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Soviet policy took a new turn in 1955 when Nikita Khrushchev assumed control of the party and government.

Born in 1894, Khrushchev became a Bolshevik in 1918 and fought in the Red Army during the civil war. He attended a technical school and moved up the party ladder through positions in Moscow and Ukraine; and after World War II he became a member of the Politburo, the decision-making committee at the top of the Communist hierarchy. On becoming party secretary and premier in the mid-1950s, Khrushchev softened some of the harshest aspects of Stalin's dictatorship at home and pursued peaceful coexistence in foreign affairs. The doctrine of peaceful coexistence maintained that socialism's triumph over capitalism would result from economic, technological, and scientific competition, not warfare. Although Khrushchev did not hesitate to use military force against the anticommunist revolt in Hungary in 1956, he sought to improve East-West relations by meeting with Western leaders, visiting Europe and the United States, and publicly supporting disarmament. After several years of bad agricultural harvests and his humiliating withdrawal of missiles from Cuba in 1962, he fell from power in 1964 and retired to his villa outside Moscow, where he died in 1971.

The following excerpt is taken from a speech Khrushchev delivered in November 1958 at a reception for graduates of the Soviet Union's military academies. It shows that even while supporting peaceful coexistence, he harbored deep hostility toward the Soviet Union's Cold War rivals.

QUESTIONS FOR ANALYSIS

1. According to Khrushchev, what are the aims of Soviet foreign policy?
2. Why, according to Khrushchev, is it necessary for the Soviet Union to maintain a large military establishment?
3. What, according to Khrushchev, is the overall goal of the capitalist nations?
4. How does Khrushchev interpret the West's policy toward the newly independent nations of Africa and Asia?
5. Why is Khrushchev convinced that the Soviet Union and communism will triumph over the United States and capitalism?
6. How does the image of the Soviet Union portrayed by Khrushchev differ from the image described in NSC-68 (source 103)?

Comrades,

The Communist Party and the Soviet Government, all our people, are doing everything to maintain the Armed Forces of the Soviet Union at the necessary standard and to equip them with the latest weapons. But we are not doing it to prepare

our Army for any wars of conquest, as the imperialists try to insinuate. By attributing aggressive aims to the Soviet Union, our enemies betray their own ambition of organizing military campaigns against peaceful countries and gaining predatory imperialist domination over the world.

Source: From Nikita Khrushchev, *For Victory in Peaceful Competition with Capitalism* (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1960), 749–757.

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We have no aggressive aims whatsoever. The Soviet people have been brought up on the grand ideas of Marxism-Leninism, in the spirit of respect for the freedom and independence of all countries, the spirit of international friendship. We proceed from the fact that there are no unpopulated countries, and that for this reason conquering a country or territory is tantamount to enslaving its people and exploiting them and their wealth. This goes entirely against our ideology, the great teaching of Marxism-Leninism. . . .

We know our strength very well. The socialist camp is now strong and powerful as never before. Yet we cannot disregard the strength of the imperialist camp. The ruling circles in the imperialist countries see what formidable economic and cultural progress has been made in the Soviet Union, the Chinese People's Republic, and all the socialist countries.

The imperialists would like to halt the development of the socialist countries by means of war. They would like thereby to check or completely destroy the socialist trend in social development, so as to preserve their domination, to preserve the capitalist system.

Not to be caught by surprise, to keep the aggressive forces at arm's length from the Soviet Union and all the socialist countries, to discourage the imperialists from using war as a means of settling the ideological controversy between socialism and capitalism, we must see to it that our Armed Forces are always ready to repel the aggressor, and to rout him. (*Prolonged applause*). . .

Comrades, we live at the wonderful time when the scientific foresight of our great teachers, Marx and Lenin, about the triumph of socialism over moribund capitalism is coming true and the disgraceful colonial system is in the act of collapsing. The peoples in the colonial countries are emerging

from centuries of colonial oppression and fighting stubbornly to become masters of their destiny, their national wealth.

The imperialists are going to all lengths to preserve their domination and keep the colonial countries in a state of dependence. They are looking for new forms of keeping the peoples of economically underdeveloped countries dependent upon them. They are building up aggressive pacts and alliances, such as NATO, the Baghdad Pact, SEATO,¹ and others. With this object U.S. and British imperialists conclude diverse bilateral treaties and military agreements with a number of countries.

