

TRADITIONAL SECURITY SYSTEM IN COLONIAL EASTERN NIGERIA: AN APPRAISAL OF OGWUMIRI AND OGBUZURU IKELIONWU

By

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Abstract

The British penetration and conquest of hinterland Igbo in the first decade of the 20th century was a landmark in the people's history. Apart from the heavy transformation and distortion of major traditional values and heritage, the invaders masterminded the establishment of the infamous Native Authority System through the appointment of Anglophiles christened Warrant Chiefs. As the embodiment of the people's political and judicial authority, the Warrant Chiefs adopted several measures to consolidate the newly acquired status, one of which was the use of militia gang. This study examines the traditional security mechanisms, organizations and operations of Ogwumili and Ogbuzuru Ikelionwu in the consolidation of colonialism in Igboland, which were created by Chief Onyema of Eke and Chief Chukwuani of Ozalla respectively. The study explores the level of tolerance and acceptance accorded the militia by the British amidst the former's clandestine and inhuman activities. This made mockery of British advocacy and campaign for human right. Nevertheless, some element of the militia tactics and expertise should be incorporated into the nations armed forces especially on wars against insurgency.

Keyword: Warrant Chiefs, British, Ogwumili, Ogbuzuru Ikelionwu, Igboland.

Introduction

The erosion of the African people's socio-cultural life by the British colonial incursions had a lot of dire consequences, most of which the people continue to grapple with to present time. One of the reasons for the seeming intractability of Africa's post-colonial realities is the way these incursions

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corroded the cores and mainstay of their ethos and cultural sensibilities, unleashing trends that, in Jean-Paul Sartre's words, 'poorly matched the reality of Africans' lives and that they could neither quite reject or integrate'¹. Prior to this intrusion, the people that populated these areas had enjoyed a well-sophisticated system that served their needs sufficiently; these included the settlement of problems and implementing of resolutions. It should be noted that among the unwarranted changes that were engendered by this invasion was the imposition of the Indirect Rule System. The Native Courts were established, Colonial Police introduced and the arbitrary selections of some individuals who had questionable character got baptized as Warrant Chiefs, in order to assure the sustainability and the hegemonic control of the British over their host communities. This arbitrary selection undoubtedly stemmed from the fact that the British were unfamiliar with the territory which they had coerced to submission. It was this system of governing Igboland through the Warrant Chiefs that brought Chief Onyeama Onwusi of Eke and Chief Chukwuani Nwangwu of Ozalla into the picture of colonial rule. Both Chiefs were nonetheless errand boys of colonial overlord to experiment the fanciful ideas of local governance in a community which lacked centralized authorities unlike the case of the Northern emirate system of Nigeria ² and their mode of operation was basically what Afigbo described as "artificial tyrant"³.

Generally, the acephalous structure of the Igbo socio-political setting allowed little or no room for the British pattern of governance. It was however the above circumstances that triggered the curiosity of the British to remedy the deficiencies inherent in Indirect Rule System, necessitating the search for colonial puppets in Agbaja and Nkanu areas under Udi Division. Meanwhile, Chukwuani was appointed first in 1910 before Onyeama in the same year, in order to close the lacuna of applying Indirect Rule in decentralized areas. The result of the system was the complete negation of communal harmony experienced in hitherto Udi Division. The novelty of the idea and, perhaps, the consequence of the phenomena engendered a lot of interests, which did not escape the attention of scholars with intellectual anxiety⁴.

Essentially, the rise of these "new men" (Chukwuani and Onyeama) to the supreme position of their areas, hastened the need to consolidate their hold on power, hence they galvanized young able-bodied men and recruited them into their Storm Troopers (*Ogwumili* and *Ogbuzuru Ikelionwu*). These militia gangs were technically endorsed by the British

administration, as long as it continues to serve the British economic and political interest. Both Chiefs' discretionary use of violence through these militias constituted a culture that promoted authoritarianism and flagrant abuse of human rights. It was virtually recognized that the two powerful Paramount Rulers under the Udi Division were tyrannical in their struggle to attain unlimited power, as they acquired legitimacy in their domain through the services of the dreaded militias.

