

A HISTORY OF NIGERIA

Nigeria is Africa's most populous country and the world's eighth largest oil producer, but its success has been undermined in recent decades by ethnic and religious conflict, political instability, rampant official corruption, and an ailing economy. Toyin Falola, a leading historian intimately acquainted with the region, and Matthew Heaton, who has worked extensively on African science and culture, combine their expertise to explain the context to Nigeria's recent troubles, through an exploration of its pre-colonial and colonial past and its journey from independence to statehood. By examining key themes such as colonialism, religion, slavery, nationalism, and the economy, the authors show how Nigeria's history has been swayed by the vicissitudes of the world around it, and how Nigerians have adapted to meet these challenges. This book offers a unique portrayal of a resilient people living in a country with immense, but unrealized, potential.

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University of Texas at Austin



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For Dr. Akin Ogundiran, a dear friend and colleague

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Chronology

9000 BCE	Late Stone Age evidence of indigenous habitation in Iwo Eleru rock shelter in southwestern Nigeria.
600 BCE	Evidence of iron technology used by Nok civilization, near present-day Abuja.
1000–1500 CE	Foundation of centralized states such as Kanem, Borno, Benin, Ife, Oyo, and the Hausa city states.
1100–1400 CE	Introduction of Islam into savanna and Sahelian states of northern Nigeria.
1300–1600	The “golden age” of the trans-Saharan trade. Gold, slaves, and other commodities are traded from the states of northern Nigeria across the Sahara desert to the states of the north African littoral, Europe, and the Middle East. The trans-Saharan trade continued through the nineteenth century, but in a diminished capacity after the rise of direct trade with Europeans on the coast in the fifteenth century AD.
1450–1850	Contacts with Europeans on the coast result in monumental changes to the political, economic, and social institutions of southern Nigerian states. The trade in slaves dominates relations between Nigerians and Europeans at this time, changing for ever the histories of four continents as goods and people engaged in a growing transatlantic trade.
1804	Beginning of Islamic revolution that results in the creation of the Sokoto Caliphate in northern Nigeria. The Sokoto Caliphate expands the frontiers of Islam and spread the religion beyond the ruling classes to common people to a greater extent than existed previously.

xiv	<i>Chronology</i>
1807	British abolition of the slave trade. Although the trade in slaves continues from southern Nigerian ports for another forty years, trade in palm oil and other forms of “legitimate” commerce expand rapidly from this point.
1833	Final collapse of Oyo empire, which marks the beginning of sixty years of instability and war among Yoruba states in the southwest.
1841	The Niger Expedition marks the first attempt by Europeans and African Christians to spread Christianity into the interior of Nigeria. In 1846 Church Missionary Society (CMS) missionaries establish a mission at Abeokuta; from this point Christianity begins to spread rapidly in southern Nigeria for the first time. A new elite emerges in the south, educated in European mission schools and sharing many European cultural attributes. Christianity and Islam have since become the two dominant religions in Nigeria.
1861	British annexation of Lagos as a Crown Colony.
1885	Establishment of the Oil Rivers Protectorate in southeastern Nigeria, renamed the Niger Coast Protectorate in 1893.
1886	Formation of the Royal Niger Company (RNC), which monopolizes trade in the Niger basin until the revocation of its charter in 1900. In the same year a peace treaty is signed, ending the prolonged war among the Yoruba-speaking peoples of the southwest.
1887	King Ja Ja of Opobo exiled to the West Indies for abrogation of Treaty of Protection.
1893	Establishment of a British protectorate over Yoruba territories in the southwest.
1894	Revolt of Brassmen against the Royal Niger Company. In the same year, Nana, the Itsekiri governor of the river Benin, is deposed and deported for hindering British access to interior markets.
1898–1909	Ekumeku underground resistance movement fights against the RNC and British colonial rule.
1900	Creation of the Protectorate of Northern Nigeria. Extension of the northern protectorate concludes in

