

Title: A Gilded Cage? Nnamdi Azikiwe's Pan-Africanism as Governor-General of Nigeria, 1960-1963\*

Abstract (112 words):

Historians have wrongly ignored the period when Nnamdi Azikiwe served as Governor-General of Nigeria, just after its independence (1960-3). Archival materials in Britain, the United States, and Azikiwe's own papers in Nigeria reveal that he played a dynamic role in Nigeria's new government, struggling against the constitutional limits of his chosen position, especially on the role of Nigeria in convening pan-African conferences on the road to the creation of the Organization of African Unity in 1963. Despite being on the margins of official policymaking, Azikiwe used the authority of his reputation as Nigeria's preeminent pan-Africanist ever since the 1930s to shape the role Nigeria would play in Africa's new age of independence.

Keywords: Nnamdi Azikiwe; pan-Africanism; Nigeria; Commonwealth

Word Count: 11,103

Character and Space Count: 72,064

As Nigeria prepared to celebrate its independence on 1 October 1960, one man remained profoundly unhappy. The young playwright Wole Soyinka, newly returned from Britain, found the circumstances of independence rather depressing. Or, perhaps more accurately, he found the *personnel* of independence disappointing. He did not exactly conceal his distaste, either, only thinly veiling his criticisms in the play he submitted to be performed in the festivities around the inauguration of independent Nigeria's first indigenous Governor-General, the longtime nationalist newspaper editor and anticolonial leader Nnamdi Azikiwe. In Soyinka's *Dance of the Forests*, villagers preparing to celebrate an epochal meeting of past and present nonetheless sigh, "We were sent the wrong people. We asked for statesmen and we were sent executioners."<sup>1</sup> The future Nobel laureate wasn't surprised when the inaugural committee decided that its tone was not fit for the celebrations after all.<sup>2</sup>

In his cynicism, Soyinka felt that "it would not have made the slightest difference to the future of a nation, the kernel of which was already implanted in the machinations of the departing colonial power."<sup>3</sup> Looking at the incoming government, led by the North-dominated National People's Conference with its Prime Minister, Sir Abubakar Tafewa Balewa, Soyinka lamented that the most pro-British and least enthusiastic proponents of independence would lead Nigeria into ostensible freedom. Of course, Sir Abubakar had formed the new government in coalition with Azikiwe's National Convention of Nigeria and the Cameroons (NCNC) after elections in 1959, when Azikiwe had opted not to form a coalition with his rival Obafemi Awolowo's Action Group.<sup>4</sup>

In particular, Soyinka lamented that Nnamdi Azikiwe had forsaken his place in front-bench politics as leader of the NCNC for the symbolic role of Governor-General: that is, since Nigeria became independent as a dominion, Queen Elizabeth II remained the titular sovereign

over the otherwise-independent country. Just as in Canada, Australia, or New Zealand, in Nigeria she would be represented by a person designated by Nigeria's own elected government, a Governor-General.<sup>5</sup> Shortly after Azikiwe's resignation as leader of the NCNC, his successor Michael Okpara lamented the abdication, but still put a brave face on, finding encouragement in the fact that "his wide experience and ability as a statesman will still be available to all Nigerian Governments and people irrespective of political affiliation."<sup>6</sup> Soyinka, more bluntly, saw this as Zik "determined to lock himself in a gilded cage."<sup>7</sup> Other observers shared this concern: in 1961, senior NCNC official Kola Balogun shared his frustration that "the most colourful Nigerian nationalist and one of the greatest freedom fighters of our time had become a glorified prisoner in the gilded cage."<sup>8</sup> More diplomatically, the *West African Review's* commemorative issue for Nigeria's independence noted that "if, at 57, he chooses to retire from the hurly-burly of politics, well - he has earned the rest."<sup>9</sup>

Having assumed Zik truly was at rest, historians have largely ignored the Governor-General when discussing the hurly-burly of Nigeria's early independence as a dominion (1960-3) and in its First Republic (1963-6). Works which do acknowledge Zik as a factor only bring him in for the disputed 1964 election when Azikiwe as president delayed certifying the re-election of Sir Abubakar as prime minister.<sup>10</sup> In contrast to this historiography, during the early months of Nigerian independence, foreign policymakers from the United States and the United Kingdom recognized that Zik remained a force to be reckoned with. Lord Arthur Head, the British High Commissioner to newly independent Nigeria, called Zik "the most outstanding political figure in Nigeria," admitting that "in public esteem he still dominates the political scene," a view he had not revised by 1962, when he called Azikiwe "the ablest politician of them all," who "still exerts

much influence.”<sup>11</sup> Likewise, the U.S. Ambassador in Lagos recognized that Zik’s “behind scenes influence is considerable.”<sup>12</sup>

This article uses archival materials in Britain, the United States, and Azikiwe’s papers own papers in Nigeria to demonstrate that he played a dynamic role in Nigerian politics despite the constitutional limitations of his role as Governor-General. In particular, Azikiwe built upon his thirty-year celebrity and reputation as Nigeria’s preeminent pan-Africanist to push the independent Nigerian government into taking concrete steps to participate in and lead a pan-African bloc among the newly independent African states. Azikiwe’s success in this area, despite being on the margins of official policymaking, highlights by contrast his failure to manage the crises threatening Nigeria’s unity once he became President of Nigeria’s First Republic in 1963. While historians have extensively documented the failures of the First Republic, this article shifts attention back onto Nigeria’s earliest post-independence days to see both the successes of its anticolonial generation once they came into power, exemplified by Azikiwe bringing to fruition his long pan-African ideals, and the limits of that generation’s power, seen in Nigeria’s collapse after 1963.