Interestingly, with the opening of the Colliery in 1915⁵, Chief Chukwuani and Chief Onyeama had already gained ground through the ruthless activities of their dreaded militias who could unleash terror and fear on oppositions. It was not surprising that they were highly instrumental in the conscription of labourers for the Coalmines and Railways. The Machiavellian character of *Ogwumili* and *Ogbuzuru Ikelionwu*, helped enhanced both Chiefs' political powers and reflected in their meteoric elevation to Paramount Rulers by 1917, following colonial reviewed policy. Both Chiefs were appointed due to their distinguished records in discharging their service to the colonial government. These instrumental roles of Chief Chukwuani and Chief Onyeama were clear with the open confession of the Commissioner of Onitsha Province, Mr. R. A. Robert, who stated:

Chief Chukwuani of Ozalla and Chief Onyeama of Eke, have both proved themselves useful friends of Government during the period of unrest in the division. The former accompanied the District Officer on the Patrol to Akebe and Apugu and gave useful information and both have kept their towns under complete control. The Chiefs and peoples of Udi and Abia towns have also been most friendly all through and have worked and supplied carriers most willingly⁶

Chukwuani and Onyeama's Paramount positions cemented their autocracy and gave them license under which they designed a "Police State" with their respective militias. Chukwuani was said to have both spiritual and political powers by virtue of his family exclusive right to serve *Ani* Ozalla coupled with the spiritual *NwaNgene* Lake that was next to the deity⁷

Chief Onyeama of Eke and the Ogwumili

Chief Onyeama Onwusi was appointed the Warrant Chief of Eke in 1910 and promoted to the status of Paramount Ruler of Agbaja in 1917. By the time the British disband the status of Paramount Chiefs in Igboland in 1923, Chief

Onyeama retired to the position of "Okuru Oha" of Agbaja in 1925, until his death in 1933⁸. Born in a remote village of *Amankwo* Eke in c.1875, about half a decade younger than Chukwuani. His enthusiastic consciousness for greatness was obvious at a tender age. This explained the reason why he was initiated into the Masquerade cult before adulthood⁹. It was this sense of ambition that spurred him to involve in the lucrative trade of that era- The Slave Trade, which avail him the opportunity to travel across almost all the slave markets in Igboland and thus shape his thought towards personal dictatorship. The callousness associated with this inhuman trade, breeds Onyeama to the fore that there was no such thing as remorse or ethical feelings in the wheeling-and-dealing of survival¹⁰. Little wonder, when the White men landed in Eke around 1908, Onyeama had already enmeshed himself with wealth, experience and known to be one of the few influential persons in Eke. Udi area was undoubtedly, one of the last places the British occupied in Igboland, but certainly not the least in the history of Africa, the activities of *Ogwumili* under Onyeama in Udi and beyond would later attest to this effect. Onyeama's escapades in Agbaja made him perhaps one of the greatest and ruthless African Chief's, in what his grandson gladly coined an "African god"¹¹, indeed he deserve a history of himself.

Meanwhile, Chief Onyeama impulse and lust for power quickly precipitated him to establish an unflinching cordiality with the British through his hospitality. He was said to have come forward when his area was first occupied¹², while real authority of the Eke people failed. His ability to feign his ambition in the face of rivals and courageously dislodge his people from taking arms against the British troops was commendable, and thus won him the British admiration.

Two years of conspiracies among potential rivals and coupled with his welfare package for the British led to his appointment as Warrant Chief of Eke in 1910¹³. In an effort to exercise autocratic power in the entire Agbaja, he engaged in a bitter feud with Ozo-Nebechi Okachi of Oghe (the first man to be appointed Warrant Chief in Agbaja area) in which he successfully outwitted Okachi through false allegations of ineffectiveness. At the end of his conspiracy against Okachi, Chief Onyeama emerged as the most feared Warrant Chief in Agbaja area. After the above episode, he did not relent in seeking for unlimited powers; he succeeded through the use of gifts, personal intelligence and intimidating nature to lure his subordinate Chiefs to become subservience to his authority. However, the most important measure, which Chief Onyeama employed in consolidating his political

