Colonel Montanaro counselled that the people of Oron needed to be crushed and that the levying of the fines on the towns and the despatch of the necessary force to enforce payments would in no way interfere with his expedition against Aro Confederacy. More importantly, he wanted a large force to be sent because he wanted the militant districts to be vanquished and totally destroyed, because he did

not want his communications links to Opobo and Old Calabar to be disrupted when the Aro Expedition did get under way on the 20th of December 1901.

Captain Venour

Accordingly, Probyn duly authorised a punitive military patrol to Oron. The column, consisting of 250 Rank and File, was commanded by Captain Venour and supported by Captain Bromley, Lieutenant Parry, and Lieutenant Campbell, 19th Hussars, with 1 Maxim Gun and 1 Squadron of Maxim Gunners. The column left Old Calabar on the 5th of September 1901 and arrived in the village of Ukoko the following day. While at Ukoko, Captain Venour, who was also the patrol's Political Officer, was informed by 'friendlies'⁸⁶—natives who had accepted British rule, were friendly and loyal to Britain—that they had been told by the people of Oron to warn Captain Venour to turn back and return to Old Calabar, because if he proceeded any further, he and his column would be opposed. But undeterred by the warning, Captain Venour continued the advance to the village of Oyubia. Oyubia was deserted, but as soon as he left the village, two shots rang out. The shots were pre-arranged signal because within the hour after the shots were fired, Captain Venour's scouts made contact with the Orons, whose fighting strength was estimated at 300 strong.⁸⁷ But as the column pressed forward and the Maxim Gunners were brought into action, the opposition retired into the surrounding forest and subsequently into the deserted village of Orua-Quan, where they made a stand and engaged Captain Venour's advance guard. The column returned fire, and the Maxim again went into action and eventually drove the defenders out of the village. The captain then advanced on the deserted village of N'Kanjor. The village was occupied after brief exchanges of fire. Between the 10th and 13th of September 1901, Captain Venour divided his column into several detachments, with each detachment allocated to specific area. During the period, the detachments patrolled the entire countryside until the 19th of September 1901 when the people of Oron capitulated.

Casualties: 83 (32) Killed

On the 5th of September 1901, British troops under the command of Captain Venour killed twelve people during the advance on the village of N'Kanjor.

On the 7th of September 1901, British troops under the command of Captain Venour pursued fleeing villagers into the surrounding forest and killed six of them, including

the village's Chief. According to Captain Venour, many of the villagers were wounded, and two of the wounded subsequently died of their wounds because he found their bodies in the neighbouring village of Oyuko-Asang, where they had bled to death. Thus on the 7th of September 1901, British troops killed eight people.

On the 10th of September 1901, Lieutenant Parry launched a surprise attack on the village of Etiabong. During the attack, Lieutenant Parry and his detachment killed twelve villagers and captured three of the village Chiefs.

Thus, between the 5th and 10th of September 1901, Captain Venour and the troops under his command killed thirty-two people in Oron District.

The number of people who were killed was considerably higher than thirty-two, particularly on the 19th of September 1901, when the people who were fleeing N'Kanjor were caught and trapped between Lieutenant Parry and Lieutenant Campbell and their troops as they fled to Etiabong. The combine operations by Lieutenants Parry and Campbell and their troops must have exacted a heavy toll because they precipitated the collapse of resistance and the eventual surrender of the people of Oron on the 19th of September 1901. We will never know the exact number of the people who were killed between the 5th and 19th of September 1901 because Captain Venour did not leave SAA statistics, therefore Captain Milne-Home's method and Lieutenant Bush's report are not useful here. However, based on the figure of thirty-two, the number of people who were killed during the operations was eighty. This figure was arrived at as follows: (i) during the six days of operations from the 5th to the 10th of September 1901, Captain Venour and his troops killed thirty-two people. Therefore they killed at the rate of 5.33 people per day. (ii) Assuming that Captain Venour and his troops operated and killed at the rate of 5.33 per day during the fifteen days from the 5th to the 19th of September 1901, it follows that they killed eighty people during the operations.

Additionally, on the 10th of September 1901, Captain Venour captured three Oron Chiefs during his attacks on Etiabong. What were their fates? Were they tried and hanged? Were they detained at Sir Moor's pleasure? Were they ever allowed to return to their village? There was no further mention of them after they were captured, therefore we must count them among the casualties that were inflicted on the people of Oron. Accordingly, the number of people who were killed in Oron by Captain Venour and his troops was eighty-three.

Destruction of Oron Villages

On the 8th of September 1901, Captain Venour and his column burnt down the village of N'Kanjour. On the 10th of September 1901, he advanced on the village of Oyuko-Asang unopposed. He found the village deserted and destroyed it because a deserted village meant a rejection of British rule, because as a confirmation of their submission to British rule, villages must wait on and welcome the 'Whiteman' when he marched into their villages at the head of his troops. On the same day, the 10th of September 1901, he advanced on the following villages: Affah-Arkai, Urait, Ebini, Anwan, Akuasio, Idunudo, and Ete. Again, he entered these villages unopposed, but the villages were deserted. Accordingly he destroyed them.

On the 19th of September 1901, the main column advanced on Ikono. Ikono comprised of three villages. The villages were deserted. Again, he burnt and levelled the three villages before he advanced on the village of Idua, which he also burnt and destroyed because it, too, was deserted. On the same day, Lieutenant Parry burnt and destroyed Etiabong.

Confiscation of Cattle and Other Livestock

On the 19th of September 1901, Captain Venour was informed that the people had herded their cattle and other livestock to Etiabong. He immediately despatched seventy-five men under the command of Lieutenant Parry to seize Etiabong and confiscated the cattle and livestock. According to Lieutenant Parry, he and his troops confiscated 100 cows and goats.

Politics in Awayong River District and Ikwe in 1902: Territorial, Trade, or Tribal Disputes?

We must point out from the outset that Sir Moor was wrong when he claimed that Akayo, Edem, Amitchi, and Ikwe people were different tribes and that the issues that led him to authorise a military patrol to Awayong River District were to put a stop to tribal wars between Akayo, Edem Amitchi and Ikwe people. The people whom he called Akayo, Amitchi, Edem, and Ikwe occupied Obubra and the surrounding areas. They were not tribes in the sense in which Britain used the term to denigrate Indigenous people in order to fragment and set one community against the other and hence made it easy to establish its rule over the arguing neighbours. Instead they were part of a nation of people who have continuously inhabited the area for millennia. And Akayo, Amitchi, Edem, and Ikwe were place names; and the people

who lived in the places were a member of a people who knew themselves as Ogoni and who knew and called the length and breadth of the land they lived on as Ogoniland. There were no tribal wars between Akayo, Amitchi, Edem, and Ikwe; instead it was boundary disputes, because that was what Sir Moor reported in September 1902 when he informed the Earl of Elgin that he had approved military operations for Awayong River country and Ibekwe country.⁸⁸ He told the earl that the operations had been necessitated because he needed to put an end to the fighting between Akayo and Edem tribes over the ownership and access to Oyomoyon Beach on the Awayong River.⁸⁹ Thus, Sir Moor cast Britain in the role of the peacemaker, deploying British troops to pacify two warring tribes lest they destroy each other.