### Zik of Africa

Until the emergence of Kwame Nkrumah as a pan-African icon in the early 1950s as he led Gold Coast toward independence, Nnamdi Azikiwe was the most prominent pan-Africanist in British West Africa, and possibly in all of Africa. Political scientist James Coleman made this point in 1958, and in 1943 then-Colonial Secretary Oliver Stanley called Azikiwe “the biggest danger of the lot.”<sup>14</sup>

Zik's reputation as a pan-African, and a dangerous challenge to the British colonial system, stemmed from his life story, his writings, and his political activity. Azikiwe's biography has been well documented, from his early life in all three regions of what would become Nigeria, to his sojourn in the United States as a student from 1925 to 1934, and his return to West Africa as an activist newspaperman, first in Accra and then in Lagos.<sup>15</sup> Zik's anticolonial writings from the United States, Accra, and Lagos established him as a pan-Africanist, as he selected from and elaborated on the pan-African ideas of West Indians and African-Americans such as Edward Wilmot Blyden, W.E.B. Du Bois, and Marcus Garvey, as well as West Africans such as J.E. Casely Hayford and his allies in the National Congress of British West Africa.<sup>16</sup> He published his first book in 1934, on Liberia, celebrating the African republic's independence while castigating the imperial powers for restricting its freedom.<sup>17</sup> Zik also always framed his scholarship on and support for Liberia as a pan-African project, identifying Liberia as "the medium...[which] will facilitate the establishment of a national hegemony of the black man" in Africa.<sup>18</sup> Zik's ideas circulated around West Africa as he used his "spectacular self" to craft a public image as a political celebrity, just as he circulated across and around the black Atlantic.<sup>19</sup>

Most importantly for his reputation as a pan-Africanist, in 1937 Azikiwe published a collection of his columns for Accra's *African Morning Post* as *Renasant Africa*, which articulated his ideas for an African renaissance to bring independence to the continent. *Renasant Africa* offered a vague program for a "New Africa," modeled on the New Negro Movement articulated by Alain Locke, one of Zik's teachers during his U.S. period.<sup>21</sup> Azikiwe's "new Africa" comprised five elements: spiritual balance (by which Azikiwe indicated a sort of freedom of expression); social regeneration (anti-tribalism); economic determinism (a mix of self-sufficiency and socialism); mental emancipation (education, especially in African culture

and history); and, most importantly for the pan-Africanism of the 1960s, “National Risorgimento,” or “political resurgence.”<sup>22</sup>

Zik wrote about this resurgence or risorgimento as an inevitable outcome of individual Africans’ rebirth along the lines of his four other criteria, but he left the shape of that politics vague. However, he offered some hints which rhyme with his use of “risorgimento,” which implied a reunification along the lines of Italy’s unification in the 1850s and 1860s. Thus, in *Renascent Africa* he looked forward to “the redemption of Africa and the reconstruction of this ham which has been carved by the sword of European imperialism.”<sup>23</sup> With the same impulse, he encouraged New Africans to “*put away childish things*” to see Africans from other territories as brothers rather than foreigners, again transcending the colonial boundaries.<sup>24</sup>

Beyond his writings, Azikiwe actively participated in pan-African politics, circulating intellectually, in person, and in his writing around the Black Atlantic from West Africa and the Caribbean to the United States and western Europe.<sup>25</sup> Zik could not attend the 1945 Pan-African Congress in Manchester, but he sent a representative from his new NCNC. Azikiwe also attended the December 1953 Kumasi pan-African conference organized by Nkrumah.<sup>26</sup> In a 1957 radio interview, Zik reiterated his support for the goal set out at Kumasi, namely for British West Africa to gain its independence as a confederation of states, which would also eventually open itself for French territories in the region.<sup>27</sup> Azikiwe publicly affirmed the creation of the Ghana-Guinea Union in November 1958, placing it in the context of the “formation of a United States of West Africa” as agreed at Kumasi.<sup>28</sup> Due to parliamentary business in the region of Eastern Nigeria whose self-government regime he led as premier since 1954, Azikiwe could not attend the December 1958 All-African People’s Conference in Accra, but he sent a NCNC delegation and a goodwill message, which was met with “cries of ‘Zik, Zik’ from all sides.”<sup>29</sup>

Azikiwe's pan-Africanism in the 1950s emerged largely in his attachment to Kwame Nkrumah's projects. Nkrumah, whom Zik had known during his early sojourn in Accra from 1934 to 1937, had previously been a kind of disciple to Azikiwe, following Zik's advice and enjoying his financial support in going to the Nigerian's alma mater, Lincoln University, for his education in the late 1930s.<sup>30</sup> By the 1950s, Nkrumah had surpassed Azikiwe as the star of pan-Africanism, enjoying the authority of the first successful movement for self-government in West Africa, and then independence in 1957.<sup>31</sup>