Chronology

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- 1903, when British forces conquer the Sokoto Caliphate and kill the Sultan.
- 1902–3 The Aro Expedition, part of the British effort to “pacify” the hinterlands of eastern Nigeria.
- 1908 Protests in Lagos against the water rate, fueled by the reporting of Nigerian journalists such as Herbert Macaulay, often dubbed the “father of Nigerian nationalism.” Macaulay and other journalists use newspapers to report on and critique the performance of the colonial government.
- 1912 Establishment of the Southern Nigeria Civil Service Union, later renamed the Nigerian Civil Servants’ Union.
- 1914 Amalgamation of northern and southern protectorates.
- 1914–18 Nigerian troops aid the British cause in the First World War.
- 1920 National Congress of British West Africa (NCBWA) founded.
- 1923 Establishment of the Clifford Constitution, which allows for elected representation in the governance of Nigeria for the first time.
- 1925 West African Students’ Union (WASU) founded.
- 1929 The “Women’s War,” or Aba Riots, a major protest against British indirect rule in southeastern Nigeria.
- 1931 Establishment of the Nigerian Union of Teachers (NUT).
- 1936 Nigerian Youth Movement (NYM), a political organization of young nationalists in the Lagos area, founded.
- 1944 Nnamdi Azikiwe founds the NCNC, the National Council of Nigeria and the Cameroons (later Nigerian Citizens), which quickly becomes an influential political party pushing for independence for Nigeria from British colonial rule. In the same year Mrs. Olufunmilayo Ransome-Kuti founds the Abeokuta Ladies’ Club, later renamed the Abeokuta Women’s Union (AWU), to lobby against the injustices of colonial indirect rule.
- 1945 Nigerian labor unions organize a General Strike, bringing work and business to a standstill. The strike

- precipitates important economic changes in the form of the first Ten Year Plan, adopted later the same year.
- 1946 The Richards Constitution enacted, providing a central legislature and dividing Nigeria into three regions: the North, West, and East. This is the first set of constitutional reforms that ultimately leads to independence for Nigeria.
- 1948 First university in Nigeria established in Ibadan.
- 1949 Northern People's Congress (NPC) founded under the leadership of Tafawa Balewa, Aminu Kano, and Ahmadu Bello, the *Sardauna* of Sokoto.
- 1951 The MacPherson Constitution amends the Richards Constitution, moving Nigeria closer to independence. In the same year the Action Group (AG), a Yoruba-dominated political party in the southwest, is founded under the leadership of Obafemi Awolowo.
- 1954 The Lyttleton Constitution establishes a federal system of government for Nigeria.
- 1956 Petroleum discovered in the Niger delta region.
- 1957 Regional self-government attained in the East and West.
- 1959 Regional self-government attained in the North.
- 1960 Nigeria becomes independent from the United Kingdom on October 1.
- 1963 Nigeria becomes a republic, replacing the queen with an indigenous president as the symbolic head of state.
- 1966 Military coup on January 15 brings down the First Republic and installs General John Aguiyi-Ironsi as head of state. Countercoup on July 29 brings General Yakubu Gowon to power.
- 1967 Emeka Ojukwu declares independence of Eastern Region as the sovereign Republic of Biafra on May 30. In the same year Gowon creates twelve states out of the existing three regions. From this point, clamor for the creation of more states becomes constant. Since 2000 Nigeria has been made up of thirty-six states and a Federal Capital Territory (FCT) at Abuja.
- 1967–70 Civil war between the forces of the Federal Military Government (FMG) and Biafran separatists. War

Chronology

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- ends with the surrender of Biafra on January 12, 1970, and the reincorporation of Biafra into Nigeria.
- 1971 Nigeria joins the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC).
- 1973 Rising price of oil results in booming economy for Nigeria. Since this time Nigeria has been heavily dependent on its oil exports to supply government revenues. The results have been grandiose development projects, widespread official corruption, and mismanagement of government funds.
- 1975 Gowon regime overthrown in coup of July 30. General Murtala Mohammed becomes the new head of state.
- 1976 Mohammed assassinated on February 13 in an unsuccessful coup. Mohammed's deputy, Lieutenant General Olusegun Obasanjo, takes over as head of state. The Mohammed/Obasanjo regime becomes known for its sweeping reforms in political institutions and its willingness to transfer power to civilian leadership for the first time since the 1966 coup.
- 1979 Political power handed to civilian administration of the Second Republic under President Alhaji Shehu Shagari. The Second Republic presides over a declining economy as the oil boom is followed by an oil bust. Nigeria becomes a debtor state, as politicians continue to spend lavishly despite the poor economic climate.
- 1983 Second Republic overthrown in military coup of December 31. General Muhammadu Buhari becomes head of state. The Buhari administration becomes known for its firmness on issues of integrity, corruption, and austerity, but proves unable to improve the foundering economy.
- 1985 General Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida overthrows the Buhari regime on August 27. Under Babangida the Nigerian economy continues its decline. The institution of a Structural Adjustment Program (SAP) brings hardship to the majority of Nigerian citizens, and the supposed long-term benefits of the SAP do not materialize.