position, was through the establishment of a secret militia called *Ogwumili*, known with their distinctive Red Cap and horses hoof, for he understood, as Frantz Fanon would have it, that 'internecine feud merely perpetuate age-long grudges entrenched in memory'¹⁴. The term *Ogwumili* simply means that the gangs would do their work not minding if there was heavy downpour or high intensity of the sun¹⁵. Members of the gangs were recruited from able-bodied 'Age Grade' groups in surrounding communities within Agbaja. Key members of the *Ogwumili* include; Eze Nwannadi Nwaonoh, Ani Odechi, Ude Aniumeh, and Egbo Nwachime, (head of *Ogwumili*, who later had a fallout with his master, Chief Onyeama and thus exposed Onyeama's evil to the British, including the burial sites and a particular room loaded with human skulls)¹⁶. *Ogwumili* clearly had unrestrained power over life and death, as they could make arbitrary arrests or even take hostages among people considered as potential enemies. Many of these supposedly enemies were buried alive under the orders of Onyeama, little wonder people lived in fear during his reign¹⁷. It was due to the terrifying activities of *Ogwumili*, made Dilibe to succinctly liken them to Hitler's Gestapo, thus, "that the activities of *Ogwumili* evoke chilling impressions of Hitler's Gestapo and Papa Doc's Tonton"¹⁸. The *Ogwumili* secret cult was sub-divided into two category viz: the espionage section and militant section. The former, consists mainly of his loyalists such as Warrant Chiefs, Headmen, elders and other allies, whose duties was to provide him on regular basic information regarding social and political activities in their various communities. While, the latter responsibility includes; the enforcement of all policy decision of Chief Onyeama and the British colonial masters, intimidating and physical harassment of Chief Onyeama oppositions, the seizure of goods, livestock and beautiful ladies fancied by the Chief and taking them to his palace¹⁹.

Chief Chukwuani of Ozalla and Ogbuzuru Ikelionwu

Chief Chukwuani Nwangwu born in c.1870 in Amaigbo Ozalla Nkanu from the Priestly family of Umugwuani clan, the designated family to serve the *Ani*- Ozalla deity, that is situated close to the *Ngene* spiritual lake, where Chukwuani was said to have gained immense spiritual powers and protection during his escapades with the Aro slave traders, and his fight with neighboring Ntu Egbe Nese communities prior the British intrusion²⁰. He rose from obscurity to mastery of Nkanu land. Between 1910 -1930, Nkanu area was in the hand of a strong willed leader who was desperate over

power, conscious of his enemies and manipulated the people in collaboration with his British friends. Colonial incursion and subjugation of Nkanuland at the early part of the 20th century avail Chukwuani with the opportunity of one of his skillful diplomatic strokes. Thus, there was little doubt that Chukwuani's role in the momentous events of British colonialization in Nkanu reveal that personalities in history do matter. The arrival of the British in Nkanu between 1907-1909, led to the establishment of the British paraphernalia for administrative convenience. Hence, Nkanu was placed under Udi Division and were required to attend the Udi Native Court²¹. Since the indigenous people had no option than to accept the imposition of Colonial rule, the British established control both in social, economic and political affairs of the conquered region. Like other parts of Igboland that accepted colonial rule following the Aro expedition of 1901-02²², the people of Nkanu succumbed to the invaders owing to their obvious disparity in weaponry, unholy collaboration with the Whiteman by some individuals, and the British superior technology.

In their usual method of consulting the influential and prominent leaders of each area, the British enquire if the people were willing to accept their over-lordship or face outright annihilation. It was during this search for collaborators that fate handed Chukwuani to glory, as he became the most favourite personnel who fit into the nature of character so desperately needed by the colonial overlord. He was installed the Warrant Chief of Ozalla at *Nkwo Ani* Market Square Amaigbo and the first in Nkanuland in 1910 with Mr Okeke Ubanyi an Arochukwu man as the interpreter²³. However, the factors that led to his appointment, was conjecture, as there exist various versions. Nonetheless Chukwuani's appointment, was largely subjected to his outright doggedness, opportunism, ideological flexibility and strewed manipulative skills.

As soon as Chief Chukwuani's ascended to the throne of Warrant Chief his popularity in the community was extremely undermined by his people. This was because consultation over his appointment was not with the general assembly of the village and was considered a social mischief. He was not a village head, but his appearance as a strong and courageous fellow who could possibly render effective leadership so desperately needed by the British led to his appointment. A vital means which Chief Chukwuani employed to consolidate his hold on power, was the recruitment of young men into his private militia group popularly known as *Ogbuzuru Ikelionwu* or *Umu Ojibo Chukwuani* who were ruthlessly brutal²⁴ only comparable to

Lenin's Cheka, Mussolini's Black shirt and Hitler's S. S. This group of brigands were imbued with high spirit and devoted to him, the Fuhrer. These young men are well-known notorious bandits whose job were to terrorize dissidents, enforce and execute colonial activities, counter anti-Chukwuani, gather secret information's, and provide law and order. It was also the duties of the Ogbuzuru to burn down or destroy schools and churches that were built without the consent of Chukwuani. Among the members of Ogbuzuru *Ikelionwu* were; *Atu Nwaene, Omume Okoroafor Onovo* from *Obodo-Ukpa, Obe*, Ede Aniagu, (Head of the militia) *Obiaya Okereke*²⁵ etc.