Azikiwe used the platform of welcoming Nkrumah to visit Eastern Nigeria in February 1959 to remind his audience, and possibly Nkrumah himself, of how his own career in the 1930s pre-dated Nkrumah's rise, claiming that Nkrumah was "now a fellow alumnus and a fraternity brother." He also called to mind how Nkrumah's Foreign Minister, Kojo Botsio, had volunteered with Azikiwe's 1947 delegation to London—back when Zik, not Nkrumah, was the most famous African leader in British circles. Azikiwe also made sure to point out his long association with Nkrumah's counselor on pan-African affairs, George Padmore, noting their association went back to the 1920s. In this speech, even as Zik attempted to place himself above Nkrumah in historical terms, he still endorsed Nkrumah's pan-African projects, speaking glowingly of the previous December's All-African People's Conference. In particular, Azikiwe celebrated that the conference heralded the beginning of "a future Federation of independent West African States," and hoped "that the Federation of Nigeria, soon to be independent, will play a worthy part in that larger Federation."<sup>32</sup> The CIA analysis of Nkrumah's reception in Eastern Nigeria perhaps got at the tension in Zik's thought best, noting that despite Azikiwe's enthusiasm for Nkrumah's policies, he still "believe[d] Nigeria must dominate any West African regional union."<sup>33</sup>

By 1959, with Nigerian independence around the corner in 1960, Zik had three decades of thinking about pan-Africanism under his belt and a widespread reputation for promoting those ideas. Therefore, when analyzing his transition from anticolonial intellectual to post-independence government, historians should pay attention to how his pan-African ideas translated from ideas into governance. As we shall see, Nigeria's particular federal politics drove Azikiwe away from his more radical visions of the 1930s through the 1950s and toward a more conservative policy. However, even within a more constrained political environment, Zik continued to push Nigeria toward greater cooperation with its neighbors and all African countries to build a strong pan-African bloc.

#### Reversals of Fortune? 1959-1960

Azikiwe's step away from radical pan-Africanism along the line pursued by Nkrumah stemmed from domestic politics within Nigeria. In 1958, Eastern Nigeria's Governor Stapledon noted that Azikiwe and the NCNC had recently made a quiet deal with the leaders of the conservative, Northern Region-based Northern People's Congress (NPC).<sup>34</sup> This deal facilitated smooth governance since the NPC and NCNC both held ministerial portfolios in the new federal government set up under Nigeria's 1957 constitution, and it also looked forward to Nigeria's first federal general election, scheduled for 1959, which would elect the government to lead Nigeria into independence in 1960. Azikiwe and the NPC's leader, the aristocratic Sir Ahmadu Bello, usually referred to by his title, the Sardauna of Sokoto, shared little except a mutual hatred of the Western Region-based Action Group (AG), led by Obafemi Awolowo. The CIA knew of the NPC-NCNC entente by July 1959, recognizing it was purely a "working arrangement" which "might be broken abruptly if either party should feel it could do better separately."<sup>35</sup> Kenneth



Post dates the alliance back to Azikiwe's May 1958 visit to the Sardauna at Kaduna, and quotes an NCNC official "who described the arrangement...as 'A negative alliance, agreed to keep the Action Group out.'"<sup>36</sup> Since Bello and the Northern elites who formed the NPC's base despised Nkrumah and his secular, socialist-inflected pan-Africanism nearly as much as they despised Awolowo, Zik would "be less ready than before to back Nkrumah if by so doing he runs risk of disturbing relations with Sardauna."<sup>37</sup>

In light of NCNC's understanding with the NPC, once the campaigning began in earnest for the December 1959 federal elections, Azikiwe backed away from his more sanguine support of Nkrumah's pan-Africanism. Thus, only a few months after applauding Nkrumah and possible Ghanaian and Nigerian unity in a West African Federation, in July 1959 Azikiwe gave a speech in London staking out his position on how the newly independent African states should achieve pan-African unity. Rather than an imminent federation, in London Zik emphasized the need to recognize the sovereignty of independent African states, with those independent states then cooperating among themselves. This would then provide the basis for deeper political union, to be formed in a vaguely defined future.<sup>38</sup>

While Azikiwe did not call out Nkrumah specifically, his gradualist approach placed him squarely in the camp opposite Nkrumah, who sought "a political union of African States now."<sup>39</sup> In contrast to this school, Azikiwe proposed a series of specific steps to unite independent African states to build an infrastructure of cooperation, including a customs union, freedom of movement across borders, and "the construction of *autobahn* systems" to link West, East, North, and Central Africa. On this basis, Azikiwe offered a hope that "we should be able to knit the continent of Africa into a tapestry of free-trading, free-travelling, and free-living peoples."<sup>40</sup> By 1961, these two approaches to pan-Africanism would become institutionalized into geopolitical

blocs, the Nkrumah-influenced Casablanca bloc, and the Monrovia bloc, which was shaped by ideas much like Azikiwe's, but developed independently and articulated by President William Tubman of Liberia at his Saniquellie summit with Nkrumah and Sekou Touré of Guinea about two weeks before Azikiwe's speech.<sup>41</sup>