xviii	<i>Chronology</i>
1993	Presidential election held on June 12 to decide the civilian successor to Babangida. Chief M. K. O. Abiola, a Yoruba Muslim from the southwest, wins what has been called the freest and fairest election in Nigerian history. Shortly afterwards the election results are annulled, throwing the country into chaos. Babangida hands power to an Interim Governing Council (IGC), led by Chief Ernest Shonekan, on August 27. On November 17 the IGC is overthrown by General Sani Abacha, who becomes the new head of state.
1994–8	Under Abacha Nigeria becomes an international pariah state. Abacha refuses to recognize the election of June 12, 1993, and uses violence and manipulation to suppress dissent.
1995	Ken Saro-Wiwa and other members of the “Ogoni Nine” are executed. The executions become a symbol of the tyranny of the Abacha regime and result in international protest and condemnation.
1998	Abacha dies on June 8. Power is transferred to General Abdulsalami Abubakar, who organizes a quick transition to civilian rule.
1999	The Fourth Republic commences under the leadership of President Olusegun Obasanjo. Under Obasanjo Nigeria seeks to improve its tarnished international reputation and to stabilize the political and economic conditions in the country. Some progress is made, but most Nigerians remain impoverished, and the political process remains significantly flawed.
2006	A national census tabulates Nigeria’s population at over 140 million.
2007	Inauguration of President Umaru Yar’Adua on May 29, marking the first time in Nigeria’s history that power is transferred from one civilian regime to another. The transfer is controversial, however, since the elections that brought Yar’Adua to power are widely believed to have been rigged by the ruling People’s Democratic Party (PDP).

Notable people in Nigerian history

Abacha, General Sani (1943–98)

Former military dictator and commander-in-chief of the armed forces, who ruled Nigeria from 1993 until his mysterious death on June 8, 1998. A career military man, Abacha was born in Kano, and began his military training at the age of nineteen. It was he who announced the overthrow of the Second Republic in 1983, when Muhammadu Buhari came to power, and he was the number two soldier during the Babangida administration. In November 1993 he overthrew the existing Interim Governing Council of Ernest Shonekan and declared himself head of state. Over the next five years Abacha battled pro-democracy groups and widespread international disapproval over his refusal to recognize the results of the 1993 election and his fierce clampdown on anti-government activism. Abacha has been most vilified for the execution of Ken Saro-Wiwa and other members of the Ogoni Nine. Under Abacha's rule, Nigeria became an international pariah state and the country's economic crisis peaked.

Abiola, Chief Moshood Kashimawo Olawale (1937–98)

Born in Abeokuta and educated at the University of Glasgow, Abiola was a Yoruba Muslim who became one of the wealthiest businessmen in Nigeria. His companies covered newspaper publishing, banking, air transportation, oil drilling, and the book trade. Through his wealth, Abiola also became one of the leading philanthropists in Nigeria. He had been an important backer of the National Party of Nigeria (NPN) government during the Second Republic, and won the nomination of the Social Democratic Party (SDP) to stand for the presidency in the election of June 12, 1993. Abiola won the election, but the results were annulled. When Abiola declared himself president anyway a year later, head of state Sani Abacha had him put in prison, where he died four years later.

Achebe, Chinua (1930–)

Author of many important books, including *Things Fall Apart*, *A Man of the People*, *No Longer at Ease*, *Arrow of God*, and *Anthills of the Savannah*, Achebe has become one of the most famous novelists in Africa. Born at Ogidi, in eastern Nigeria, Achebe worked as a broadcaster from 1954 to 1967, when he became a professor at the University of Nigeria, Nsukka. As an eloquent portrayer and critic of the existential crises facing Africa and Africans over the last two centuries, Achebe has spoken and worked throughout the world since the 1970s.

Aguiyi-Ironsi, Major General Johnson Thomas Umunankwe (1924–66)

One of Nigeria's most distinguished soldiers of the 1950s and 1960s, Aguiyi-Ironsi served as an equerry to Queen Elizabeth II on her royal visit to Nigeria in 1956 and as military adviser to the Nigerian High Commission in London in 1961, and was the first African commander of the United Nations peacekeeping force in the Congo crisis. In 1965 he was promoted to major general and became the general commanding officer of the Nigerian army. After the first military coup of 1966, Ironsi, as the most senior military officer, became the first military head of state of Nigeria, but only for a few months. After angering many, particularly northerners, over his perceived favoritism of Igbos and the abolition of the federal structure, he was killed in the second military coup in July, 1966.

