Among the different ethnic groups in Nigeria, the Igbo are without a doubt, one of the most remarkable. So remarkable, indeed, that some have even traced their ancestry to biblical Israel, as the far-flung descendants of Jacob, the Jewish patriarch. Gad, Jacob’s seventh son, is said to have had three sons who settled in South-eastern Nigeria. These sons; Eri, Arodi and Areli, are believed to have fathered clans in Igbo-land and to have founded such Igbo towns as Aguleri, Arochukwu, Owerri and Umuleri.

Igbo Genius.
Even the bitterest adversaries of the Igbo cannot but admit that, as a people, they are very resourceful and ingenious. Indeed, this has often been the cause of their envy and dislike by others. However, more enlightened non-Igbo Nigerians see this as a cause for celebration. While today, the centre-point of Nigeria’s manufacturing is situated in the Lagos/Ogun axis, there is no doubt that the real locomotive of Nigeria’s indigenous industrialization lies farther afield in Aba/Nnewi and in the mushrooming cottage-industries of the Igbo heartland.

Igbo-men
In one of the paradoxes of Nigerian history, the terrible civil war provoked homespun industrialization in the South-East. Military blockade left the Igbo with little alternative than to be inventive in a hurry. While Nigeria as a nation failed woefully to harness this profitably after the war, it has nevertheless ensured that the Igbo are at the forefront of Nigeria’s economic development today. Indeed, the way we disregard “made in Aba” today is the same way we disregarded “made in Japan” yesterday. For those of us who believe against the odds that Nigeria is the China of tomorrow, we equally recognize that the ingenuity of the Igbo is an indelible part of the actualization of that manifest destiny.

Hall of Fame.
The Igbo have been a great credit to Nigeria. They have given us a great number of our favourite sons, including international statesman Nnamdi Azikiwe; military leader
Odumegwu Ojukwu; regional leader Michael Okpara; vice-president Alex Ekwueme; mathematical genius Chike Obi; literary icon Chinua Achebe; world-class economist Pius Okigbo; world boxing champion Dick Tiger; international statesman Emeka Anyaoku; and world-class artist Ben Enwonwu. Permit me to include in this illustrious list even some of my very good Igbo friends: Pat Utomi, Ojo Madueke, Olisa Agbakoba, Joy Ogwu, and Stanley Macebuh.

Let us get one thing straight: Nigeria would be a much poorer country without the Igbo. Indeed, Nigeria would not be Nigeria without them. Can you imagine the Super Eagles without the Igbo? Not likely! Who can forget Nwankwo Kanu, Jay Kay Okocha and our very own Emmanuel Amuneke?

Can you imagine Nollywood without the Igbo? Impossible! Just think of Stella Damascus-Aboderin; Rita Dominic and Mike Ezuruonye.

And then there are the diaspora Igbo who many are unaware are of Igbo descent, including concert singer and actor Paul Robeson; Oscar award-winner Forest Whitaker; mega-pastor T.D. Jakes; Olympic champion Christine Ohuruogu; and BAFTA actor award-winner Chiwetel Ejiofor.

You may well wonder why I have found it necessary to present this small litany of Igbo who-is-who. I think it is important to emphasise how the Igbo have been very vital to the Nigerian project. They have more than represented Nigeria creditably in virtually all walks of life. This makes it all the more absurd that this same people have been consistently denied the position of executive president of the country in all but six months of Nigeria’s 54 year history.

The war
The Igbo were abused and maltreated in one of the worst pogroms ever. It was not just that they were senselessly massacred in their own country; it was that they were butchered.

I remember vividly gory pictures of scores and scores of the Igbo with hands chopped up and with legs amputated. And then there were the ravages of the three-year civil-war itself, resulting in the death of millions of Igbo; many through starvation and attrition.

The end of the war brought no respite, as the Igbo were pauperized by fiscal decrees that
YES INDEED!!! NIGERIA CANNOT SURVIVE WITHOUT IGBOS!

wiped out their savings and their properties were blatantly sequestered by opportunists. All this is more than enough to destroy the spirit of any group of people. But God has been on the side of the Igbo.

It is a testament to their resilience that, in spite of this terrible affliction, they have survived, bounced back and have even triumphed in Nigeria. Forty years have now gone by. The Igbo may never forget what happened to them and, indeed, should never forget. But it is past time for them to forgive.

We Are Sorry.
This is one voice in the Nigerian wilderness saying to the Igbo from the depth of his heart: we are sorry. We are sorry for the way we mistreated you. We are sorry for the way we abused you. We are sorry for starving your children to death. We are sorry for killing your loved ones. We are sorry for stealing your properties.

We are sorry for making you feel unwanted in your own country. Please forgive us. It is time to forgive us. It is way past time for the Igbo to forgive Nigerians. We beg you in the name of God.

Paradoxically, the redemption of the Igbos to prominent national office moved apace under President Obasanjo; a Yoruba man. Recognising that Igbos are some of the most seasoned, competent and experienced public-servants, Obasanjo relied heavily on their expertise.

Thanks to Obasanjo, we got Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala at Finance, Charles Soludo at Central Bank, Obiageli Ezekwesili at Education, Ndidi Okereke at the Stock Exchange, and Dora Akunyili at NAFDAC. Indeed, Igbo statesmen came into more prominence under Obasanjo than did Yoruba statesmen. But for some strange reason, this does not seem to have succeeded in assuaging the ill-feeling of the Igbos toward the Yorubas.

Nigeria cannot survive without the Igbo.

COMMENTARY:

The above article by one Femi Aribisala claims that Nigeria cannot survive without the Igbos. That Igbos are sharing this Trojan message leaves a sour taste in the mouth. How stupid can a tribe be? Are Igbos not the same tribe that was pushed out of Nigeria in 1967? The indispensable tribe was humiliated, raped, dispossessed of their belongings and those Igbos that survived the Holocaust were readmitted in Nigeria for more humiliation.

Nigeria not only survived from 1967 to 1970 without the Igbos but beat the hell out of the Igbos. The Igbos are always used as mumus and mugus by the other Nigerian tribes. Onye aghobulu ka agbara! (The gullible are easy prey) Nigeria can survive without the Igbos so can Chad, Mali, and Burkina Faso.

An elated value of self is one of the Igbo problems. Igbos sense of megalomania accentuated by sycophancy is indeed a lethal combination. Nigeria needs Igbo mugus and mumus to do the hard work while the other tribes collect tithes from them. https://africastallestman.com/2017/05/04/igbos-love-for-tithing/

When the Igbos exit Nigeria, the other tribes will work hard for their money. That scares the hell out of the tribes. That’s the main reason they do not want the Igbos to leave Nigeria.

Mr. Aribisala deserves a Nobel Prize in Satire!

“A word is not enough for the fool” – Chidiogo.