Azikiwe insisted that such a 'bottom-up' pan-Africanism would prove more enduring than top-down unions shaped by governments, since "hard-bargaining politicians who passed through the ordeal of victimization and the crucible of persecution to win their political independence" would never "surrender their newly-won political power in the interest of a political leviathan which is populated by people who are alien to one another in their social and economic relations." Zik based his negative assessment of Nkrumah and other unitarists' vision on an assumption of African equality with Europeans and Americans. If Europe and America had failed to build lasting unity among their sovereign states, why should Africans expect anything different? Azikiwe warned that if Africans believed themselves better than their predecessors on other continents, the result would be disastrous. Zik feared that pan-Africanism pursued too aggressively could "[precipitate] a crisis which will find African leaders jockeying among themselves for leadership of peoples who are not only alien to each other" and ultimately a catastrophe. Azikiwe specifically cited the example of the Holy Roman Empire, "which gave top priority to political integration before social and economic integration, only to disintegrate into unimportant nation-states after the Peace of Westphalia in 1648."<sup>42</sup>

Lest his listeners totally despair, Azikiwe affirmed his belief that pan-African unity was possible, but sadly acknowledged that this would not come to pass "within the life-time of the heroes and heroines who have spearheaded the struggle for freedom in Africa, these four decades," but that with gradual social and economic integration, "an amalgam of

understanding...might be realizable earlier than we expected.”<sup>43</sup> This long-term perspective contrasted with his optimism of the 1930s, when in *Renasant Africa* Zik had prophesied African unity as “automatic” and “inevitable.”<sup>44</sup> The realities of political administration, which Azikiwe had participated in since 1954 in Nigeria’s Eastern Region, seem to have revealed the practical difficulties of political integration, however desirable. Rather than give up on pan-African unity, then, Zik simply shifted the timeframe forward.

In all of these projects, Azikiwe based his ideas on the fact that Nigeria itself, as a federation among three radically different regional territories, constituted a pan-African project. Thus, in his proposal for opening borders among newly independent territories, Zik cited the example of what he claimed was a common Nigerian culture, built up through “students, dancers, artistes, traders and holiday-makers” crossing borders to “become the harbingers of a new era in Africa, because once a sense of one-ness has permeated the social fabric it facilitates the crystallization of common nationality, as the experience of Nigerian history vindicates.”<sup>45</sup> The use of Nigerian federalism as a model carried over from a February 1959 NCNC policy paper, which advocated a “Union of West African Republics...at least as closely knit as the regions which are in union to form the federation of Nigeria.”<sup>46</sup>

Even though Azikiwe’s model for pan-African integration was significantly more conservative than Nkrumah’s, it was still more radical than any of his rivals for the leadership of Nigeria in 1959. Awolowo believed even working for economic integration “unrealistic,” while the NPC called any talk of a West African union “premature.”<sup>47</sup> But even Zik’s moderate pan-African proposal appeared in jeopardy when his NCNC, in coalition with the Northern Elements Progressive Union, only won 89 seats in the federal legislature at the 12 December 1959 poll—

despite winning 2,594,577 votes in total, to the NPC's 1,992,179 (134 seats) and the AG's 1,992,384 (79 seats).<sup>48</sup>

Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa, the mild-mannered former schoolteacher from Bauchi in northern Nigeria who had been selected by the Sardauna to lead the NPC's parliamentary party in 1957 and had remained in that role for the 1959 election, became Nigeria's first independent prime minister due to a deal with Azikiwe and the NCNC. Awolowo had proposed an AG-NCNC coalition, offering Azikiwe the prize of the Prime Minister's office, but Zik turned him down, preferring to retain the *modus vivendi* he had reached with the Sardauna and the NPC back in 1958. Accordingly, Azikiwe became president of Nigeria's new Senate, but with the understanding that he would become Governor-General after the last British occupant, Sir James Robertson, retired shortly after Nigeria gained independence on 1 October 1960.<sup>49</sup>

Publicly, Azikiwe explained his alignment with the conservative NPC, and his acceptance of the less prestigious role of Governor-General, as an act of selflessness. Speaking to the NCNC's executive to explain his decision, Azikiwe insisted that becoming Prime Minister "had not necessarily been my goal in the national struggle," and that "all I personally desired was to see [his] country free from British rule and it made no difference to me what role I might play in the future political history of Nigeria."<sup>50</sup> Despite this magnanimity, Zik freely acknowledged that personal factors led him to reject the NCNC-AG coalition, especially the AG-run Western Region's confiscation of Azikiwe's 25 acres at Ikeja in 1958, as well as AG-funded legal attacks on him over the last several years.<sup>51</sup> Zik divided his personal notes about the decision into "Personal Reasons" and "Political Reasons," and he tellingly listed the personal first. As he explained to the NCNC leadership, Azikiwe submitted that in coalition governments, "circumstances...oblige one to pick and choose his friends mainly upon the human factor."<sup>52</sup>

Ultimately, this “human factor” trumped both Azikiwe’s prime ministerial ambitions and his stated pan-Africanist commitments. Despite his protests that he could not lead the NCNC into coalition with the AG because he would not “hobnob with political opponents, in a strange political marriage of inconvenience, which would find me becoming influenced to compromise my beliefs and convictions,” by entering government with the NPC Azikiwe simply chose to hobnob with a different set of political opponents in an equally odd marriage of convenience.<sup>53</sup>

In addition to the earlier “understanding” with the NPC, a certain selflessness could have played into Azikiwe’s 1959 decision, which helped preserve what remained a fragile union between Nigeria’s three regions. The NPC, and the Sardauna of Sokoto especially, had consistently feared the Western and Eastern regions uniting to dominate the Northern region, so an AG-NCNC coalition would have been the worst nightmare of the Northern power brokers, who may have stirred up secessionist sentiment facing an Azikiwe premiership.<sup>54</sup> From the perspective of Nigeria as a pan-African project, preserving the federation served a nationalist as well as a pan-Africanist end.