But all these pacts, blocs, and agreements are nothing but an artfully camouflaged form of the same old imperialist policy of keeping these countries in complete subjection to the principal imperialist Powers under the pretext of defending them from the "communist threat," and paralyzing the struggle of their peoples for liberation from colonialists, from these dyed-in-the-wool imperialist exploiters.

The imperialists stop at nothing to appropriate the resources of the peoples of colonial and dependent countries. Aided by venal men occupying high government posts in some of the dependent countries, the imperialists try to drag these countries into their own camp so they should themselves help the imperialists in shoring up rotten and corrupt regimes and keep the peoples in the dependencies in colonial slavery. . . .

At present the rulers of some capitalist countries agree to unequal treaties with the United States. But to conceal this in some way, they claim that these treaties are allegedly defensive and a safeguard against the Soviet threat, although it is common knowledge that the Soviet Union has never threatened anyone, and does not threaten anyone now. Our enemies harp on some Soviet "threat,"

¹All of these were regional collective security organizations designed to halt Soviet aggression. An attack on one member was to be construed as an attack on all. NATO (North Atlantic

Treaty Organization) was founded in 1949; SEATO (Southeast Asia Treaty Organization) was founded in 1954; the Baghdad Pact (Middle Eastern Treaty Organization) was signed 1955.

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while the kings and rulers of certain states have something else in mind. What they fear is their own peoples, and they want the United States to back them, to protect them from the righteous wrath of the people. . . .

In hammering together their military blocs, the imperialists do not conceal their aggressive designs. Generals in countries that are party to these aggressive blocs often make provocative statements against the peaceful nations. Recently, Field Marshal Montgomery² known for his inflammatory statements and attacks upon the Soviet Union, retired from the post of Deputy Supreme Commander of NATO Armed Forces in Europe. Now he has been replaced by another Englishman, General Gale.³ No sooner had he assumed his duties than he adopted the methods of his predecessor. . . . He bragged brazenly about the possibilities of military adventures against the Soviet Union and other peaceful countries. Among other things, he extolled in every way the modern means of communication and the air power of the NATO countries. In the past, Gale declared, it took eight hours to connect Paris and Oslo, whereas now it takes just a few seconds. In the past the Western armed forces had just so many airfields, he said, whereas now they have so and so many bases. . . .

We have said repeatedly that it is best to cease these inflammatory speeches, which cause alarm and fear in people. It would be far more sensible to work for a settlement of controversial issues by negotiation, barring threats, let alone the use of weapons, so that people could live peacefully and enjoy the fruits of their labor.

But statesmen of the more aggressive imperialist groups carry on their notorious policy "from positions of strength." Recently Mr. Dulles⁴ declared

again in a speech that the Western Powers were prepared to use armed force to retain control of West Berlin. . . .

Mr. Dulles likes to refer to God in his speeches. If he is really a pious man, we should recommend under the circumstances that he go to church and pray that God give him, a man in a high post, the patience and intelligence to get his proper bearings in the international situation and not to abuse his standing, not to frighten people, but to strive for a sensible settlement of controversial issues without resort to threats of war. (*Applause.*)

High-ranking statesmen such as Mr. Dulles must not liken themselves to a duellist who reaches instantly for his sword or pistol in an argument. They would do well to bear in mind that the partner whom they want to attack, apparently has the same, and perhaps an even more powerful and dangerous weapon. (*Prolonged applause.*) . . .

While encircling the Soviet Union with their military bases, the American imperialists like to use the language of chess players. They often say that they want to check us, that is, to put us in a difficult position. But it must be borne in mind that if one side wants to check, the other side might, for its part, also declare check, and even checkmate. (*Stormy applause.*) . . .

Our seven-year plan⁵ has set grand tasks. The time is not far distant when we shall catch up to the United States in per capita production of key industrial items. Our country will achieve the highest living standard and have the world's shortest working day.

To use a figure of speech, we are putting everything projected in our seven-year plan on the scales. Let the capitalists give the working people all that has been, and soon will be, achieved in the socialist countries. But the capitalist system

²Bernard Law Montgomery (1887–1976) was a British general in World War II and served as deputy supreme allied commander of NATO from 1953 to 1958.

³Sir Richard N. Gale (1896–1982) was a British career officer who served in both world wars. He was deputy to the NATO supreme Allied commander in Europe from 1958 to 1967.

⁴John Foster Dulles (1888–1959) was secretary of state under Eisenhower. A staunch anticommunist, he was architect of anti-Soviet alliances and stated he would "go to the brink" of war to halt communist aggression.

⁵The Soviet Union's recently adopted economic plan.