Akintola, Chief S. L. (1910–66)

Born in Ogbomosho, Akintola's first career was as a journalist. At one point he served as editor of the *Daily Service*, the newspaper of the Nigerian Youth Movement, and he became heavily involved in nationalist politics, particularly in the Yoruba-dominated Egbe Omo Oduduwa and the Action Group, serving as deputy leader of the latter from 1955 to 1962 and as premier of the Western Region from 1959 to 1966. After a falling-out with Chief Obafemi Awolowo in 1962, Akintola abandoned the AG and founded the United People's Party (UPP), and later the Nigerian National Democratic Party (NNDP), which formed an alliance with the northern-dominated NPC government and used the power of incumbency to rig elections in 1964 and 1965. The chaos in the Western Region resulting from the 1965 elections was one of the main factors that led to the military coup of January 15, 1966. Akintola was killed in the coup.

Awolowo, Chief Obafemi (1909–87)

Founder of the Egbe Omo Oduduwa and the Action Group, both Yoruba-dominated organizations that pushed for Nigerian independence and the extension and preservation of Yoruba interests and culture in a multi-ethnic, federated Nigeria. He studied law and commerce in London in the mid-1940s and returned to Nigeria to practice law and politics. Awolowo contested the post of prime minister in the 1959 general election, but the AG lost to the NPC–NCNC coalition, and Awolowo became the leader of the opposition. After his falling out with Western Region premier S. L. Akintola in 1962, Awolowo was charged with corruption and treason and sentenced to ten years in prison. He was later pardoned by Yakubu Gowon and became a federal officeholder in the military regime. He ran for the presidency of the Second Republic in 1979 and 1983, but lost both times to Shehu Shagari. He died in May 1987.

Azikiwe, Nnamdi (1904–96)

Founder of the National Council of Nigeria and the Cameroons (later Nigerian Citizens), which became one of the largest parties vying for independence for a unified Nigeria from British colonial rule. Azikiwe was born in Zungeru, in northern Nigeria, to Igbo parents and was educated in several mission schools throughout Nigeria. He traveled to the United States for university education, where he became involved in the Pan-African movement. On his return to Nigeria he became a successful journalist and activist in the Nigerian Youth Movement, before breaking away and founding the NCNC in 1944. As its leader, Azikiwe became the first indigenous governor general of Nigeria in 1959 and its first ceremonial president in 1963. He was ousted from this position by the coup of January 15, 1966, but he never retired from politics, running unsuccessfully for president in both 1979 and 1983. The national airport in Abuja, the country's capital, is named after him.

Babangida, General Ibrahim Badamasi (1941–)

Born at Minna, in what is now Niger State, Babangida was trained at many different military institutions and held many different military posts in his career. He first rose to national prominence for his efforts in quashing the abortive coup of Lieutenant Colonel B. Suka Dimka in February 1976, in which General Murtala Mohammed was assassinated. In 1984 he became chief of army staff, a position he held until August 27, 1985, when he mounted the successful coup that removed Muhammadu

Buhari from power. Babangida became president and commander-in-chief of the armed forces, and ruled Nigeria until 1993. Babangida was responsible for the institution of the Structural Adjustment Program in the country, which brought economic hardship for many Nigerians, as well as for the complicated transition to civilian rule, which resulted in his annulment of the results of the presidential election of June 12, 1993. Babangida handed power to an Interim Governing Council on August 27, 1993, but has since remained influential in Nigerian politics.

Balewa, Alhaji Sir Abubakar Tafawa (1912–66)

Born in Tafawa Balewa Town in what is now Bauchi State, Balewa trained to become a teacher, receiving his teaching certificate in 1933. He taught at Bauchi Middle School and, after studying at the Institute of Education at the University of London, became an education officer for Bauchi province. He was one of the founding members of the Northern People's Congress, which became the largest and most powerful party in northern Nigeria and which won control of the federal legislature in the 1959 general elections. Balewa became the first prime minister of Nigeria and governed during the tumultuous First Republic. His power and promotion of the "northernization" agenda made him a prime target for the organizers of the coup of January 15, 1966, in which he was abducted and killed.

Bello, Ahmadu, the *Sardauna* of Sokoto (1910–66)

A grandson of Usman dan Fodio, Bello became the most important northern politician between the 1940s and the 1960s. Although he lost a bid to become the Sultan of Sokoto in 1938, he was named the *Sardauna* (war leader), a very important position. He went on to become a founding member and leader of the NPC, and the premier of the Northern Region in 1954. Along with Prime Minister Balewa, Bello was instrumental in promoting the "northernization" agenda of the NPC-dominated First Republic. He was killed in the coup of January 15, 1966, which ended the First Republic.