Azikiwe certainly told himself this altruistic narrative. In a poem entitled “Sacrifice,” composed about a month after the agreement with the NPC, he rather grandiosely wrote that “Let us coolly face the fire, / And control our selfish ire; / Should this be a sacrifice, / Let us gladly pay the price.”<sup>55</sup> A 3 July 1960 poem, “One Nigeria,” made the unity of Nigeria more explicitly his motive for becoming Governor-General rather than Prime Minister, as Zik claimed he had an “offering made in an Onitsha den. / That I should be an instrument of power / To tower high above my countrymen / And hold their rein at our momentous hour.” However, “Had East and West united to divide / The spoils of war whilst caring not a fig, / Our vaunted unity would be

descried.” Zik again read himself as a high literary hero: “To be or not to be, confronted me: / I made my choice, by shunning infamy.”<sup>56</sup>

He would again use poetry to explain his selflessness in his inaugural address as Governor-General on 16 November 1960, when he acknowledged “observers” who “thought...I should continue to fight in order to displace the present Head of our Government, instead of supporting the conclusion of a political truce and agreeing to become what one of them euphemistically described as ‘a prisoner in a gilded cage.’”<sup>57</sup> Zik explained himself by quoting from the Chicago “lumberman’s poet” Douglas Malloch, accepting that “We can’t all be captains, we’ve got to be crew,” and “If you can't be a muskie then just be a bass - / But the liveliest bass in the lake!” Zik’s aquatic metaphors betrayed a more self-interested realpolitik involved in his coalition deal. Although he insisted “more than one captain cannot run a ship efficiently” in his inaugural, Azikiwe seemed to believe he could steer the ship through other means.<sup>58</sup>

Azikiwe’s listed reasons for his 1959 decision, and the working relationship maintained between Zik and the Sardauna since 1958, suggest that Zik believed he could more easily control and shape Nigerian policy as the power behind the throne in an NCNC-NPC alliance, rather than as the public face of an NCNC-AG coalition. Zik had rejected a coalition with AG in part because he feared the AG leadership’s dexterity with the law, which he felt would make them “intractable when it comes to political bargaining, because they knew what they were doing, unlike other political bodies.”<sup>59</sup> The straightforward implication of this, of course, being that Sir Abubakar and the NPC did not know what they were doing. Zik seems to have counted on “the cordiality which exists in the personal relationship of NCNC leaders and the NPC leaders” to

have provided a more stable ground for NCNC influence than the longtime rivalry between himself and the AG leadership.<sup>60</sup>

To an extent, this calculation paid off, as Zik succeeded in securing important ministerial posts for the NCNC in Sir Abubakar's cabinet, such as the Foreign Ministry. Even this would be a slightly poisoned pill, as Sir Abubakar appointed Jaja Wachuku to the influential position, almost certainly knowing Wachuku had defected from the NCNC and challenged Zik's leadership of the Eastern Region in 1953, only rejoining the NCNC in 1957. Likewise, Sir Abubakar took another onetime Azikiwe confidant, K.O. Mbadiwe, as his adviser on African affairs—but Mbadiwe had only rejoined the NCNC in late 1960, after fighting the 1959 election on a rival ticket.<sup>61</sup>

If Sir Abubakar's personnel choices demonstrated Zik's only tangential influence over policy, the substance of the new Nigerian government's policy demonstrated how little real influence Azikiwe would hold simply through loyalty to the NPC alliance. Sir Abubakar was an avowed Anglophile whom the British High Commissioner, Lord Arthur Head, caricatured as envisioning Nigeria "walking through history hand-in-hand with Britain and the Commonwealth, on equal terms, sharing the difficulties and problems of the day and gaining wisdom from the councils of their equal but more experienced leaders."<sup>62</sup> The most concrete example of Sir Abubakar's promotion of alliance with the Western powers was Nigeria's defense pact with Britain, pushed through the Nigerian legislature in 1960. On this front, Azikiwe stood in full agreement with Sir Abubakar, embracing Anglo-Nigerian defense cooperation just as he embraced the Commonwealth connection to the former colonial power, and by framing the defense pact as a Commonwealth commitment Zik and the NCNC could still claim to support a non-aligned foreign policy.<sup>63</sup>

Azikiwe and the NCNC succeeded in forcing Sir Abubakar to offer lip service to a non-aligned foreign policy for Nigeria, but this would prove a hollow victory. In August 1960, Sir Abubakar made a parliamentary statement identifying Nigeria's foreign policy as "neutralist."<sup>64</sup> The statement, however, was drafted with the help of a British colonial official, who along with Sir Abubakar ensured it made the right noises to appease the NCNC without making any concrete policy changes.<sup>65</sup> The emptiness of the parliamentary commitment to neutralism remained clear to U.S. policymakers. The veteran Democratic Party stalwart Averell Harriman, touring West Africa in September 1960, wired then-presidential candidate John Kennedy from Lagos, reassuring him of Balewa's distaste for "the terms non alignment [sic] or neutrality as he considers himself committed to western ideals. 'They are the same as those of Nigeria,' he stated."<sup>66</sup> When Sir Abubakar met with President Eisenhower on the sidelines of 1960's UN General Assembly just after independence celebrations in October, he expressed his admiration for U.S. anti-Soviet policy, noting "the whole burden of representing the West and standing up to the USSR falls on the U.S.," which he claimed "never fought an aggressive or expansionist war." Balewa insisted that Nigeria would never accept Soviet aid, instead looking to "the U.S., Britain, Germany, and to a lesser degree, France."<sup>67</sup>