Activities of Ogbumili and Ogbuzuru Ikelionwu

Upon their appointment under the Colonial Warrant Chief System, Chief Onyeama and Chief Chukwuani's ordered a crackdown against oppositions for security purposes. Chukwuani was said to have ordered the dreaded *Ogbuzuru Ikelionwu* to launch a campaign of lawless burning of houses of all those who repudiated his order for a compulsory labour in an effort to compel them to capitulation²⁶. Both Chiefs carried out a measure of horror in an effort to attend to colonial needs. Works like the building of colonial institutions, schools, churches, organizing head Porters, carriers and the construction of roads for effective evacuation of resources were all directed by these gangs. The establishment of the Native Court, with its tedious activities, propelled Onyeama and Chukwuani to direct their militias into the task of a smooth functioning of British rule. Also worthy of note was the role of Chukwuani through the *Ogbuzuru Ikelionwu* in persuading the Nkanu people to concentrate on colonial export crops like palm produce (palm oil and kernel). This made the people to consider palm production as a major aspect of their agricultural activities. Onyeama on his own end concentrated more on the recruitment of labourers for the Colliery, since his Agbaja domain was largely barren lands.

These militia gangs were in the habit of extortion, such as visiting markets in different towns and seizing various goods they desired in the name of Chukwuani and Onyeama. Accordingly, through such means, both Chiefs and the members of the militias got themselves enriched. One Onu Nwede who happens to be Chukwuani's spy in Mburubu was exploitative and perfidious to the extent that at regular interval he would connive with *Ogbuzuru Ikelionwu* to confiscate people's goods in the market and also terrorize the notable Mburubu traditional elite, on the ground that they stand as potential political opponents²⁷. These militias could also conspire

with defaulters on how to manoeuvre from the wrath of their Fuhrers. Meanwhile, such person would have bribed them in order to escape charges. These bribes could be in form of giving their masters material things, including women. The activities of the militias in confiscating people's property and wives for Chukwuani and themselves were clear with the Amurri native people's report to the Colonial Government, after they refused to attend the Agbani Court, thus

They stated that while they were attending Agbani Native Court, the court messengers used to seize whatever they wanted in the market and not pay and that Chief Chukwuani had taken all their young girls as well as their crops, palm nuts, etc²⁸

Yet, *Ogwumili* militias continued to grow in number and in the discreet discharge of their duties; Onyeama instilled the sense of ruthlessness in them, no wonder they were always on stand-by to use such force at such time as Onyeama thought was necessary. Their operations ensured that the people's affectivity was kept on the edge running sore flinching from a caustic agent. The secret gangs which stretched across the entire Udi areas were great source of information to both Chiefs, as they could rely on them to be promptly alerted prior to any attack. Onyeama was said to have had more trust in his *Ogwumili* society, and preferred to work with them instead of his fellow Chiefs especially in sourcing information's from the various communities²⁹. It was the active role of *Ogbuzuru Ikelionwu* informants, who had forewarned their Fuhrer, that saved him from doom during the case of a stolen rifle by one Okori which was reported to the District Officer Enugu Commanding Troops (Captain Spaxman) Udi Sworn Station, on 24 June 1921. It was said that these spies whose ears were always on the ground had earlier informed Chukwuani about the impending British plans to invade his palace with armed police for a thorough search over the missing rifle³⁰. This enabled him to prepare beforehand. According to colonial report:

Chief Chukwuani bought rifle and ammunition stolen from troops and place where hidden is said to be known. Request authority suspend and arrest if search successful action must be quick to be of use... Chief Chukwuani was ordered to produce Okori, he produced several Okoris none of whom were identified as the man wanted, no further Okori could be found³¹.

At the end of the search in his palace, no rifle including the Okori was found and he was therefore, exonerated from the British punishment on the ground of lack of sufficient evidence, thanks to the activities of his *Ogbuzuru Ikelionwu* who notified him early. *Ogwumili* were responsible for the destruction of one Gabriel Onoh's (father of C. C. Onoh) house that was near completion because he was yet to get a go-ahead order from Onyeama³².