Bello, Muhammadu (1781–1837)

Son of Usman dan Fodio and one of the leaders of the Islamic revolution that resulted in the establishment of the Sokoto Caliphate. After the death of his father, Bello took over the reins of government, taking the title of Sultan of Sokoto, and continued to spread the revolution to new frontiers and to quell internal resistance. Under Bello, Islamic politics, justice,

education, and culture, which had once been the reserve of the wealthy and powerful elite, began to spread throughout northern Nigeria.

Buhari, Major General Muhammadu (1942–)

Born in Daura in Katsina province of Kaduna State, Buhari trained at the Nigerian Military Training College in Kaduna and at Mons Officer Cadet School in the United Kingdom. He held many important positions under Nigeria's military regimes, including Director of Supply and Transport of the Nigerian army from 1974 to 1975, military governor of Northeastern – and, later, Borno – State from 1975 to 1976, and federal commissioner for petroleum and energy in the military administration of Olusegun Obasanjo. On December 31, 1983, he became head of state and commander-in-chief of the armed forces in the coup that overthrew the Second Republic. Buhari's military administration is probably best known for its idealistic but ultimately unsuccessful "War Against Indiscipline" (WAI), in which Nigerians were charged to be punctual to work, wait in queues, and keep their cities clean. After just twenty months, Buhari was himself overthrown in the coup that brought Ibrahim Babangida to power on August 27, 1985. Buhari has remained influential in politics, however. He ran for president in 2003 and 2007 as the candidate of the All Nigeria People's Party (ANPP), coming second both times.

Crowther, Bishop Samuel Ajayi (1809–91)

Born in Yorubaland in 1809, Crowther was captured at the age of twelve and sold to Portuguese slave traders. The ship he was being transported on was captured by a British anti-slavery patrol ship, and he was released in Freetown, Sierra Leone. In Freetown, Crowther was educated by the Church Missionary Society, and baptized in 1825. In 1841 he was chosen to accompany the Niger Expedition to establish a missionary presence in the Nigerian interior. The mission failed, and Crowther returned to the coast to work as a missionary in Badagry and Abeokuta. He was a very successful missionary, and in 1861 he was named the first African bishop of the Anglican Church, with his diocese on the river Niger. An African nationalist, Crowther believed that Africa's future should be the preserve of Africans themselves, and fought against the encroachment of British colonial rule in the late nineteenth century. He quarreled with Sir George Goldie over the activities of the Royal Niger Company and over ideas that Christianity should be used to promote British interests in the region. In 1890 he resigned his position as Bishop on the Niger. He died the next year.

Equiano, Olaudah (c. 1745–97)

Famous abolitionist and author of *The Interesting Narrative of Olaudah Equiano*, Equiano was born in Igboland around 1745. Kidnapped and sold into slavery around the age of eleven, Equiano lived as a slave in Virginia and England and participated in the Seven Years War of 1756–63. After the war he was sold to a slave trader in the West Indies, from whom he later bought his freedom. He returned to Great Britain in 1769 and became an active member of the abolitionist movement, giving public speeches and writing many letters to English newspapers. In 1789 he published his *Interesting Narrative*, in which he recounted his personal experiences of the horrors of slavery and the slave trade. The book was immensely successful and helped to shape people's thoughts about the slave trade, which was finally abolished in the United Kingdom in 1807, ten years after Equiano's death. In recent years questions have been raised as to the African origin of Equiano. Some scholars now claim that he was born not in Igboland but in South Carolina.

Fodio, Usman dan (1754–1817)

Fulani Islamic scholar and leader of the Islamic revolution that established the Sokoto Caliphate in northern Nigeria in the nineteenth century. Born and educated in the Hausa state of Gobir, by the late eighteenth century dan Fodio had developed a group of followers known as “the Community,” who subscribed to his vociferous calls for a purification of the political and religious make-up of the region. Relations between dan Fodio and the King of Gobir deteriorated over the latter's refusal to institute sweeping Islamic reforms, and in 1804 dan Fodio fled from Gobir after an attempt had been made on his life. His followers went with him and organized a revolution against the king. Later in the year dan Fodio declared a *jihad*, or holy war, against the heretical Hausa rulers. Over the next decade dan Fodio's followers toppled the Hausa dynasties in most states in northern Nigeria and replaced them with Fulani emirs, thus bringing into existence the mighty Sokoto Caliphate, which ruled the region for the next century. In 1812 dan Fodio divided the administration of the territories under his control between his brother Abduallahi and his son Muhammadu Bello, and retired from public life. He died in 1817.