Sir Abubakar would demonstrate his disinterest in non-alignment most flagrantly in 1961 by rejecting an invitation to the Conference of Non-Aligned Nations held in Belgrade in September of that year. Nigeria was only invited to the Belgrade Conference because Indian diplomats pressed for a wide interpretation of "non-alignment."<sup>68</sup> Even so, Sir Abubakar rejected the invitation; and by doing so during a visit to the United States in July 1961, Yugoslav diplomats took it as an indication of Nigeria's true loyalties in the Cold War.<sup>69</sup> On the pan-African front, the NPC promised to be no more amenable to Azikiwe and the NCNC's stated



policy aims than on non-alignment. In January 1960, just after the NCNC-NPC deal, Sir Abubakar told the Republic of China's ambassador to Liberia that he had no intention of joining any sort of African union, which would "surrender [Nigeria's] sovereignty."<sup>70</sup>

#### The Black Atlantic and Azikiwe's Inauguration, November 1960

In 1945 and 1958, domestic Nigerian political responsibilities had prevented Zik from attending critical symbolic events in the history of pan-Africanism. After 1958, however, he seemed to be isolating himself from the pan-African momentum gathering around Nkrumah's Ghana—by consciously aligning with the NPC in 1958 and 1959, and then by entering into a coalition government with the NPC in 1959 and 1960, purposefully sidelining himself from active policymaking by taking on the largely ceremonial role as Governor-General. The assertiveness of Sir Abubakar's government on Nigeria's place in the cold war would suggest that Azikiwe miscalculated if he thought he could retain any policymaking influence.

However, his activity after becoming Governor-General on 16 November 1960 suggests that Zik had other motives besides preserving Nigerian unity, retiring selflessly to clear the deck for other captains, or even trying to be a power behind the throne. Rather, he attempted to use the prestige of his office, and the access it gave him, as a kind of bully pulpit to steer a government he could not otherwise control towards policies he cared about.

Sir Abubakar recognized the difficulties Zik could create. As the intelligence analyst at the U.S. embassy in Lagos reported, despite the position's constitutional restrictions, "Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe, is a very strong personality with the largest personal following of any single Nigerian."<sup>71</sup> The last British Governor-General, Sir James Robertson, later recounted that Abubakar tried to get Robertson to stay on as Governor-General until 1962. According to

Robertson, only British Prime Minister Harold Macmillan's intervention during his visit to Lagos (on his way to give the "Winds of Change" speech in Pretoria) in early 1960 convinced the Nigerian Prime Minister to follow through on his promise to appoint Zik as Robertson's replacement.<sup>72</sup> The interim British High Commissioner in Lagos, writing before the arrival of Lord Arthur Head, also acknowledged that Sir Abubakar and the Sardauna "would have greatly preferred to have avoided having to recommend Dr. Azikiwe" as Governor-General. They had apparently hoped Zik would commit some political indiscretion after their deal in late 1959 which would allow them to renege on appointing him.<sup>73</sup>

As it happened, Azikiwe's good behavior throughout 1960 allowed him to enjoy his moment of pomp and circumstance in November 1960. Since Azikiwe remained President of the Senate on Nigeria's independence day, he had to take a backseat during those celebrations. Azikiwe's friends across the Atlantic did not forget him, even if his moment in the sun had to wait. His old Lincoln classmate Langston Hughes sent Zik a brief telegram on the eve of Nigerian independence, invoking the language of the New Negro movement and Azikiwe's early writings on "New Africa" by sending "greetings to New Nigeria and yourself today."<sup>74</sup>

He pulled out all the stops for his inauguration as Governor-General, managing most of the planning himself. Zik did not waste the opportunity to remind his Nigerian colleagues of the wide network from around the Black Atlantic which he had cultivated throughout his career. A who's who of the African-American political and cultural elite of the early twentieth century, from across the political spectrum, made their way to Lagos for the 16 November inauguration. Azikiwe's classmate from Lincoln, the poet Langston Hughes, noted down Ralph Bunche, W.E.B. Du Bois and Shirley Graham Du Bois, Amy Jacques Garvey, and George S. Schuyler, all of whom had either taught or worked with Zik during his American sojourn.<sup>75</sup> In addition to the

singer Nina Simone, the famed African-American historian and educator Dr. Horace Mann Bond had accompanied Hughes on the chartered plane to Lagos.<sup>76</sup> Azikiwe expressed his appreciation to Langston Hughes in particular by ending his inaugural address with Hughes' hopeful look to the future, the poem "Youth," with its evocative and restrained language: "Yesterday, a night-gone thing, / A sun-down name. / And dawn today, / Broad arch above the road we came. / We march."<sup>77</sup>