While there were territorial arguments between Akayo and Britain's ally Edem, the main arguments were economic, and they were centred on the control of trade traffic on Awayong River and, in general, control over the flow of trade in the entire Obubra Hill of Ogoniland. Britain's interest was to take possession of the trade on the Awayong River. Thus, in his Correspondences and Despatches to Downing Street, Sir Moor claimed that he was informed that Ikwe people were pirates, that they had been committing piratical crimes on Awayong River for a considerable number of years, that they were intercepting traders plying their trade on the river and up to Obubra Hill, that they had confiscated goods and canoes, and that recently a young boy drowned as a direct result of Ikwe's piracy. In addition, Sir Moor claimed that they recently intercepted several Calabar canoes and confiscated the canoes together with the goods and produce they contained.

But prior to British intervention in Ogoniland, issues relating to trade and traffic on Awayong River were adjudicated by the Elders of the communities involved, and their decisions were binding. Usually, the party or parties that were adjudged to be at fault were asked to make restitution to the injured party or parties. Thus, to the inhabitants of Awayong River District and Ikwe country, the interception and confiscation of Calabar canoes were no more than local business disputes. But to Britain, the interception and confiscation of canoes on Awayong River was an act of piracy that, it complained, had brought the flow of free trade on the entire Obubra Hill areas to a standstill. In addition, Britain was aggrieved that the flow of trade further upriver had been interrupted by the disputes between Akayo and Edem over the use and ownership of Oyomoyon Beach. The Akayos, who were the more numerous, powerful, and wealthier than the Edems, had seized Oyomoyon and had prohibited the Edems from setting foot on it. The dispute between Akayo and Edem over Oyomoyon involved Britain's allies, namely, the friendly and loyal people of Calabar and Edem. Calabar and Edem were treaty towns. Their inhabitants were loyal

and allied to Britain and the government of the Protectorate of Southern Provinces. Therefore, Sir Moor intervened on their behalf. But in his intervention, he initially accepted and adopted the existing methods of conflict resolution and asked the people of Ikwe to make the appropriate restitutions to Calabar and surrender the people who intercepted and confiscated the canoes from Calabar for prosecution and punishment. The Ikwes refused to make restitutions or surrender anyone to him on the ground that they do not recognise his authority in their country.

In order to break the deadlock, Sir Moor asked Major Crawford Cockburn, Political Officer and District Commissioner of Obubra Hill, to meet with the Akayo and Edem Chiefs in order to discuss the dispute over Oyomoyon. Major Cockburn invited the Chiefs from both parties to a meeting. At the meeting, he immediately took the side of Britain's ally, the Edems, and ordered the Akayos to vacate Oyomoyon and hand it over to Edem. He subsequently complained that the Akayos Chiefs came to the meeting with over three hundred men-at-arms and that the presence of the armed men had been intimidating. Nevertheless, he conceded that they did not attack him and his party, but he was irritated that they rejected his order that they should vacate Oyomoyon, that they refused to hand it over to Edem, and that they walked out of the meeting. Thus, he interpreted the fact that the Akayos came to the meeting with armed escorts to mean that they did not want to participate in peacemaking in the first place and that they were not interested in negotiations and hence peaceful resolution of the dispute. Instead he believed that the Akayos were too hostile and that their hostility meant they wanted war. But he was wrong, both in his approach to conflict resolution and in his interpretation and conclusion, because he was responsible for creating the political circumstances that not only invited hostility from the Akayos, but also he created the environment that made them to distrust his peacemaking intentions and hence heightened the tension in an already tense political situation. First, he did not examine the grounds on which both sides were basing their claims to the ownership of Oyomoyon; instead he simply instructed the Akayos to vacate Oyomoyon and never to set foot on it. And second, he invited the Akayo Chiefs to a meeting in the town of Kabinchi, and Kabinchi was the principal Edem town. Intuitive and impartial army major and Political Officers would have understood that the Akayo Chiefs came to the meeting with armed escorts because they were going into the opposition's territory, that they could have been ambushed, and that they may need to fight their way out. Additionally, they could have been walking into a pre-planned hostage situation because Britain was known for inviting Chiefs to peace meetings only to put guns to their heads, take

them prisoners, and deport and banish them. Thus, Major Cockburn could have chosen a neutral territory for his meeting.

But by then Sir Moor had already made up his mind, and his instructions to Major Cockburn to convene a meeting between Akayo and Edem were a formality whose aims were to appease Downing Street that peaceful means had been tried and failed and prepared the grounds for the destruction of lives and properties that would inevitably follow the military campaigns he planned against the Akayos and the Ikwes. Because in his view, the Ikwes' refusal to pay restitution and surrender the offenders together with the Akayos' refusal to vacate Oyomoyon were unacceptable, because they not only challenged the legitimacy of the British Government and the government of the Protectorate he headed, but also if the Akayos and Ikwes were left unpunished, they might set dangerous precedents for the people in the surrounding areas. Because the people in the surrounding areas could have reasoned that if Akayo and Ikwes people could defy Britain and the government of the Protectorate of Southern Provinces and get away with it, then they, too, could defy Britain and the government of the Protectorate and get away with it. Thus, the time had come, roared Sir Moor, to put an end to the old practice whereby it was considered acceptable that pirates should only make restitutions for their crimes and natives could oppugn the authority and instructions issued by His Majesty's officials who were carrying out their lawful duties.⁹⁰

Captain Grayson, Royal Artillery (RA)

Accordingly, Sir Moor authorised military operations to arrest the perpetrators of piracy on Awayong River and, more importantly, to punish the people severely, particularly the Ikwes, for their defiance of the authority of the British Government and of his government. The military operations were placed under the command of Captain A. D. H. Grayson. The column—consisting of Sergeant Bradley, eighty-six Rank and File, 1 Maxim Gun, 1 Squadron of Maxim Gunners, and one subdivision of no. 2 battery armed with a seven-pounder gun—left Old Calabar for Unwana on the 24th of September 1902 aboard the steamer *GB Jackdaw*. The column arrived in Unwana on the 29th of September 1902. They remained in Unwana until the 3rd of October 1902 in order to demonstrate force and enable Sergeant Bradley to establish a camp and garrison it with twenty-five men and for Lieutenant Ward and Sergeant Wilson to join the column. Thus, the next day, the 4th of October 1902, the remainder of the column embarked on *GB Jackdaw* for Obubra, where they arrived the same day. Meanwhile Captain Grayson was reinforced by fifty men, and on the

5th of October, a demonstration of force was made in Obubra, and a garrison of twenty men was left behind. The column, which by then consisted of Captain Grayson, Lieutenant Ward, Sergeant Wilson, ninety men, one Maxim, 1 Squadron of Maxim Gunners, and a subdivision of no. 2 battery, was joined by Major W. D. Crawford Cockburn, Political Officer and District Commissioner of Obubra Hill.