Furthermore, members of the dreaded *Ogwumili* society were mostly operational in the 1920s; especially in Owa areas. This was because Chief Onyeama believed the Owa people wanted to secede from his rule, thus making them his opponents. He saw it as an attempt to "diminish his power and authority and would not hear of it"³³. *Ogbuzuru Ikelionwu* militia was also employed to silence potential threat and enemies, giving rise to events that would remind one of Fanon writing that 'the colonized subject will first train this aggressiveness sedimented in his muscles against his own people'³⁴. The death of many Chukwuani's arch rivals or oppositions were linked to the horrible activities of this militias. A key instance of the above was the assassination of Ede Mba of Amagunze, a powerful court member in Nkanu was linked to Chukwuani's militias. Chief Ede Mba was the most outspoken critic of Chukwuani from Nkanu and had the advantage of having gone to school. Chukwuani saw him as a potential threat and was said to have masterminded his death³⁵. Onyeama had his *Ogwumili* militia group for the purpose of eliminating his opponent in order to escape direct implication that would attract the wrath of colonial administration.

Another major area where these militias played active role in the discharge of their Fuhrers orders was through the discipline of any individual who failed to pay his tax, starting from 1928, when direct taxation was imposed, which marked the end of British consolidation of Igboland. The militias' role in the collection of taxes was also clear when the assessment officer of Nkanu recommended that Chief Chukwuani should be reinstated to his former position of Paramount Chief to help out in tax collection. Although, the Resident Officer ignored the proposal, but when he imagined how the efficiency of Chukwuani's militias could help in tax collection, he was left with no option but to propose an annual salary of 200 pounds for Chief Chukwuani for the assistance he could possibly render to the District Officer during tax collection³⁶ through his militias. These militias confiscated the belongings of tax defaulters at will, although, they were also known for collecting bribes from those who evaded tax. It was the horrible and ruthless manner of the *Ogbuzuru Ikelionwu* militia activities in the collection of taxes

that made everybody to be so afraid of Chukwuani. At some point, they could as well go beyond the order of Chukwuani for their own selfish interest, such as conspiring to snatch people's wife on the pretext that such victims were opposition to Chukwuani's government³⁷. The brutal activities of these militias was a welcome development for the British, as they enjoyed the unconscious frustration complex³⁸ the people were subjected to, and regarded them as the best means for maintaining law and order throughout the vast Nkanu and Agbaja clan. In respect to that, the District Officer N. C. Duncan wrote a memorandum to the Resident saying:

there is no doubt in mind that had it not been for the sound policy followed by Chief Onyeama, constant patrols and excursions would have been necessitated in the Agbaja country and the constant presence of a Political Officer would have been essential³⁹.

Hence, the activities of the *Ogwumili* spurred the British to expand Onyeama's empire.

Moreover, the need for steady workforce in the Colliery after its establishment in 1915, gave rise to the emergence of Forced Labour. Therefore, in order to ensure the unstoppable supply of labourers in the colliery, it became imperative for the Colliery Management to sign and seal an agreement with Chief Chukwuani and Chief Onyeama, since both powerful Chiefs came from Udi division, the vicinity where the "Soul of British Industries" (coal) was in massive deposition. The term of agreement provided that Chief Chukwuani and Chief Onyeama were officially designated as labour contractors for the mines and would be paid conscription fees on the number of labourers they were able to recruit for the coal mines. The Colliery's frequent demand for immense labourers propelled the British authority to provide more inducement for labour contractors. Between 1919-21, Chief Chukwuani and Chief Onyeama were heavily depended on for labour conscription, them and other concerned Warrant Chiefs were giving 15 pounds monthly to hundred men supplied to the colliery and by the time the labour conscription was restricted to Chief Chukwuani and Chief Onyeama, both were annually paid £400 and £500, respectively for the supply of labour to the Colliery⁴⁰