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cannot give the working people, the whole nation, what the socialist system can give.

We want the people to choose for themselves what suits them best, what system accords with the fundamental interests of the toilers and what system gives some the opportunity of enriching themselves by exploiting and plundering others. We are sure that the peoples will make the right

choice. All peoples will choose the path charted by Marxism-Leninism. (*Stormy applause.*)

The future is with us, with socialism, with communism! We have created all the conditions we need to advance with giant strides along the road shown us by Marx and Lenin—the road to communism. And no hostile forces will stop our advance! (*Stormy, prolonged applause. All rise.*)

Great Britain Lets Go of India

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A turning point in the dismantling of Europe's empires took place in August 1947 when the Indian people gained independence from Great Britain and the new states of India and Pakistan were created. After the greatest imperial power released its hold on the "jewel in the crown" of its empire, nationalist leaders throughout Asia and Africa demanded equal treatment, and European politicians found it more difficult to justify continued colonial rule elsewhere.

British and Indian leaders had debated the timing and framework of Indian independence for decades, but World War II brought the issue to a head. Many Indians, still embittered by the meager benefits they had received for their sacrifices in World War I, showed little enthusiasm for the British cause in World War II. In 1942, after Japan's conquest of Southeast Asia, the British government sent Sir Stafford Cripps to Delhi to offer India dominion status after the war if the leaders of the independence movement, Gandhi and Jinnah, would support the war against Japan. Negotiations broke down, however, leading Gandhi to launch the "Quit India" movement, his last nationwide passive resistance campaign against British rule. Anti-British feeling intensified in 1943 when a disastrous famine took between 1 million and 3 million lives and the pro-Japanese Indian National Army, organized by Subhas Bose, declared war on Great Britain.

A shift in postwar British politics also affected India's future. The 1945 elections initiated six years of rule by the Labour Party, which had less enthusiasm for the idea of empire than the Conservatives. In the face of mounting restiveness in India, Prime Minister Clement Attlee dispatched a three-person mission to India in early 1946 charged with preserving Indian unity in the face of growing Hindu-Muslim antagonism and arranging for India's independence as soon as possible. Although Hindus and Muslims could not reconcile their differences, on February 20, 1947, the Labour government announced its plan to end British rule in India no later than June 1948.

This led to an emotional two-day debate in Parliament in which Conservatives and some Liberals argued that independence should be delayed. Labour had a strong majority, however, and in March 1947, Parliament approved its plan. At midnight on

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August 14–15, 1947, predominantly Hindu India and predominantly Muslim Pakistan became independent states.

The following excerpts are from the parliamentary debates of March 4 and 5, 1947. All the speakers are opposing a proposal by Sir John Anderson, a Liberal representing the Scottish universities, that Great Britain should promise independence by June 1948 but withdraw the offer and require further negotiations if a suitable Hindu–Muslim agreement could not be achieved.

QUESTIONS FOR ANALYSIS

1. What were the points of disagreement among members of Parliament about the benefits and harm of British colonial rule in India?
2. Some speakers who believed that British colonialism had benefited India still supported independence. Why?
3. The critics of British rule in India supported immediate independence. What was their line of argument?
4. According to the speakers, what military and economic realities make it impractical to continue British rule in India?
5. How do the speakers view developments in India as part of broader historical trends?
6. Most of the speakers were members of the Labour Party and thus sympathetic to socialism. What examples of socialist perspectives can you find in their speeches?

MR. CLEMENT DAVIES¹ (MONTGOMERY) It is an old adage now, that “the old order changeth, yielding place to new,” but there has been a more rapid change from the old to the new in our time than ever before. We have witnessed great changes in each one of the five Continents, and for many of those changes this country and its people have been directly or indirectly responsible. . . . In all the lands where the British flag flies, we have taught the peoples the rule of law and the value of justice impartially administered. We have extended knowledge, and tried to inculcate understanding and toleration.

Our declared objects were twofold—first, the betterment of the conditions of the people and the improvement of their standard of life; and, second, to teach them the ways of good administration

and gradually train them to undertake responsibility so that one day we could hand over to them the full burden of their own self-government. Our teachings and our methods have had widespread effect, and we should rejoice that so many peoples in the world today are awake, and aware of their own individualities, and have a desire to express their own personalities and their traditions, and to live their own mode of life. . . . Our association with India during two centuries has been, on the whole—with mistakes, as we will admit—an honorable one. So far as we were able we brought peace to this great sub-continent; we have introduced not only a system of law and order, but also a system of administration of justice, fair and impartial, which has won their respect. . . . We have tried to inculcate into them the feeling that

Source: *Parliamentary Debates*, 5th ser., vol. 434 (London: His Majesty's Printing Office, 1947).