On the 6th of October 1902, Captain Grayson and his column disembarked from *GB Jackdaw* and advanced on the Edem town of Kabinchi. At the time he was advancing on Kabinchi, the town was under Akayo siege. The Akayo had surrounded the town on all the landward sides. Captain Grayson and his column halted at the outskirts of the town while Major Cockburn went ahead to try to negotiate with the Akayos. The Akayos told Major Cockburn that they had no quarrel with him and the British Government, but they reiterated their position that they would not vacate Oyomoyon. The Akayos nevertheless allowed Major Cockburn and Captain Grayson and his troops safe passage into Kabinchi where they camped and slept for the night without molestations.

The next day, the 7th of October 1902, Major Cockburn handed over the operations to Captain Grayson, with the instructions to attack and destroy Akayo war camp and turn them out of their camp. Accordingly, Captain Grayson immediately ordered the Gunners of the no. 2 battery to shell the general direction of Akayo camp. At the same time, the Maxim Squadron was deployed to attack and clear the defensive ridges that the Akayos had constructed round their camp. The troops subsequently charged into the nearly deserted camp, meeting slight opposition from the Akayos' rear defence.⁹¹ Between the 8th and 10th of October 1902, Captain Grayson and his troops roamed the vastness of Akayo territories attacking, burning, looting, and destroying towns and villages.

On the afternoon of the 8th of October 1902, Captain Grayson, accompanied by Lieutenant Ward, the seven-pounder of no. 2 battery, and fifty men, entered the town of Obuafum and thence the hamlet of Awurahen. From Awurahen, the seven-pounder went into action and shelled the town of Ekurabe. Obuafum, Awurahen, and Ekurabe were subsequently occupied, burnt, and destroyed.

On the evening of the 9th of October 1902, Captain Grayson shelled the town of Agutari. He and his troops subsequently stormed Agutari only to find it shattered and deserted. Captain Grayson halted at Agutari for the night, and as a precaution against possible night-time attacks, he ordered fire to be set to the houses on both ends of the town, because they abutted forested areas that could provide excellent cover from which the Akayos could launch surprise attacks. But no attacks came that

night because the Akayos had abandoned their towns and villages and left the field. Where did they go? Did they ever return to rebuild their shattered towns and villages and resume their lives?

Casualties: Unknown

In his report on the operations on the Awayong River districts, Sir Moor enthused to the secretary of state that the military operations had been an unqualified success, that the operations had been carried in effectual and prompt manner, and that the Awayong River trade routes had been reopened and trade had begun to flourish. He was effusive in his praises for Captain Grayson and Major Crawford Cockburn, whom he claimed negotiated and settled the terms of peace with the natives. The only dark spot on the shining self-congratulatory despatch, which arrived at Downing Street on the 12th of December 1902, was the casualties sustained by British troops and their followers. According to Sir Moor, the Protectorate of Southern Provinces lost three men killed and two men wounded. In addition, three Carriers were wounded and friendly natives lost two men killed and seven wounded.

Although Sir Moor and Captain Grayson did not state how many Akayo people were killed during the operations, we believe many people, including women and children, were killed between the 6th and 20th of October 1902 when, according to Captain Grayson, the seven-pounder of the no. 2 battery shelled Akayo towns and camps and when the Maxims of F Coy of the Southern Nigeria Regiment went into action to clear the Akayos from the bushes on the outskirts by their burning towns and villages. And Captain Grayson also wrote the following in a report on the operations on his personal command between the 13th and 20th of October 1902:

On the 17th of October 1902 I went to Oyomoyon in Steel Canoes with 80 men at 8 am . . . [I] Left [Oyomoyon] at 7 am on the 18th of October 1902 and reached Obubra at 11 am. On the 19th of October 1902 [I] left Obubra at 8 am for the town of Otubu in order to resolve orders to destroy part of the town by noon. I arrived at Otubu at 11 am. After 6-Pounder Q. F.⁹² from [Gun Boat] GB 'Jackdaw' and Maxims advanced into town and did the necessary destruction unopposed. Enemy suffered to a large extent both from casualties and looting.⁹³

We will never know how many people were killed. And we will never know their names, ages, genders, occupations, and more importantly, if at all they were buried. We will never know where they were buried and who buried them there, because

Captain Grayson did not collect and disseminate these basic statistical information that would have enabled some or all of the above issues to be addressed today. Captain Grayson did not even collect and disseminate basic official statistical data on the number of SAA rounds he and his troops fired. Such basic statistical information relating to munitions had been a standard requirement even before 1909⁹⁴ because the data enabled the Ministry of Defence, the Colonial Office, and the government of the Protectorate of Southern Provinces to estimate the costs of the armaments that were expended during military operations and to apportion the costs to the inhabitants of the occupied territories for reimbursements. Therefore, because Captain Grayson did not state the number of SAA rounds he and his column fired, we have been unable to apply Captain Milne-Home's method and Lieutenant Bush's report to determine the casualties that were inflicted on the Akayos.

However, irrespective of the number of Akayo people who were killed, a belligerent Sir Moor nevertheless blamed them for creating the circumstance that led him to authorise the operations and hence held them responsible for the consequences of the operation for themselves because, he argued, the natives refused to negotiate with Major Cockburn and were subsequently forced to submit after they had suffered severely at the hands of British troops. But as we have shown above and shall show below, Major Cockburn did not go to Kabinchi to negotiate peaceful settlement; instead he went to destroy the Akayos on behalf His Majesty's loyal subjects, namely, the inhabitants of Edem. Thus, when Sir Moor said the natives suffered severe consequences, he was saying that a considerable number of people whose names, ages, genders, and occupations were unknown were killed and wounded by British troops between the 6th and 20th of October 1902. He was also saying that he did not know the exact number of people who were killed and their places of burial.