Young able-bodied men were conscripted throughout the entire Nkanu and Agbaja area and sent to the Colliery on daily payment and Otamkpa (Isiagu) in batches, where they are compelled to work for the duration of three months forced labour, before a replacement by a new

batch. It was a sort of relay arrangement, without payment in most instances. The brutal method adopted by *Ogwumili* and *Ogbuzuru Ikelionwu* in drafting forced labourers was similar to the kind of horror unleashed by Joseph Stalin's N.K.V.D. to millions of Russians who were sent to the Gulag camps, in the 1920's and 1930's, and echoed the view that the colonized subject's last resort is to defend his personality against his fellow countryman. Consequently, the procurement of labour for the mine work became an object for individual oppression and cheating and a means of lining the pockets of the chiefs at the expense of the poor peasants. Between 1918 and 1919, there was a wide outcry against certain Udi chiefs, especially Onyeama and Chukwuani ⁴¹

The negative impact of the *Ogwumili* and *Ogbuzuru Ikelionwu* in the recruitment of forced labour during this era was alarming. The labourers were said to have been subjected to inhuman treatment. Under the dictate of the colonial masters, the Chiefs through these militias used aggression, intimidation and coercion to intensify recruitment for the coalmines, railways and road labourers. The Chiefs on the other hand, were justified to employ the Native Court under Lugard's policy and other reasonable means to act on recalcitrant lots who refused to be conscripted. Meanwhile, there were disturbing reports of corruption and abuse, by the both Chiefs through the activities of the *Ogwumili* and *Ogbuzuru Ikelionwu*. The militias gave favour to their friends, relations or those who grease their palms and were also notorious in the act of selling exemption from forced labour to either Otamkpa or Coalmines, and therefore imposed double portion to those who refused to bribe them from recruitment ⁴²

Another grave predicament that bedeviled labourers that went to faraway *Otamkpa* or Colliery camps, was the risk of a man losing his wife/wives to the dreaded *Ogwumili* and *Ogbuzuru Ikelionwu*, who seized such opportunity to forcefully take labourers' wives and keep for themselves and their bosses. The chances of one losing his valuables, such as livestock, seed yam due to lack of cultivation or late planting, and other properties were high ⁴³. It appears that such fear of the unknown could possibly necessitate the people to bribe their way out in order to escape labour conscription.

Nevertheless, the activities of *Ogwumili* and *Ogbuzuru Ikelionwu* were imperative which cannot be over-emphasized; as it was through the aid of these militias, that Onyeama and Chukwuani were able to command respect in their respective areas, sanitized societal ills, maintain law and order. Such

problems like communal boundary clash, stealing, murder, oppression of the weak by the strong, abortion etc., was put to check. These militias kept guard at night, but infiltrated the people during the day and through covert means detected those engaged in social vices⁴⁴. The fear of punishments meted on victims serves as deterrent to others from nefarious activities. Communities under these militias were completely purged of thieves, murderers, rapists, etc. The militias also played a major part in sensitizing parents in various communities on the need to embrace Western education for their children. It was this single act of preaching about "civilization" that made Simon Nwekeonu to refer *Ogwumili* and *Ogbuzuru Ikelionwu* as a "spear of double sharp ends"⁴⁵. For the people, surviving the nightmare was gradually morphing into accepting and normalizing it. Yet, what was more shattering was not just that they were confronted with extreme limit of the inhumane, but also that some of their own were already appropriating the machinery of colonial oppression. A situation redolent of the bidirectionality that the French Philosopher, Paul Ricoeur⁴⁶, often associates with the nature of evil.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Colonial penetration led to the corrosion of the Igbo cultural values. The establishment of Native Authorities ushered in the era of Warrant Chiefs in Igboland, with individuals who wielded unlimited authority, in contrast to hitherto Igbo worldview. These "new men" were chosen due to the vagrant search for indigenous personnel that could politically aid the British in conducting their exploitative and dictatorial pattern of administration. The Warrant Chiefs adopted several measures to consolidate their newly acquired status, one of which was the establishment and use of dreaded militia gangs who were schooled into the habit of ruthlessness. In this regard, Chief Onyema of Eke and Chief Chukwuani of Ozalla established *Ogwumili* and *Ogbuzuru Ikelionwu* respectively, which they used to terrorize most communities in order to attain unlimited power and serve the interest of the British hawks, regardless of the social consequence. The *Ogwumili* and *Ogbuzuru Ikelionwu* gangs could sometimes go extreme miles in oppressing the people, without their Fuhrer's knowledge. No wonder, their activities could be likened to the "Reign of Terror" under Maximillien Robespierre in France and *Yezhovschina* in Russia (Russian Commissar for Internal Affairs, who broadened the scope of the Purges). Through the underground activities of the informants and militants sections of the *Ogwumili* and

Ogbuzuru Ikelionwu, the Chiefs became both foxes and lions, as they could easily recognize traps plotted by their enemies and as well defend themselves against tigers.