Goldie, Sir George (1846–1925)

British shipping mogul and largest shareholder in the Royal Niger Company, which became one of the tools through which British colonial

rule was imposed upon Nigeria. Goldie was given a Royal Charter in 1886 to allow his company to negotiate with local rulers in the territories around the river Niger to administer the territories in the interests of free trade. The RNC quickly eroded the sovereignty of the local rulers with whom it had treaty relationships, however, and became a monopolistic company, completely controlling trade on the Niger for over fifteen years. In 1900 Goldie's charter was revoked and the territories controlled by the company came under the direct control of the British government.

Gowon, General Yakubu (1934–)

Born in what is now Plateau State, Gowon enlisted in the army in 1954 and took officer's training courses in Ghana and the United Kingdom. He served in the UN peacekeeping mission to the Congo between 1961 and 1963. After the coup of January 15, 1966, Gowon became the chief of staff of the Nigerian army under Aguiyi-Ironsi. After the second coup of July 29, 1966, in which Ironsi was killed, Gowon was chosen by the organizers of the coup to become the new head of state. Gowon ruled Nigeria for the next nine years. He was head of the Federal Military Government during the Nigerian Civil War, in which he galvanized the country under the slogan "To keep Nigeria one is a task which must be done." After the civil war he embarked on a program of "Reconciliation, rehabilitation, and reconstruction." This process was helped greatly by the oil boom that Nigeria experienced during the early 1970s. Gowon's administration after the civil war was plagued with inefficiency and corruption, however. Gowon also angered many prominent officers and politicians by prevaricating on the transfer of power back to civilian rule. On July 29, 1975, Gowon was overthrown in the military coup that brought General Murtala Mohammed to power. He went into exile in the United Kingdom until 1983, when he returned home. He completed his PhD in political science from the University of Warwick in 1984. He continues to live in Plateau State, and in 1998 was a prominent supporter of the presidential campaign of Olusegun Obasanjo.

Ja Ja, King of Opobo (1821–91)

One of the most famous resisters of the British colonial takeover of Nigeria. Born in the Amaigbo village group in southeastern Nigeria, Ja Ja was sold as a slave at the age of twelve to a chief in the coastal trading state of Bonny. Through his prowess as a trader, particularly in palm oil, Ja Ja rose to become the head of the Anna Pepple house, an extremely wealthy and powerful house in Bonny, in 1863. His success as a trader roused the

ire and competition of other houses, particularly the Manilla Pepple house, headed by Oko Jumbo. In 1869 war broke out between the two houses, with the result that Ja Ja fled inland, establishing a new trading state, which he named Opobo. From the hinterland Ja Ja cut off Bonny's access to palm oil markets, and, over time, he turned Opobo into a wealthy trading state of its own. In 1884 Ja Ja signed a treaty of protection with the British guaranteeing them free trade in his realm. Not intending to live up to an agreement that would erode his competitive advantage, Ja Ja quickly abrogated the terms of the treaty, provoking the anger of the British. In 1887 the acting British consul, Harry Johnston, tricked Ja Ja on board a gunboat, ostensibly to negotiate a peaceful end to hostilities. Once on board, however, Ja Ja was arrested and taken to Accra, whence he was banished to the West Indies. He was allowed to return to Opobo in 1891, but died on the voyage home. His body was returned home and buried in Opobo.

Kano, Alhaji Aminu (1920–83)

A Fulani, educated as a school teacher at Kaduna College and the Institute of Education at the University of London, Kano worked with Tafawa Balewa at Bauchi Middle School and became one of the founding members of the Northern People's Congress. When this party became too conservative for him, however, Kano broke away and formed a new party, the Northern Elements Progressive Union (NEPU), which competed with the NPC for votes among Nigeria's northern Muslims. A champion of the poor, Kano became a populist leader, but never had enough backing from the established elite classes to win elections much beyond his base of Kano city. After the onset of military rule in 1966 Kano held many positions in the military governments, including federal commissioner of communications (1967–71) and federal commissioner for health (1971–74). Kano formed the People's Redemption Party (PRP) to contest elections during the Second Republic, and ran as the party's presidential candidate in 1979. He lost the election and died four years later, on May 18, 1983.