Destruction of Towns and Villages

On the 7th of October 1902 Captain Grayson and his Column attacked and burnt down Akayo refugee camps. According to Major Cockburn ten to twelve Akayo towns were razed and destroyed between the 8th and 10th of October 1902. Amongst the Akayo towns and villages that were destroyed during the period were: Agutari, Akallum, Awurahen, Ekurabe, and Obuafum. According to Major Cockburn Agutari was a very large town. He stated that he began the destruction of the town on the morning of the 10th of October 1902, that he gave orders that no part of the town was to be spared, that he made sure that the troops set the entire town ablaze and

that they used explosive charges to blow up the walls of the houses and reduced them to rubble. He stated that the burning and destruction of the town took the entire day, the 10th of October 1902.⁹⁵

Political and District Officer Major Cockburn

On the 10th of October 1902, as their towns and villages burn and their land and farms were destroyed and laid waste by a 700-strong marauding Edem auxiliaries employed by Major Cockburn on behalf of the British Government, Akayo Chiefs sent emissaries to his headquarters to sue for peace. He agreed to meet them the next day, the 11th of October 1902, to listen to their request for peace. But he did not listen; instead he threatened to resume the offensives unless they agreed to and carried out the following terms:

Retire from [the] neighbourhood of Oyomoyon and give up all claims to any beach near there.

Swear Juju not to attack Edem again after the troops have been withdrawn or to attempt in any way to try to punish them for the looting and destruction of Akayo towns.

All Akayo Chiefs must attend general meeting on the 11th of October 1902.

The Akayos must surrender 300 guns and ammunition at the meeting for destruction.

The Akayos must pay the following fine: 50 goats, 2 bullocks, 2 pigs, 10 chickens and 3 dogs.

The Akayos must surrender 2 men from each to town as hostages and guarantors of good behaviour for 2 months.⁹⁶

On the 6th of October 1902, the emissaries arrived with half of the fine together with guides to lead Major Cockburn and his party to the town where the Chiefs were assembled and waiting for his arrival. But Major Cockburn did not go to negotiate with the Akayos in good faith. He was not a neutral negotiator in search for peace. Instead he went to enforce the case on behalf Edem because on the 5th of October 1902, when he invited the parties (the Akayos and the Edems) to the dispute over the ownership of Oyomoyon to a meeting, which he scheduled for the 6th of October 1902, he had already made up his mind. Therefore at the time he was going through the motion of arranging and conducting the meeting, he had already decided the outcomes in favour of the Edems because the Edems were friendly and loyal treaty people; they were imperial subjects, and their land, including the disputed

Oyomoyon Beach, was imperial land. Accordingly, at the meeting, he simply told the Akayos that while they could have a beach on Awayong River, they must cede Oyomoyon to the Edems. And on their part, the Akayos agreed to attend the meeting in good faith, but they nevertheless made it clear there and then that they owned Oyomoyon before the arrival of the 'Whiteman'⁹⁷ and that they would not be ceding it to the Edams.

On the 6th of October 1902, the day of the meeting, the Akayo and Edem Chiefs were assembled and waiting for Major Cockburn to arrive. And by his own account, when he did arrive, he sat i the between the Akayo Chiefs and Edem Chiefs. He stated that he turned to the Akayo Chiefs and delivered an ultimatum, giving them until noon that day to cede Oyomoyon to Edem.⁹⁸ Even before he delivered his ultimatum, he knew that the Akayos were not treaty people, that they had never signed any treaty with the British Government, that they were still independent people, that he had no authority to issue ultimatums to them on their territories, and that he knew that the Akayos would never accept his ultimatum. Indeed, according to Captain Grayson, who was at the meeting, Major Cockburn instructed him to commence the attacks on the Akayos at noon on the 6th of October 1902 even before the meeting between the parties to the disputes was convened. Thus, what Sir Moor referred to as negotiations were not negotiations at all; instead Major Cockburn's actions were designed to raise the temperature and prepare the grounds that would justify the declaration of the Akayos as hostile enemies who knowingly impeded and imperilled His Majesty's Force. Since the Akayos had not voluntarily signed any treaty ceding themselves and their territories to the protection of His Majesty's Government, the only grounds on which Britain could claim legitimate jurisdiction was through international law, namely, the Right of Conquest. In other words, the implications of Sir Moor's arguments were that the operations were inevitable and that he authorised them and deployed His Majesty's Force to keep His Majesty's peace because the people of Awayong River and Ikwe were holding up His Majesty's trade, that the only way to preserve His Majesty's trade was to establish jurisdiction over Akayo territories, and that to justify jurisdiction in international law, the Akayos must be provoked into rebellion and then conquered so that Britain could claim the Rights and Privileges of Conquest.

Ikwe (Ikwerre?)

On the 6th of October 1902, when Akayo people surrendered and were brought under British rule, the Ikwes refused to accept the authority of the British

Government on their land. Therefore, Major Cockburn asked for permission to attack them on his homeward journey after he had destroyed the people of Akayo. But for one reason or another, the people of Ikwe were left alone, and they survived as an independent people until 1903 when boundary disputes flared up again. On this occasion, the disputes were in a different part of their territory to the north of Ogurude because by 1903 the Ikwes were beginning to feel surrounded and hemmed in by the inhabitants of Akayo, Edem, and Amitchi Districts, because by 1903 Akayo, Edem, and Amitchi had all signed treaties with the British Government and were now under British rule. Thus, the current boundary disputes were between Ikwe people and Amitchi people, with whom they shared a boundary to the north-west on the right banks of Cross River.

According to Major Cockburn, on the 16th of January 1903, the people of Ikwe attacked the friendly people of Amitchi and drove them from their farms. He claimed that the disputes between the Ikwes and the Amitchis had been ongoing for a considerable time because the people of Amitchi had been complaining to him and had asked him for assistance up to three or four times a month ever since and that, as of the above date, the Amitchi town of Ete was being invested by the Ikwes.⁹⁹ Additionally, he claimed that trade had been affected because the Ikwes were preventing Amitchi people from visiting the Ogurude Market to trade, that the blockade of the Ogurude Market was interfering with the planning of the proposed European factory at that market, and that, as of the 20th of January 1903, the market was not only still being blocked, but also the Amitchi people have reported to him that four days ago, the Ikwes attacked one of their towns, firing guns into the town and taunting the townspeople to the effect 'where are your friends the 'Whiteman' now?'¹⁰⁰

Captain H. H. Sproule, 1st Bengal Lancers

Upon the receipt of Major Cockburn's report, Richard Morrisey, RN, Acting Divisional Commissioner of Cross River division, considered that decisive and immediate action needed to be taken because the situation was likely to deteriorate if the Ikwes believed that Britain was unable to come to the aid of the friendly and loyal people of Amitchi, who had made numerous pleas for help and were promised help that failed to arrive. Accordingly, because of difficulties with communication between Nkpani country and Old Calabar, he decided to deal with the Ikwes before he made formal application to the high Commissioner for permission to deploy British troops. Therefore, he instructed Captain H. H. Sproule, commander of Afikpo and Cross River

garrisons, to proceed at once to Obubra Hill with the troops under his command. At the same time, he asked the Officer commanding the troops in Bende to send the 2nd Subdivision Royal Artillery, the seven-ponder gun, and one section (thirty-two men) of troops as escort to Obubra Hill where they would join Captain Sproule's troops for the impending operations against the people of Ikwe. Additionally, he instructed Major Cockburn to accompany the patrol as a Political Officer. Thus, between the 10th and the 16th of February 1903, the following column was in concentration in Obubra Hill: 12 Gunners and a seven-ponder of the 2nd Subdivision of Royal Artillery, 1 Maxim Gun, 1 Squadron of Maxim Gunners, 140 Rank and File, and 3 unidentified European Officers. The column was accompanied by Dr Stewart, Medical Officer; a Mr Dayrell, as transport Officer; and 160 Carriers.

