Twitter Thread by Chxta



Chxta
@Chxta

I can't but help coming back to this thread. I owe Uncle Gbenro a bottle of cognac for it.

Let me build on it a little...

Prior to when Carlos Zappa renamed Ahaba to "Asaba", nd■ Oshim■r■ were quite an intertwined people who knew their kin.

> A short note on ethnicity.
>
> A lot of these labels are mere identity. Useful labels though.
>
> Identity is important
>
> Many don\u2019t know their own parents were not even born Nigerians.
>
> Most were a strange, now defunct nationality called British West African.
>
> — Gb\xe9nr\xf3 Ad\xe9gbol\xe1 \u0646 (@GbenroAdegbola) December 27, 2020

As such, you could not "kpa alo" in Ahaba without a priest from Nri present.

This kinship is seen in the names. Onicha M■r■, Onicha ■gbo, Onicha Olona, as examples, the first being the great market town, the last two being on the west side of the great river, Ori m■r■...

Then Carlos Zappa came, and renamed Ahaba to Asaba, while TE Dennis renamed Onicha to Onitsha.

A hypothetical child, let's call him Chukwudebe Isichei, born exactly 120 years ago today in Asaba, knew himself as being Onye Oshimili, as did his cousin across the great river.

The year Isichei was born, a strange company, the Royal Niger Company, without his elders' consent or even knowledge, passed over "ownership" of his village to the British Crown, and the cartographers went to work.

Isichei became a "Southern Nigerian" from Onitsha Division.

Then on Isichei's 14th birthday, his Southern #Nigeria was "amalgamated" with a strange land called Northern Nigeria, and he was told that himself and those people whom he had not much in common with, except perhaps the colour of their skin, were now from the same country.

It didn't end there. When Isichei turned 39, his "Southern #Nigeria" was split into two by imperial fiat, and split along the lines of the Great River.

Suddenly, Isichei was told that he was from Benin Division in Western Region, and now had to take his leadership from Ibadan.

Agitations started almost immediately, but were put on hold because the Imperial power had a war to fight, and Isichei was shipped off to a strange land and called a "Burma Boy".

He returned at age 45 to a country in turmoil and seeking "independence". He joined the movement.

When Isichei turned 47, he was paid a visit by the great Bernard Eluwa, the charismatic secretary of the Igbo Progressive Union, who, speaking in a dialect similar to Isichei's, convinced Isichei that, "any■ b■ nd■ Igbo b■ ofu."

Isichei agreed with him.

In Isichei's 60th year, "independence" came. Three years later, Isichei was told that he was no longer a westerner, but a Midwesterner.

In all this, OBN Eluwa's message rang, and his son, Chike, a doctor in Benin, told him that the Central Hospital was known as "Ked■ Hospital".

Then disaster struck.

In Isichei's 66th year, #Nigeria fell apart, and war followed the next year. Tragically, Chike was killed in the #AsabaMassacre.

The old man was spared because he couldn't make it to the "meeting" with federal troops.

He took his tragedy stoically.

After age 70, he noticed that many of the young men who survived were no longer disciples of either OBN Eluwa or Dennis Osadebe.

The canoes and pontoons had stopped moving from Cable Point, and instead, a new bridge took their place.

At age 76, Isichei became a "Bendelite".

This bewildering turn of events went on, as also at age 76, after a series of meetings, the great Dennis Osadebe coined the term, Anioma, good land, to describe the Igbo speaking peoples of Bendel.

Isichei felt it was good, but there was to be another twist in the tale...

Isichei died in 2000 at the ripe old age of 100. At age 91, by military fiat, he stopped being a Bendelite, and became a "Deltan".

In his 100 years on earth, he had had 10 different, often conflicting identities.

Now tell me, which would work, and which wouldn't in this soup?

Oh, and for the record, I could do a similar story and situate Chukwudebe Isichei in Nsube. At that point, we'll find out that until the year 1976, no one had heard the term "Anambra".

It's not even an Igbo word.