

CLASS: SS3

SUBJECT: CIVIC EDUCATION

TOPIC: INTER ETHNIC RIVALRY AND ISSUE OF SECESSION

WEEK: 9

TERM: FIRST

INTER ETHNIC RIVALRY AND ISSUE OF SECESSION

Since the inception of Nigeria, there has been rivalry among the different ethnic groups. The major issue that brings about this rivalry is the question of leadership of the country. None of the major ethnic groups wants to concede the leadership of the country to the other because they are aware that whoever gets political power first, will be in charge of the country's economy.

REGIONALISM AND ETHNIC CONFLICTS

1. THE KANO RIOT OF 1953

In March 1953, a member of Action Group (AG) in the house of Representatives-Chief Anthony Enahoro moved a motion requesting that Nigeria should be granted self-government in 1956 from the Britain. The motion was opposed by the leader of the Northern People's Congress (NPC) motion. After the failure of the motion for self-government in 1953 in the house of Representatives, the leaders of the NCNC (National Council of Nigerians and the Cameroonians) and Action Group embarked on a tour to the Northern cities, to explain the the need for self-government for Nigeria. This delegation was led by S.L. Akintola of the Action Group and was welcomed by violent demonstration by the Northern Youths.

Subsequently, a meeting was scheduled for Kano at the height of the North-South tension. This led to a four day of rioting at Sabongari-Kano and resulted in 277 casualties involving 36 deaths. Among the dead, 15 were Northerners while 21 were Southerners. The riot which started on the 16th May ended on the 19th May 1953.

2. NIGERIA CIVIL WAR

The war started on July 6, 1967 and came to an end on January 15th, 1970.

Major General Philip Effiong, the Chief of Defense Staff of the Republic of Biafra formally renounced the non-existence of the state called BIAFRA. This exercise took place at DODAN Barracks Lagos on January 15th, 1970.

CAUSES OF THE CIVIL WAR

- A. **Mass killing of Igbo's in the North:** This killing was seen as a reaction to the January 15 1966 coup where some Northern leaders were killed e.g. Sir Abubakar Tafewa Bewlewa, Sir Ahmadu Bello, etc. The governors of Eastern region colonel Odumegwu Ojukwu asked Non-Easterners living in the East to leave and at the same time asked all the Igbo's living in other parts of the country to return home.
- B. **Head of states:** colonel Yakubu Gowon took over as the Head of States instead of Brigadier Ogundipe, the then most senior military officer. Ojukwu saw this as unjustifiable, noting the fact that Gowon was not his senior in the army and so refused to take instructions from him.
- C. **Secession:** The declaration of the Eastern region as the Republic of Biafra on May 30, 1967 after the federal government had created 12 states out of the former 4 regions.
- D. **Aburi declaration:** The failure of General Gowon to implement his own side of the agreement reached with Ojukwu at Aburi, Ghana was another cause of the civil war that started on July 6, 1967. This meeting was at the instance of the Ghanaian head of state, General Ankrah, held between January 4th and 5th 1967.

- E. **Tribal domination:** The fear of one tribe dominating the army was another remote cause. They saw the Igbo's as dominating the army and staged the coup, the head of states was an Igbo man and none of the civilian politicians killed was Igbo.

ASSIGNMENT

Write short note on the Aburi Declaration.