Lugard, Sir Frederick (1858–1945)

British colonial administrator, he worked as an army officer in Nyasaland (Malawi), Kenya, and Uganda before taking up employment in the Royal Niger Company in 1894. In 1897 he organized the West African Frontier Force (WAFF) for the British to secure the western border of the British sphere of influence in northern Nigeria against French encroachment. In

1900 Lugard became the first high commissioner of the Protectorate of Northern Nigeria after the dissolution of the RNC. He then undertook the military conquest of the Sokoto Caliphate, which was completed in 1903. As high commissioner of the northern protectorate, Lugard developed the administrative system that he called “indirect rule,” by which the British ruled colonial territories through existing local rulers. Lugard left Nigeria in 1906, but returned in 1912 to oversee the amalgamation of the Nigerian protectorates into a single administrative unit, becoming the first governor general of a unified Nigeria. As governor general he extended his form of indirect rule to southern Nigeria, before retiring from public service in 1919. In 1922 he published *The Dual Mandate in British Tropical Africa*, in which he outlined in great detail his philosophy of colonial rule as a system that ought both to benefit the economy of the colonizing country and help to bring indigenous races to a higher level of “civilization.” Indirect rule and the Dual Mandate became common ideologies of British colonial rule throughout Africa.

Macaulay, Herbert (1884–1946)

A grandson of Bishop Samuel Ajayi Crowther, Macaulay grew up in Lagos before undergoing training in England to become a civil engineer. He later abandoned this career path to become a journalist and esteemed critic of British colonial rule in Lagos. He founded the first daily newspaper in Nigeria, *The Lagos Daily News*, through which he informed Nigerians about the activities of their alien colonial government. He formed the first political party in Nigeria, the Nigerian National Democratic Party, which won all the seats in the Nigerian Legislative Council until the rise of the Nigerian Youth Movement in the 1930s. He later became a supporter of Nnamdi Azikiwe’s National Council of Nigeria and the Cameroons. For his vociferous criticism of colonial injustices, which sometimes led to needed reforms, Macaulay has often been called the “father of Nigerian nationalism.”

Mohammed, General Murtala Ramat (1938–76)

Born in Kano and educated at Government College in Zaria, Mohammed enlisted in the army in 1957 and underwent training at Sandhurst Royal Military Academy in the United Kingdom. He served in the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in the Congo, and later as an aide-de-camp to the administrator of the Western Region during the emergency there. He was made a lieutenant colonel after the military coup of January 15, 1966, that brought Aguiyi-Ironsi to power, and took

an active part in the July 29, 1966, coup that deposed Aguiyi-Ironsi. Mohammed served as a field commander in the civil war, capturing Asaba and Onitsha for the Federal Military Government, before moving to Lagos to become inspector of the Nigerian Army Signals in 1968 and, later, in August 1974, federal commissioner of communications. Mohammed became head of state and commander-in-chief of the Nigerian armed forces after the coup that toppled Yakubu Gowon on July 29, 1975. Over the next six months Mohammed undertook a series of sweeping reforms to government administration, including the compulsory retirement of thousands of military officers and civil servants, and the formation of a plan for a handover to civilian rule. On February 13, 1976, Mohammed was assassinated in an abortive coup attempt. Mohammed has been revered since as the most qualified and best-intentioned ruler in Nigerian history, although many believe his near-mythical status owes significantly to the fact that he did not live long enough to have his reputation tarnished.

Nzeogwu, Major Patrick Chukwuma (1937–67)

Born in Kaduna to Igbo parents, Nzeogwu attended St. John's College in Kaduna and later joined the Nigerian army, for which he underwent training at Sandhurst Royal Military Academy in the United Kingdom. Nzeogwu is credited as the leader of the first military coup of January 15, 1966, that ended the First Republic and resulted in the murders of prime minister Tafawa Balewa, Northern Region premier Ahmadu Bello, and Western Region premier S. L. Akintola, among many others. The coup was only partially successful, however, and, after Aguiyi-Ironsi had managed to restore stability to a shattered government, Nzeogwu was detained first in Lagos and then in the Eastern Region. Colonel Emeka Ojukwu released him from prison before the secession of the Eastern Region as the sovereign state of Biafra. Nzeogwu fought on the side of Biafra in the civil war, despite personal disagreement with the decision to secede, and was killed in battle on July 26, 1967.