On the 18th of February 1903, Captain Sproule and his troops left Ogurude for the town of Ajutum, where they camped for the night. The next day, the 19th of February 1903, he resumed the march to the Amitchi town of Ate, because Ate was the nearest Amitchi town from which he planned to launch attacks on the Ikwes. But when he arrived in the village of Ohabale, he and Major Cockburn were informed by friendly and loyal natives that the entire country ahead of them was deserted and that the inhabitants of Ate, which was Captain Sproule's immediate objective, had fled. Accordingly, Major Cockburn immediately handed over the operations to Captain Sproule because deserted towns and villages were deemed to be hostile territories and constituted the treasonable felony offence of impediment of His Majesty's Force for which the punishments were Active Military Operations and destruction of life and properties. At that stage, the Ikwes had not attacked Britain's allies and, Major Cockburn's and Captain Sproule's lives and those of the British troops under command were not in danger whatsoever; but the mere fact that the Ikwes abandoned their towns and villages meant they had refused to submit to Britain's terms and that their refusal to submit was equivalent to a declaration of war on His Imperial Majesty Edward VII.

Captain Sproule and his column subsequently marched into Ate, where some friendly townspeople who had remained in town as its population fled pointed him in the direction of the Ikwe town of Ebegga, some quarter of a mile (0.402 km) east of the now abandoned Ikwe defensive fortifications around Ate. And leaving 2 Sections to garrison Ate and protect baggage and Carriers, Captain Sproule advanced on Ebegga. The column's advance guard collided with Ikwe defences within the first quarter of an hour outside Ate. Captain Sproule nevertheless continued the advance on Ebegga, but the fire from Ikwe defences was so intense that his Amitchi guides fled, leaving him and his troops stranded in a thickly forested no-man's land under fire from Ikwe

defenders in concealed stockades. Thus, Captain Sproule and his troops were temporarily forced to retire. But he subsequently returned to the attack by redirecting sections to the flanks of Ikwe defences. The Ikwes defended and held their ground for four hours. Meanwhile, suitable firing grounds were prepared for the seven-pounder and immediately began to shell the Ikwes. At the same time, the Maxim was brought into action, thus enabling the flankers to turn Ikwe defenders out of their stockades. Captain Sproule and his troops eventually took Ebegga. Captain Sproule established his forward headquarters on Ebegga Market Square amidst the charred remains of the town. On the 20th of February 1903, he sent a reconnaissance patrol to the north of Ebegga. The reconnaissance patrol entered the village of Wangallie and found it deserted. It was torched. The Ikwes had retreated to their yam fields. There the reconnaissance patrol collided with them and skirmishes ensued. The Ikwes were eventually forced to abandon their fields and began to fight a retreating action with Captain Sproule and his entire troops hot on their heels. They retreated to the town of Eferikpi about 3 miles (4.8 km) from Wangillie. Captain Sproule attacked Eferikpi. Ikwe defenders resisted, but they were outgunned and were eventually forced to retreat, with some retreating eastwards and others northwards. Captain Sproule eventually took Eferikpi and found it deserted. It was, accordingly, destroyed.

Eferikpi, according to Captain Sproule, was a very large and thriving market town. Therefore he decided to move his headquarters from Ate to Eferikpi. The news that Eferikpi had been occupied and that Captain Sproule was moving his headquarters from Ate to Eferikpi must have alerted the Amitchis who saw the occupation of Eferikpi as an opportunity to loot, because over 2,000 unarmed Amitchis subsequently descended on Captain Sproule's headquarters in Eferikpi behind the train of his headquarter staff. The arrival of the Amitchis infuriated the Ikwes because as soon as the Amitchis set foot on Eferikpi, they launched attacks on Captain Sproule. But they did not prosecute the attack with their usual determination; instead the attacks were probing attacks, because there were sightings of about 3,000 armed Ikwes in the surrounding forested areas waiting to storm Captain Sproule's headquarters during the night, because the Ikwes, according to Major Cockburn, were night fighters. Thus, Captain Sproule was faced with 2,000 uninvited and unarmed civilians in his headquarters who could stampede and spread panic in the troops' camp, particularly among the Carriers. The Amitchis were imperial subjects, and one of the main objectives of the current military operations against the Ikwes were to protect them and their territory against the Ikwes' claims to portions of their territory. Therefore he faced a dilemma because he could not

turn them out of his headquarters, because they would be destroyed by the Ikwes who were lurking in the surrounding forest. Accordingly, he had to put them in the centre of the troops' camp, detailed a strong guard over them, doubled the strengths of the outposts, and appointed Officers' watch and kept the watch throughout the night.

The Ikwes did not attack in the night as had been expected; instead they came in the early hours of dawn, launching determined attack on the north-east and the south of the camp. They attacked in such strength that the seven-pounder and Maxim were, according to Captain Sproule, deployed to maximum capacity and effect. The Ikwes were eventually forced to retreat. Once the attacks were repelled and the Ikwes were being counterattacked and pushed eastwards, Major Cockburn was able to lead the Amitchis out of Eferikpi. During the next two days, Captain Sproule remained in Eferikpi, sending out fighting patrols to clear the southern and eastern portions of Ikwe territories. Although the towns in the area were stockade, they were deserted, and the troops encountered little or no opposition as they patrolled the towns in search of the Ikwes. On the 23rd of February 1903, the Ikwes made their final stand in the town of Alobo in order try to stop Captain Sproule's advance on their capital, Indosoki. But they were no match for Captain Sproule's Maxims and 2.95-inch shrapnel shells, which had been brought into action. By the 24th of February 1903, the fighting was over and the Ikwes sued for peace. Major Cockburn summoned all Ikwe Chiefs to a meeting. At the meeting, the entire Ikwe Chiefs formally surrendered and accepted the terms of the British Government.