¹A London lawyer (1884–1962). A Liberal Member of Parliament (MP) from 1929 until the time of his death.

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although they are composed of different races, with different languages, customs, and religions, they are really part of one great people of India.

The standard of life, pathetically low as it is, has improved so that during the last 30 years there has been an increase in the population of 100 million and they now number 400 million people. We have brought to them schools, universities, and teachers, and we have not only introduced the Indians into the Civil Service but have gradually handed over to them, in the Provinces and even in the Central Government, the administration and government of their own land and their own people. . . . Then in 1946, there was the offer of complete independence, with the right again, if they so chose, of contracting in and coming back within the British Commonwealth of Nations.²

I agree that these offers were made subject to the condition that the Indian peoples themselves would co-operate to form a Central Government and draw up not only their own Constitution, but the method of framing it. Unfortunately, the leaders of the two main parties in India have failed to agree upon the formation of even a Constituent Assembly, and have failed, therefore, to agree upon a form of Constitution. . . .

What are the possible courses that could be pursued? . . . The first of the courses would be to restore power into our own hands so that we might not only have the responsibility but the full means of exercising that responsibility. I believe that that is not only impossible but unthinkable at this present stage. . . . Secondly, can we continue, as we do at present, to wait until an agreement is reached for the formation of a Central Government with a full Constitution, capable of acting on behalf

of the whole of India? The present state of affairs there and the deterioration which has already set in—and which has worsened—have shown us that we cannot long continue on that course.

The third course is the step taken by His Majesty's Government—the declaration made by the Government that we cannot and do not intend in the slightest degree to go back upon our word, that we do not intend to damp the hopes of the Indian peoples but rather to raise them, and that we cannot possibly go on indefinitely as we have been going on during these past months; that not only shall they have the power they now really possess but after June 1948, the full responsibility for government of their own peoples in India. . . .

MR. SORESENSEN³ (LEYTON, WEST) I have considerable sympathy with the hon. and gallant Member for Ayr Burghs (Sir T. Moore),⁴ because, politically, he has been dead for some time and does not know it. His ideas were extraordinarily reminiscent of 50 years ago, and I do not propose, therefore, to deal with so unpleasant and decadent a subject. When he drew attention to the service we have rendered to India—and we have undoubtedly rendered service—he overlooked the fact that India has had an existence extending for some thousands of years before the British occupation, and that during that period she managed to run schools, establish a chain of rest houses, preserve an economy, and reach a high level of civilization, when the inhabitants of these islands were in a condition of barbarism and savagery. One has only to discuss such matters with a few representative Indians to realize that they can draw up a fairly powerful indictment of the evil we have taken to India as well as the good. . . .

²The British Commonwealth of Nations was founded by Parliament in 1931 through the Statute of Westminster. It is a free association of nations comprising Great Britain and a number of its former dependencies that have chosen to maintain ties of friendship and practical cooperation. Members acknowledge the British monarch as the symbolic head

of their association. Since 1946 it has been known as the Commonwealth of Nations.

³A clergyman (1884–1971). A Labour MP from 1929 to 1931 and from 1939 to 1954.

⁴A Conservative MP (1929–1962) who had just spoken against the government's plan for Indian independence.

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Whatever may have been the origin of the various problems in India, or the degree of culpability which may be attached to this or that party or person, a situation now confronts us which demands decision. . . . That is why, in my estimation, the Government are perfectly right to fix a date for the transference of power. . . . Responsibility is ultimately an Indian matter. Acute problems have existed in India for centuries, and they have not been solved under our domination. Untouchability, the appalling subjugation of women, the division of the castes, the incipient or actual conflict between Muslim and Hindu—all those and many others exist.

I do not forget what is to me the most terrible of all India's problems, the appalling poverty. It has not been solved by us, although we have had our opportunity. On the contrary, in some respects we have increased that problem, because, despite the contributions that we have made to India's welfare, we have taken a great deal of wealth from India in order that we ourselves might enjoy a relatively higher standard of life. Can it be denied that we have benefited in the past substantially by the ignorant, sweated labor of the Indian people? We have not solved those social problems. The Indians may not solve them either. There are many problems that the Western world cannot solve, but at least, those problems are India's responsibility. Indians are more likely, because they are intimate with their own problems, to know how to find their way through those labyrinths than we, who are, to the Indian but aliens and foreigners.