Obasanjo, General Olusegun (1937–)

Born in Abeokuta, Obasanjo joined the army in 1958 and underwent officer training at Mons Officer Cadets' School in the United Kingdom. He served in the United Nations peacekeeping mission in the Congo and became commander of the Royal Engineers of the Nigerian Army in 1963. During the civil war Obasanjo served as the commander of the Ibadan Garrison from 1967 to 1969, and then as the commander of the third

marine commando division on the southeastern front of Biafra. In January 1970 Obasanjo accepted the surrender of Biafra. After the coup d'état of July 29, 1975, that brought Murtala Mohammed to power, Obasanjo became chief of staff, supreme headquarters. After Mohammed's assassination on February 13, 1976, Obasanjo became head of state and commander-in-chief of the Nigerian armed forces. As head of state, Obasanjo continued with the programs outlined by Mohammed before his death, most notably the plan to transfer power back to civilian rule. In 1979 Obasanjo became the first military ruler in Nigerian history to hand power over to a civilian administration, ushering in the Second Republic. Obasanjo retired from the military in 1979 and became a major figure in international politics, serving on numerous panels and organizations of the United Nations, World Health Organization, and Commonwealth Group. In March 1995 Obasanjo was imprisoned by Abacha for his supposed involvement in a plot to overthrow the government. After Abacha's death in 1998, Obasanjo emerged from prison to mount a presidential campaign for the newly established People's Democratic Party. Obasanjo won the election, and was re-elected in 2003 to a second term. In 2007 Obasanjo handed power to his successor, Umaru Yar'Adua, also of the PDP, marking the first time in Nigeria's history that one civilian leader transferred power to another. Obasanjo's two terms as president have been controversial: while on the one hand he has stabilized the economy and restored Nigeria's tattered international image to a degree, he has been accused of undemocratic and corrupt practices as well.

Ojukwu, Colonel Chukwuemeka Odumegwu (1933–)

Born in Zungeru, in northern Nigeria, to Igbo parents, Ojukwu was educated at King's College, Lagos, before traveling to the United Kingdom, where he studied history at Oxford. He returned from the United Kingdom in 1955 and joined the Nigerian army in 1957, serving in the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in the Congo. After the coup of January 15, 1966, that brought Aguiyi-Ironsi to power, Ojukwu was named the military governor of the Eastern Region. Ojukwu refused to recognize the second coup of July 29, 1966, that made Yakubu Gowon head of state, and, after a series of failed negotiations, Ojukwu led the Eastern Region in secession from Nigeria as the sovereign state of Biafra. In January 1970, with Biafran collapse imminent, Ojukwu fled to Ivory Coast. Pardoned in 1982, Ojukwu returned to Nigeria. Ojukwu has remained active in politics, but has not achieved any great success, losing

a senate race in Anambra in 1983 and running for president as a fringe candidate during the Fourth Republic.

Ransome-Kuti, Fela (1938–97)

Son of the famous political activist Mrs. Olufunmilayo Ransome-Kuti, Fela was one of the most famous African musicians of the 1970s and 1980s. His style of music, known as Afro-beat, blended traditional African rhythms with American jazz and blues, appealing to music lovers the world over. In Nigeria, Fela was influential not only as a musician but as a political and social critic, often speaking out publicly against the venality and corruption of the Nigerian government, for which he paid a severe price. In 1978 his own mother was killed in an army raid on his compound, and he himself spent time in prison. Fela contested the 1983 presidential election, but lost to incumbent Shehu Shagari. Fela died of complications related to AIDS in 1997.

Ransome-Kuti, Chief Olufunmilayo (1900–78)

Born in Abeokuta, Mrs. Ransome-Kuti left Nigeria in 1920 to study music and domestic science at Wincham Hall College in Manchester in the United Kingdom. She returned to Nigeria and became a teacher in Abeokuta, where she began to found several women's organizations. These organizations later merged to become the Egba Women's Union and, later, the Abeokuta Women's Union. The AWU protested strongly at abuses of power on the part of the *alake* of Abeokuta during the 1940s and 1950s, achieving his temporary deportation in 1948. Ransome-Kuti also aligned the AWU with the burgeoning nationalist movement of the NCNC, in which she held important party posts. Mrs. Ransome-Kuti's activism has pervaded her family, and four of her children have become quite famous as political activists: Fela Kuti became one of Nigeria's most politically and culturally significant musicians in the 1970s and 1980s, while Beko Ransome-Kuti, a doctor, has been detained in prison on many occasions for his protests against military regimes. Mrs. Ransome-Kuti was killed in an army raid on her son Fela's compound in 1978.

Saro-Wiwa, Kenule Beeson (1941–95)

Born at Bori in what is now Rivers State, Saro-Wiwa was educated at Government College Umuahia, the University of Ibadan, and the University of Nigeria, Nsukka. He worked as commissioner of works, land and transport for Rivers State and, later, as the state's commissioner of education. In 1987 he was appointed director of the Directorate for