Casualties: 495 Killed

Captain Sproule did not keep any records of the casualties he inflicted on the people of Ikwe. He did, however, state that on the 24th of February 1903, Chief Alobo of Indosoki came to his camp under a flag of truce on behalf of his people to sue for peace because he and his people lost too many people over the past six days. In other words, the Ikwes conceded that many of their people were killed and wounded between the 18th and 23rd of February 1903. Captain Sproule, however, left the following statistics in his report on the ammunition his troops expended during the campaign: SAA 5,940, two cases, and two shrapnel shells.¹⁰¹ Therefore, according to Captain Milne-Home's method and Lieutenant Bush's report at 12 SAA rounds per kill, Captain Sproule and his troops killed 495 people. The figure excludes the people who were killed by artillery fire.

Destruction of Ikwe Towns and Villages

On the 19th of February 1903, Captain Sproule and his troops entered the Ikwe town of Ebegga and destroyed it. According to Captain Sproule, Ebegga was about two and a half miles long and about half a mile wide. Therefore, it took him and his troops the entire afternoon to 'thoroughly burn and destroy the town'.¹⁰² Other than the towns Ebegga and Wangallie, which he specifically mentioned in his report, Captain Sproule did not give the details of the towns and villages he destroyed. But he conceded that he had had to use frequent burning and destruction of towns, compounds, villages, farms, fields, and livestock to pressurise the Ikwe Chiefs and expedite the payment of the fine that was imposed by Major Cockburn when the Ikwes finally surrendered and accepted British rule.

Politics in Ubium and Nsit in 1902

Between 1901 and 1902, the Ogoni towns of Ubium and Nsit and the surrounding territories were repeatedly attacked and subsequently occupied by Aro Field Force, under the command of Colonel Arthur Montanaro. Even though Colonel Montanaro destroyed Ubium and Nsit and their fields, food crops, cattle, and livestock with the approval of Sir Moor in order to compel them to disarm, they refused to disarm.¹⁰³ Thus, by December 1902, Britain faced a dilemma because the people of Ubium and Nsit were still heavily armed, were still independent, and were still refusing to allow British Officers, civil or military, into their territory. They continued to resist overtures to accept British rule and surrender their arms and ammunition and cede themselves and their land to Britain. Their resistance was passive rather than active because, since March 1902, when their resistance to Colonel Montanaro and Aro Field Force ended, they have not attacked British troops and have no record of attacks on their neighbours. Britain was, nevertheless, concerned that the ownership of a considerable number of Snider rifles by the people of Ubium and Nsit was dangerous to neighbouring treaty towns and villages whose inhabitants were under imperial protection. More importantly, Britain was concerned that the Ubiums' and Nsits' territories lay across the way, that they could use their precision arms and ammunition to render the roads between the treaty towns of Idua, Oron, and Eket unsafe; that they could interfere with the work on the communication lines it planned to lay across their territory; and that the considerable levels armaments held by them were detrimental to future trade in the entire area. Britain, thus, came to believe that in the interest of peace and Law and Order in the area, arms and ammunition must be taken away from the entire Ubium and Nsit population;

otherwise, if towns such as Ubium and Nsit were left in possession of arms and ammunition they could use them to raid, threaten, and terrorise neighbouring imperial territories.¹⁰⁴

Brevet Major Venour

Britain, according to Sir Moor, would have wanted the inhabitants of Ubium and Nsit to voluntarily disarm, but they had refused all efforts to get them to do so peaceably. Therefore Britain was, in Sir Moor's view, being forced to take military action to disarm them. He appointed one of his favourite commanders, the then Captain Venour and now Brevet Major Venour, as the Officer commanding as well as the patrol's Political Officer. Thus, Sir Moor authorised military patrol against the people of Ubium and Nsit not because they have committed any act of violence against neighbouring imperial possessions and their population or against Britain; instead the patrol's main aim was to use all possible means to force the inhabitants of Ubium and Nsit to give up their arms and ammunition and bring them under British control.

Major Venour and his patrol, which included Captain Ian Hogg, 4th Hussars; Lieutenant Wayling, Canadian Militia; Colour Sergeant Eaton; Dr Bates, Medical Officer; and 115 Rank and File, 82 enlisted Carriers, left Old Calabar on the 3rd of December 1902 and arrived in Eket on the 5th of December 1902. Thenceforth, Major Venour spent the period between the 6th and 11th of December 1902 patrolling the entire Ubium and Nsit countryside without encountering hostile opposition. His objective was to meet the people and persuade them to voluntarily disarm, but he met with little success because the people adopted passive resistance, disappearing into the forest as he arrived in towns and villages. Thus, he was unable to engage with the people because the towns and villages were invariably deserted when he arrived. He was to subsequently complain that the people's passivity made it extremely difficult for him to conduct active operations because even though he was convinced the people were heavily armed with precision rifles, he felt it was not 'cricket'¹⁰⁵ to burn their towns and villages and hunt them out of their 'bush camps' until they had committed acts of open hostility by 'impeding His Majesty's Force'.¹⁰⁶

Casualties: 92 (5) Killed

In his report, Captain Hogg, who was in command of all active operations throughout the duration of the patrol, stated that there was no serious fighting and that there was minimum collision between his troops and the people. However, where collisions were unavoidable, he took steps to minimise the extent of the collisions in order to minimise British casualties while, at the same time, inflicting sufficient damage on the opposition. But Major Venour and Captain Hogg did not provide statistical information as to the number of casualties they inflicted on the people of Ubium and Nsit. However, Captain Hogg stated in his report that although natives attacked him and his troops on numerous occasions, he exercised restraint in order to avoid unnecessary slaughter and that, as a result, he expended only 550 rounds of SAA. Thus, at the rate of 12 SAA rounds per kill, it means that Major Venour and Captain Hogg and the troops under their command killed forty-six people in Ubium and Nsit. But we believe that the casualties inflicted on the people of Ubium and Nsit were considerably higher than forty-six because Major Venour reported that on the 10th of December 1902, Captain Hogg, accompanied by half coy, marched into Ikorapan-Abia; that they were fired on; that they returned fire; that they drove the people out of the town; and that one of the town's Chiefs was among the townspeople who were killed on that day. Thus, between the 5th and 10th of December 1902, Captain Hogg and his troops killed forty-six people.

On the 15th of December 1902, Captain Hogg and half coy, 1 Maxim Gun, and 1 Squadron of Maxim Gunners, commanded by Colour Sergeant Eaton, attacked the town of Ndikpo. According to Captain Hogg, the town's people resisted, but Sergeant Eaton and his troops ejected them from the town. Captain Hogg stated that as Sergeant Eaton and his troops burned the town, they came upon the bodies of two people who had been killed in the fighting and that, under interrogation, captured villagers reported that many people were killed and wounded. Indeed, Major Venour stated that on the same day, the 15th of December 1902, he moved his camp to Ndikpo and that he saw traces of blood in the town, indicating that there were walking wounded. The question then is: How many of the walking wounded subsequently died of their wounds in Ubium and Nsit? We will never know the answer to this question because British documents are silent, and the silence means that it is never going to be possible to know the exact number of people who died during the bloodiest period (1900–1930) in British military campaigns in Southern Nigeria.