Wole Soyinka found all this ostentation depressing, but resigned himself to it by telling himself, "if the great Zik was determined to lock himself in a gilded cage, let it at least be done with style."<sup>78</sup> But Azikiwe, even as he entered the gilded cage, used the attention it brought to offer a political message. After explaining the intricacies of the very British constitutional position he was adopting as Governor-General, Zik gave his vision of independent Nigeria's contribution to the world: nothing short of "the need to revive the stature of man in Africa and restore the dignity of man in the world." While such a platitudinous goal might have kept the speech within the required apolitical spectrum of a Governor-General's constitutional role, Zik went beyond that, noting Nigeria's need to fight mistreatment of Africans and people of African descent. "No matter where this spurious doctrine may prevail, it may be in Lodwar [Kenya] or Sharpville [sic] or Decatur, we shall never admit that we are an inferior race."<sup>79</sup> Zik also tried to drive home Sir Abubakar's government's commitment to NCNC priorities on foreign policy, non-alignment and pan-Africanism, by mentioning the necessity of these policies as symbols of genuine independence, in addition to the need to expel apartheid South Africa from the Commonwealth.<sup>80</sup>

More worrying, perhaps, for Sir Abubakar and the NPC, was the attention Azikiwe drew to his position as Governor-General as a representative of Nigeria's unity. Near the end of his

address, Zik expressed satisfaction that “those of us, who may be rightly described as the makers of contemporary Nigeria, have ushered freedom into our country and preserved our unity as a nation,” a unity which “history has assigned to me an important part to play in order that this unity may have lasting effects and to bring home to our people the need to maintain it religiously.” But then, he added that “I shall not have consideration for personal comforts or even safety or even life itself, if these are the price I must pay for leadership in order to preserve the freedom and unity of my country.”<sup>81</sup> That is, Azikiwe already began to project himself out to the nation as its guardian, and even as its leader – far beyond what a constitutional monarch’s ceremonial representative ought to do.

While Zik may have simply been expressing his fervor for Nigeria as a pan-African project, U.S. and British observers certainly saw the potential for him to step back into political power should Nigeria’s parliamentary system logjam. U.S. intelligence noted that in an event where “no government could obtain...a majority and public security and order broke down, Dr. Azikiwe might use his office to concentrate power in 'strong hands,' perhaps his own.” While the writer went on to say “such a breakdown...is not likely in the foreseeable future,” it would occur in 1962, and especially in 1964 and 1965.<sup>82</sup> British High Commissioner Head also felt Azikiwe was leaving his political options open even as he occupied an ostensibly apolitical role, noting Zik’s “decisions will be made in light of events and the opportunities which they seem to afford him.”<sup>83</sup> In October 1960, even Zik’s erstwhile rival, Awolowo, was looking toward the next federal elections hoping for an AG-NCNC alliance mobilized behind “the standing and stature of Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe” in order to “mobilize and unite under his leadership all the truly nationalistic, radical, and progressive elements in the country.”<sup>84</sup>

Azikiwe's message certainly stung Sir Abubakar and the Sardauna. Sir Abubakar told British officials that he intended "to exercise his constitutional prerogative to control future speech-making by the Governor-General." At a formal luncheon for Azikiwe on 18 November, the NPC leaders made their displeasure obvious, with Sir Abubakar "stressing that Nigeria was not a member of the Western *bloc* or the Eastern *bloc* or (this with emphasis) the Afro-Asian *bloc*." The Sardauna, in his toast, made the greatest impression on the British official, who read into the curt formality: "We are the people with real authority, he declared; we have supporters in millions ('and you, my dear Governor-General,' he clearly implied, 'are now nothing but an impotent puppet'); we will be graciously pleased to instruct our supporters to give you such support as is appropriate to your constitutional position." The official went on to infer that "if Dr. Azikiwe departs from the path of constitutional rectitude and impartiality, he has had clear warning of opposition from the North."<sup>85</sup> The personal and political tensions which would tear apart the NPC-NCNC coalition in 1964, in retrospect, were present at the creation.

#### Achieving African Unity? 1961-1963

Having strained his constitutional position in his first moments in office, Azikiwe continued to project himself as a political leader during his first trip outside Nigeria as Governor-General. The summer visit to London had been suggested by Britain's new High Commissioner in Lagos, Lord Head, who recognized the need to keep "the most popular man in Nigeria... on good terms with our country" given "the somewhat precarious political balance which obtains in Nigeria."<sup>86</sup> In addition to a palace visit, Azikiwe had a meeting with Commonwealth Secretary Duncan Sandys, where he revealed his anger with Kwame Nkrumah, whom he claimed "did not really want genuine pan-African co-operation, but saw himself as Africa's national leader and

hero,” seeking domination in Africa rather than cooperation. Zik’s rationale was that Nkrumah had not responded to any of his own proposals for cooperation, such as a joint West African military command, and thus he inferred “Ghana was bent on aggression, as he could think of no other reason for her to spend 12m. pounds on her armed services.”<sup>87</sup>

Since Azikiwe had diverged from Nkrumah’s model of ‘African union now’ as early as 1959, he did genuinely disagree with Nkrumah’s pan-African policies. But by dishing dirt on Nkrumah, Azikiwe also hoped to improve Nigeria’s place in British and American policymaking circles. Later in 1961, in a meeting with two visiting U.S. senators, Azikiwe made veiled insinuations against Nkrumah’s government, urging the United States to “support those countries in Africa which are dedicated working out their destinies on basis democracy, rule [sic] of law and social justice and not reward those who flaunt these principles. Although words 'Ghana' and [Nkrumah’s longtime Volta Dam project] never mentioned, it was abundantly clear that he had these situations in mind.”<sup>88</sup>