Here I submit a point which surely will receive the endorsement of most hon. Members of this House. It is that even a benevolent autocracy can be no substitute for democracy and liberty. . . .

I would therefore put two points to the House tonight. Are we really asked by hon. Members

on the other side to engage in a gamble, first by continuing as we are and trying to control India indefinitely, with the probability that we should not succeed and that all over India there would be rebellion, chaos, and breakdown? Secondly, are we to try to reconquer India and in doing so, to impose upon ourselves an economic burden which we could not possibly afford? How many men would be required to keep India quiet if the great majority of the Indians were determined to defy our power? I guarantee that the number would not be fewer than a million men, with all the necessary resources and munitions of war.

Are we to do this at a time when we are crying out for manpower in this country, when in the mines, the textile industry, and elsewhere we want every man we can possibly secure? There are already 1,500,000 men under arms. To talk about facing the possibility of governing and policing India and keeping India under proper supervision out of our own resources is not only nonsense, but would provide the last straw that breaks the camel's back. . . .

FLIGHT-LIEUTENANT CRAWLEY⁵ (BUCKINGHAM)
Right hon. and hon. Members opposite, who envisage our staying in India, must have some idea of what type of rule we should maintain. A fact about the Indian services which they seem to ignore is that they are largely Indianized. Can they really expect the Services, Indianized to the extent of 80 or 90 percent, to carry out their policy any longer? Is it not true that in any situation that is likely to arise in India now, if the British remain without a definite date being given for withdrawal, every single Indian member of the Services, will, in the mind of all politically conscious Indians become a political collaborator? We have seen that in Palestine where Arab hates Arab and Jew hates Jew if they think they are collaborating with the British.⁶ How could we get

⁵An educator and journalist (1908–1992) who served in the Royal Air Force during World War II. A Labour MP from 1945 to 1951.

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the Indianized part of the Services to carry out a policy which, in the view of all political Indians, is anti-Indian? The only conceivable way in which we could stay even for seven years in India would be by instituting a type of rule which we in this country abhor more than any other—a purely dictatorial rule based upon all the things we detest most, such as an informative police, not for an emergency measure, but for a long period and imprisonment without trial. . . .

MR. HAROLD DAVIES⁷ (LEEK) . . . I believe that India is the pivot of the Pacific Ocean area. All the peoples of Asia are on the move. Can we in this House, by wishful thinking, sweep aside this natural desire for independence, freedom, and nationalism that has grown in Asia from Karachi

to Peking,⁸ from Karachi to Indonesia and Indo-China? That is all part of that movement, and we must recognize it. I am not a Utopian. I know that the changeover will not be easy. But there is no hon. Member opposite who has given any concrete, practical alternative to the decision, which has been made by my right hon. friends. What alternative can we give?

This little old country is tottering and wounded as a result of the wars inherent in the capitalist system. Can we, today, carry out vast commitments from one end of the world to another? Is it not time that we said to those for whom we have spoken so long, "The time has come when you shall have your independence. That time has come; the moment is here"?

⁶The British were attempting to extricate themselves from Palestine, which they had received as a mandate after World War I and was the scene of bitter Arab-Jewish rivalry (see source 95).

⁷An author and educator (1904–1984). A Labour MP from 1959 to 1964.

⁸Karachi, a port city on the Arabian Sea, was soon to become Pakistan's first capital city.

Problems and Prospects of Postcolonial Asia and Africa, 1960s–1980s

As one colony after another achieved independence in the 1950s and 1960s, euphoria swept across Africa and Asia. All the indignities of colonialism and all the ways it had branded colonized peoples with the mark of inferiority could now be forgotten. With a unity of purpose forged in the struggle against colonial rule, leaders and common people alike were ready to show the world they could govern themselves effectively. Their economic outlook was no less optimistic: with the heavy hand of the colonial master lifted from their economies, they anticipated rapid economic development and the alleviation of poverty.

Many of these states have achieved their dreams. But in the first three decades of independence, most experienced more difficulties and disappointments than anyone could have imagined at the time of independence. Many were nations in name only, with boundaries drawn by European administrators during the colonial

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era without regard for cultural affinities, ethnic groupings, religious traditions, and economic viability. Throughout much of Asia and Africa, shallow national loyalties were undermined by regionalism and ethnic conflict, and soon civil wars and military coups took their toll on democratic governments. With some notable exceptions, such as India, the norm became one-party dictatorships, which at best were controlled by nationalist leaders with the interests of their countrymen at heart, but at their worst were dominated by venal, short-sighted, even genocidal leaders who enriched themselves and their henchmen while their nations' economies crumbled. In some parts of Africa lawlessness, random violence, and warlordism overwhelmed even the dictators, and effective government essentially disappeared.