On the 17th of December 1902 Captain Hogg claimed that he and his troops were fired on from trenches in bushes and trees near Ibawa Marketplace while they were on reconnaissance patrol to the Northeast of Ibawa. Captain Hogg stated that he and his troops bayonet-charged the people and turned them out of their trenches. According to Major Venour subsequent information indicated that Captain Hogg inflicted severe casualties on the people, including two Chiefs who were confirmed killed. Thus, the casualties inflicted on the people of Ubium and Nsit were more than 46 killed. Accordingly, we have determined that Captain Hogg and his troops killed 92 people as follows: i) during the 6 days from the 6th to the 11th of December 1902 Captain Hogg and his troops expended 550 SAA rounds and killed 46 people. This means that they killed at the rate of 7.67 people per day. ii) Therefore, assuming that Captain Hogg and his troops operated at a uniform rate during the 12 days from the 6th of December 1902 when active operations began to the 17th of December 1902 when active operations came to an end it means that Captain Hogg and his troops killed $7.67 \times 12 = 92$ people in Ubium and Nsit.

Destruction of Towns and Villages

Since the people of Ubium and Nsit were not hostile, Major Venour began to send out ultimatums demanding that they and their Chiefs must attend at his camp and surrender their arms and ammunition, or he would recommence hostilities. The people and their Chiefs did not respond to Major Venour's ultimatums or attend at his camp because he subsequently claimed that the Chiefs found it too risky to attend meetings with British Officers because they feared they could be seized and held hostage or deported in order to extract submission out of their people. Therefore on the 11th of December 1902, a reconnaissance patrol entered the Nsit town of Ikorapan-Abia unexpectedly. The townspeople were taken by surprise, but they soon recovered and remonstrated with the patrol. No shots were fired, but angry words were said, and the townspeople subsequently disappeared into the forest. Therefore, Major Venour and his troops spent the period between the 11th and the 12th of December 1902 burning and destroying Ikorapan-Abia. Between the 13th and the 15th December 1902, he and his troops burnt and destroyed the following Ubium and Nsit towns: Ndikpo, Mbukpo-Ise, Ikot-Ibor, Ikot-Okuat, Eket-Udo Ide, and Ikot-Essen.

With the exception of Ndikpo where Major Venour claimed that he and his troops encountered resistance, the inhabitants of the remaining towns were passive and had deserted their towns before Major Venour and his troops arrived. The towns

were burnt and destroyed anyway. Major Venour reported that he captured goats and yams in Mbukpo-Ise. He stated that he also captured a woman in Mbukpo-Ise, that he subsequently released her from custody after he had finished using her services as a guide, and that on the 15th of December 1902, he returned to Ndikpo in order to complete the burning and destruction of the town. He stated that he spent the night amidst the smouldering town of Ndikpo and that, on 16th of December 1902, he began the advance on the town of Ikot-Essen, where the people, according to intelligence report, had gathered in considerable strength. He stated that when he entered the town, he was resisted, that the opposition soon disappeared, and that the people's passivity caused him to despair because he expected bloody confrontations; but the people of Ubium and Nsit would not fight, but at the same time, they would not obey his orders. He complained in frustration:

Even when these people fight and are defeated they employ passive resistance tactics and are even more difficult to get hold of to palaver.¹⁰⁷

On the 17th of December 1902, Major Venour left the ruins of Ikot-Essen and advanced on the town of Ibawa. Upon entering Ibawa, he convened a meeting. During the meeting, he told the people about the demands of the British Government and extracted binding agreement from the Chiefs that they and their people must thenceforth accept the authority of the British Government. But the principal and most populous district of Ibawa refused to attend. According to Major Venour, the refusal of the inhabitants and Chiefs of the district to attend the meeting and submit to British rule were a hostile act and an impediment of the progress of His Majesty's Force. Therefore, he attacked the district, and its Head Chief was captured and taken hostage. The district was burnt and destroyed. The Head Chief was subsequently banished to Old Calabar. That was the end of the Chief's life as he once knew it, because he would remain a prisoner for the rest of his natural life. He would die in Old Calabar and would never see his home and family again.¹⁰⁸ But what was the Chief's name? What was his crime? How old was he when he was taken hostage and banished to Old Calabar without trial or legal representation? What was his occupation? Was he married with children? Was he ever allowed to return home to Ibawa? Thus, between the 18th and 27nd of December 1902, Major Venour and his patrol attacked and burned the following towns: Ibawa, Ikot-Ese, Ikpenokum, Ituk-Mbang, and Ndunudo.

Women Hostages

According to Major Venour, his patrol surprised some women who were hiding in a refugee camp near Ibawa. He stated that when he interrogated the women, they told him they were the wives of the Head Chiefs. He stated that he held the women hostage and that he sent two of the women out to the towns and villages to tell their people to surrender because he was holding the rest of the Head Chiefs' wives in their refugee camp. He reported that the women successfully convinced their people and that the Head Chiefs and the people came and submitted to him at his headquarters. Thus, Britain was not beyond waging war on women, taking them hostage, and using their services without remunerating them for their efforts.

The Aftermaths

War Drums, Human Skulls and Bones, and Juju Houses

While Major Venour and his patrol were in Ibawa, friendly and loyal informants told him that the remaining Ubium and Nsit towns of Ikpenokum, Ndunudo, and Ituk-Mbang were all implicated in opposition to Britain, that they had ample supply of arms and ammunition, that they sent contingents to oppose Captain Hogg and his troops, that they had previously erected barriers to trade by blocking the roads to the large market near the town of Ndunudo from Cross River, that they collected toll and levies from traders, that they arrested traders who failed to pay and seized their produce, and that they were generally turbulent people and were implacable enemies of Britain. The informants also told Major Venour that the inhabitants of the town of Ndunudo own a war drum, which they had decorated with human skulls and bones, and that they had threatened to add the head of the first 'Whiteman' who entered the town to the drum.¹⁰⁹ Major Venour stated that he acted on the above information and that, on the 18th of December 1902, he marched into Ndunudo and confiscated the war drum and had it burnt in the presence of the town's assistant Head Chief. Further, he reported that his informants told him that the towns of Ikpenokum and Ituk-Mbang owned Juju Houses that were decorated with about thirty or forty human skulls and other human remains. He stated that he marched into the towns and spent the days between the 19th and 22nd of December 1903 attacking and destroying the Juju Houses.