The extent to which these Chiefs went to acquire absolute power through the aid of their militias indicates clearly what they had nursed prior colonial invasion. They were simply and squarely ambitious men with inordinate quest for power and wealth, which explains why their subjects were badly governed in a very impoverished condition. The masses, especially the poverty-stricken peasants in the areas were persecuted quite ruthlessly by these **combattimento** under the dictates of their Il Duce. Both Chiefs were out to deal with security challenges as well as any possible threat of their cherished political position, thus leading to constant purging of enemies. A practical scenario of the tactics employed by Onyeama and Chukwuani in silencing potential threat was clear with Joseph Stalin's Great Purge of 1936-38. After Stalin sensed an imminent threat to his political position during the 17th Congress of the Communist Party in February 1934, where Sergei Kirov (Leningrad Party Secretary) was accorded overwhelming eulogies and suggestions were made for him to be the next Soviet Union leader. Stalin allegedly masterminded the death of Kirov on 1st December 1934, and used it as a pretext that culminated with the Great Purge in Russia between 1936-38⁴⁷. Nonetheless, it was through these militias that the maintenance of law and order, and of the general societal sanity, was sustained.

The author suggest that the Nigeria government should evoke this indigenous security system to the nation's security apparatus. However, the ethical capacity cum intellectual prowess of the leader under which such security system could be established should be examined beforehand. Such leader should be able to understand the structure of the state. Such security institutions and agencies should be adopted for each state within the Nigerian Federation. Meanwhile, the power of the state has to be consolidated, which goes down to the question of restructuring. The security groups have to be trained especially on how to observe human rights in order not to abuse the right of the common man as with the case of the present Nigerian SARS and Police. Sadly, since the Nigerian security forces are not respected unlike their counterpart in civilized nations, such as U. S., Germany, Britain, France, Sweden, Norway, Holland etc., crimes are being committed in Nigeria without fear, due to security lapses, criminals are not made to pay for their crimes even when caught. The *Ogwumili* and *Ogbuzuru*

Ikelionwu, despite their act of terror, always enforced the laws that are made unlike the present day Nigeria security forces who rather than upholding the law and order prefer to collect bribe most often.

Chukwuani and Onyeama's security arrangement should be emulated. The militia group, although deadly and often used for their personal aggrandizement did not wield absolute powers under Onyeama and Chukwuani. The militia, which could be likened to the law enforcement agency of the time acted to uphold the law of the land; and they were called to order by Chief Chukwuani and Chief Onyeama, once they abused their powers. Such is not obtainable in the contemporary Nigerian Society where law enforcement agencies especially the Police Force are the law breakers and boldly accept bribes without drastic measures to curtail the anomaly.

This shortcoming of Nigeria security system can be remedied through the introduction of a sanitized vibrant agents within various neighbourhood to augment the existing security system. There should be an "organic solidarity" between the Nigerian police and the indigenous securities, in such a way that the individual members or elements that make up the security system function separately, but to the common end of the whole system. This would be a plus to curbing crimes and would help to attain societal sanity. Our security system should emulate the information tactics of the militia group, i.e. they should employ informants the same way they employ security operatives, these informants should be available in all neighborhood in order to provide the security operatives with valuable information's that would be beneficial to their duty of safeguarding the country. These informants should be on payroll as the case in Western Nations, which would serve as incentives in carrying out their duties judiciously.

Chukwuani and Onyeama's prioritisation of set goals and plans upon which some other ideas emanate indicated their mastership in policy management. This is because in a tyrannical system where the ultimate goal coincides with public good, there is usually high level of productivity and security. This is clear with both Chief Onyeama and Chief Chukwuani, who employed the service of their militias (*Ogwumili* and *Ogbuzurulkelionwu*) in a bid to achieve the ultimate societal good. A Andrewes was right in this respect when he aptly stated thus, 'a tyrant, in these Greek terms, is not necessarily a wicked ruler, but he is an autocrat (and generally a usurper) who provides a strong executive'. When an individual sets himself up as a dictator - a "stationary bandit who monopolises and rationalises theft in the

form of taxes... A secure autocrat has an encompassing interest in his domain which leads him to provide peaceful order and other public goods that increase productivity".

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