Economic development in the early stages of independence also came slowly. In the 1960s and 1970s, South Korea and Taiwan, former colonies of Japan, and Singapore and Hong Kong, former colonies of Great Britain, became major industrial and financial powers, but the spectacular success of these four "Asian Tigers" was unique. Elsewhere, oil-rich states in the Persian Gulf, Middle East, and Nigeria generated huge revenues in oil sales but failed to develop the balanced economies needed to improve their people's standard of living or provide a foundation for lasting economic growth. In India, agricultural and industrial growth occurred but not fast enough to keep pace with its rising population, while in Africa, low rates of literacy, lack of infrastructure, and political instability doomed most of the continent to minimal economic growth and deepening poverty.

In their efforts to provide economic growth and political order for their citizens, the approximately 100 new independent nations that emerged from the 1940s through the late 1970 faced different obstacles, undertook different strategies, and achieved varying results. The sources that follow in this section provide insights into some of their experiences.

The Colonial Legacy: Ethnic Tensions in Nigeria

106 • C. ODUMEGWU OJUKWU, SPEECHES AND WRITINGS

Political challenges for the newly independent states of sub-Saharan Africa were daunting: poor communications, low literacy levels, peasant resistance to taxation by distant governments, underdeveloped economies, arbitrary national boundaries, and unrealistically high expectations. Overshadowing everything else, however, was the persistence of strong local and ethnic loyalties that led people to judge national policies by the narrow standard of how they benefited one's region or tribe. In the Republic of Congo (soon to be renamed the Democratic Republic of Congo and later Zaire), rebellion and civil war broke out in January 1960, literally within hours of the formal end of Belgian rule. Newly independent Nigeria held together longer,

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but it too fell victim to civil war in 1967, when the eastern province of Biafra declared its independence.

When Nigeria became independent in 1960, its constitution was the product of protracted deliberations involving British administrators and representatives of the colony's major ethnic groups, the Hausa-Fulani, the Yoruba, and the Igbo. It established a central government with a prime minister and legislature and three provinces with extensive powers: the Northern Region, which was dominated by the Hausa-Fulani and was overwhelmingly Muslim; the Western Region, which was dominated by the Yoruba and was Protestant; and the Eastern Region, which was dominated by the Igbo and was mainly Roman Catholic. Denouncing corruption and the government's failure to address mounting economic problems, army officers, mostly Igbo, led a *coup d'état* in 1966 and then created a strong centralized national government at the expense of Nigeria's provinces. This angered the Hausa-Fulani and the Yoruba, who feared that the more highly educated and economically sophisticated Igbo would dominate the new regime. The result was another coup, led by Yakuba Gowon, an army officer from the Northern Region, and massacres of Igbo living outside the Eastern Region. The Eastern Region refused to recognize the new government and declared itself the independent Republic of Biafra in May 1967.

The leader of the Biafran independence movement was Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu, who was born into a wealthy Igbo family and educated in England, where he received a master's degree in history from Oxford. He rose through the ranks of the Nigerian army and in 1967 became head of state and army commander-in-chief of newly independent Biafra. Immediately attacked by Nigerian forces, Biafra held out until 1970, when Ojukwu capitulated and fled to Guinea. Yakuba Gowon now ruled a reunited Nigeria, which he divided into 12 provinces rather than 3 to defuse ethnic conflict. For the next two decades, except between 1979 and 1983, Nigeria was ruled by military dictators.

The following excerpts are from General Ojukwu's speeches and writings from 1966 to 1969. They reveal his views of Nigeria's history and politics and his thoughts on the meaning of Biafran independence.

QUESTIONS FOR ANALYSIS

1. In Ojukwu's opinion, how did the British and the Northern Nigerians contribute to the problems of the Nigerian state?
2. What characteristics define the people of Eastern Nigeria, in Ojukwu's view?
3. According to Ojukwu, what have been the major flaws of the Nigerian government since independence? How will the new state of Biafra avoid these shortcomings?
4. What specific reasons does Ojukwu provide for the decision of Eastern Nigerians to secede?
5. What does Ojukwu see as the broader significance of the Biafran independence movement?