Thus, Major Venour admitted to cultural vandalism, by arson, because the so-called Juju and Juju Houses were cultural centres, and they would have been filled with cultural items such as sculpted representation of the origins of the earth and their

place on the face of the earth, history, pastoral life, spirit world, and deities. The Juju Houses were the repositories of the people's artistic expression of life. There would have been religious murals describing the people's conception of creation, the universe, and their place in it, as well as their relationship to it in precisely the way Christianity used religious icons, paintings, and sculpted representation of their ancestors on their altar.¹¹⁰ Unfortunately, while Major Venour and his troops were engaged in the destruction of Ogoni art and culture, he did not state whether the human skulls and bones were actual human remains or whether they were painted on the drum and on the walls of the Juju Houses he destroyed. In addition, he did not tell his readers how many human skulls and bones were used to decorate the drum. More importantly, he did not tell his readers whether he burnt the skulls and bones along with the drum and Juju Houses or whether he had them buried, if they were actually human remains.

In the light of the case of the *Daily Mail* and Chief Ogbi of Warri¹¹¹ (see notes 249 and 437), we must be wary of tales such as those told to Major Venour by his informants who were friendly and loyal to Britain and who may have wanted, for one reason or another, the people of Ubium and Nsit to be attacked and destroyed on their behalf by British troops. As we have pointed out in the case of the *Daily Mail* and Chief Ogbi, tales of cannibalism, murder, and Juju were invented by British Officers, Civil and Military Officers alike, for the benefit and entertainment of the people at home in Britain, because the tales dehumanised the Indigenous people in those places in Southern Provinces by portraying them as subhuman and inferior to Britons, particularly the English. In other words, the ideologies of English refinement and superiority that underpinned the stories normalised violence and the killing of people, as well as the Commission of the crimes of arson, destruction of history, art and cultural artefacts, which were often kept in the so-called Juju Houses. Even though there were no truths in the tales, they made the destruction of art, culture, property, fields, crops, cattle and livestock, and entire livelihoods normal. The dehumanisation enabled these crimes to be a perfectly justifiable Christian duty.

But a few lines down the page, Major Venour contradicted his informants and, indeed, himself for acting on what he had been told by his informants when he commented on the advanced state of the men and women he met and spoke to as he and his troops rampaged through the country destroying their accumulated art, history, and culture by arson, and attacking and killing dissenters to British rule. He wrote:

At a big market that was being held, attended by women from Enan, Nsukara, Efok-Atai, and other surrounding towns, several to whom I spoke, testified to the excellence of the roads, their being kept open and to the peace and general prosperity of the district. The people of the Aka district are developing into keen traders. The whole of the country visited is well farmed, the people being generally diligent. They worked in metals forging their own machetes, hoes, chisels and forges. They carve excellently in wood and make brass castings which they also carve, as well as ivories. They also weave clothes of grass and cotton and grass on native looms and make native pottery.¹¹²

Major Venour wrote as if the people he was writing about were not the same Ogonis who had war drums and Juju Houses decorated with human skulls and bones. More importantly, he wrote as if the Ogonis only began to learn about agriculture, buying and selling, weaving, manufacturing tools, and carrying out artistic work, including moulding, casting, and carving brass, ivories, and wooden sculptures after the Royal Navy gunboat *Jackdaw* sailed down Cross River and disembarked Europeans onto Ogoniland. We return to these issues shortly when we go on to discuss Sir Moor's report to the Honourable Mr Chamberlain MP, Secretary of State for the Colonies.

Divide and Rule: A Brief Discussion

The passage extracted above demonstrated an aspect of Britain's political methods and propagandas in the Protectorate of Southern Provinces. The aspect we mean has often been referred to as divide and rule. But divide and rule is too simplistic because, while the cultural, economic, and political characteristics and motives of the divisor, namely Britain, have been well documented, significant attention has never been given to the principles that underpinned the selection of the characteristics of the population we would refer to as the numerators, namely, the Indigenous people of Southern Provinces, who were being attacked, destroyed, reduced, and minified, and the characteristics of the population whom we would refer to as the resultant dividends. In the present case, Major Venour was using Christian mission methodologies, according to which one of the principal goals of Britain was to bring civilisation and redemption to Juju-worshipping and savage cannibals in that part of West Africa and drag them, fighting, kicking, and screaming, into the so-called Christian ways of life.

The sections of Ogoni people of whom he wrote so glowingly in the above passage were the numerators and dividends, because they were the ones who were attacked,

destroyed, minified, and reduced from the height of their achievements to beneath the foot of Britain's hierarchy of humanity. The people who informed Major Venour were those who were designated as Britain's loyal friends because they accepted their subjugation and their inferiority to Britons and hence their place beneath the foot of Britain's hierarchy of humanity. Thus, even though they did not profess to the Christian faith, they were nevertheless perceived as Christians, because their meek acceptance of subjugation and the inferior position assigned to them by Christian Britain were in accord with the fulfilment of God's will and canons as enunciated in the Christian texts, namely, the Bible (Put endnote to Ham). In other words, their meek acceptance of servitude¹¹³ and inferiority were not only the fulfilment of divine will and canons, but also they conferred honorary Christian status on them and elevated them to superior position on the hierarchy of humanity over their heathen and dissenting compatriots.¹¹⁴ The people who dissented and refused to accept that they were inferior to Britons were painted evil with dark souls and blacker than they were. They were accused of cannibalism, murder, and human sacrifice. Their towns and villages were attacked and destroyed. Some of them paid very fearful prices in defying the overwhelming force ranged against them. And many of them paid the ultimate price: they were killed in sometimes inhumane ways, for instance, Chief Ponalade Shobiya of Ajura, Abeokuta, who refused to prostrate himself before P. V. Young, the Provincial Commissioner of Abeokuta, when he was ordered to do so following his arrest for refusing to perform unpaid labour.¹¹⁵ As we shall see in chapter 13, he was humiliated and treated like a feral animal. He was bound hands and feet and tethered to a tree in the marketplace and left tethered overnight until his hands and feet were swollen. He subsequently went on hunger strike and died a few days later in British custody. He was seventy years old.

Thus, divide and rule were not harmless political methods in the hands of the managers of the British Empire. They were deadly methods of command and control because they involved systematic classification of the same population into friends and enemy. And they involved incessant humiliation of the sections of the population who have meekly accepted subjection and inferiority and incessant infliction of violence on those who rejected subjection and inferiority.

British Rule for the General Good?

Meanwhile, in Britain of 1903, life was sedate and prosperous. The Empire was marching on. It was voraciously expanding its frontiers and crushing all opposition to the imposition of its rule. Britons were not threatened by marauding European