Zik laid out his more principled differences with Nkrumah in a speech he gave during his 1961 London visit, he reviewed the recent Nkrumah-aligned Casablanca conference and the Liberia-hosted and -influenced Monrovia conferences. While advocating the creation of a “concretised...regional states or one continental state,” Zik insisted that this must “be done voluntarily without upsetting the total sovereignty of the states involved,” just as the Monrovia bloc specified. He also put forward an NCNC idea from 1959, a “Monroe Doctrine” for Africa, “making it clear that the establishment of the continued existence of any colonial territory in Africa, by any non-African state, shall be regarded as an unfriendly act and an act of aggression against the African states collectively.”<sup>89</sup> Most importantly, though, Zik insisted that African states must reiterate with the Monrovia bloc the equality of African states regardless of size, and

the principle of non-intervention, pointing explicitly to Togo's fears of forceful integration into Ghana, and Morocco's claims to Mauritania.<sup>90</sup> Despite the anti-Nkrumah and anti-Casablanca tenor of the speech, in the government-published pamphlet containing it, Azikiwe added that the post-Casablanca and Monrovia consultations at Conakry and Dakar, respectively, had produced strikingly similar recommendations for pan-African machinery, which he felt confident statesmen could integrate and reconcile the pan-African movements.<sup>91</sup>

This speech soon became embroiled in a constitutional problem for Britain and Nigeria: the speech, along with Zik's general eagerness "to take a bigger part in African political life," seems to have spurred Sir Abubakar's government to send out invitations for a conference to be held in Lagos in January 1962 to try and unite the Casablanca and Monrovia blocs, Sir Abubakar offered Azikiwe the opportunity to chair the conference.<sup>92</sup> It is not clear why Sir Abubakar would give this honor to his rival in the government, but perhaps he sought to appease Zik's desire for influence with what he saw as an inconsequential event. The Commonwealth Relations Office (CRO) saw things differently, and expressed great annoyance at the notion of the Queen's representative directly intervening in international politics. The CRO could only find a precedent in King George V opening the 1930 Round Table Conference and the Canadian Governor-General opening the 1932 Ottawa Imperial Economic Conference.<sup>93</sup> As High Commissioner Head explained to Sir Abubakar, "an analogy would be for a European political conference to take place in London and for The Queen or the Duke of Edinburgh to take the chair." Sir Abubakar felt he could not rescind the offer, so the CRO simply had to live with it.<sup>94</sup>

By the autumn of 1961, Azikiwe had created yet another constitutional problem, making another "highly improper speech for the holder of his office."<sup>95</sup> At a special convocation at the University of Nigeria in Nsukka (Azikiwe's pet project) on 17 November, Zik announced his

proposal for Nigeria to follow India, Pakistan, and Ghana by adopting a republican constitution.<sup>96</sup> That is, Nigeria would drop the Crown and have a President as its Head of State, while still remaining a member of the Commonwealth. Azikiwe made it clear he hoped he would become that President, with an expanded range of powers.<sup>97</sup>

As at his inauguration, Zik caught Sir Abubakar's government off guard, and the Prime Minister again reassured the High Commissioner "he had confronted Zik and told him he could not go on making speeches of this kind without consulting the Government."<sup>98</sup> Azikiwe seems to have been inspired to make the move by a meeting in London with his old rival Awolowo, who on subsequent meetings in Lagos in December 1961, assured Zik "that in the event of presidential election and his wanting to stand, I assured him of Action Group votes."<sup>99</sup> As the Queen's representative, Azikiwe was not actually a head of state, and so on his visit to Britain in 1961 he could not be afforded those privileges.<sup>100</sup> This annoyance seems to have focused Azikiwe's mind on the inadequacy of the Governor-Generalship. Sir Abubakar had pointed to this indignity when he found himself forced to comment on Zik's speech at a December 1961 press conference – perhaps trying to imply that Azikiwe's proposal was merely venal.<sup>101</sup>

At the January 1962 Lagos Conference, Zik certainly seemed to audition for a new, expansive presidential role as Nigeria's head of state. After the Casablanca powers backed out of attending the conference at the last minute, ostensibly over the non-invitation of the Provisional Government of Algeria, most observers agreed that Azikiwe's rousing opening speech saved the conference from a false start.<sup>102</sup> The rousing speech continued his attack on Nkrumah from London, but also reached back to the beginnings of Zik's career, as he reviewed African history "in order for us to appreciate the political risorgimento taking place in contemporary Africa," reviving the term he used in *Renascent Africa*. Azikiwe ripped into the Casablanca powers,



insisting that “it is now a categorical imperative that all African States should declare publicly their adherence to the policy of non-intervention in the internal affairs of each other and their unscrupulous respect for the right of all African States, large or small, to co-exist,” that is, to the Monrovia principles.<sup>103</sup> Observers reported that “there was no doubt in anybody's mind that he was referring to President Nkrumah of Ghana,” or at least “there was no doubt in the mind of President Sylvanus Olympio of Togoland, which borders Ghana, who enthusiastically and loudly applauded Dr. Azikiwe's words.”<sup>104</sup> Azikiwe urged the gathered leaders to move beyond principles and implement the Dakar and Conakry recommendations for actual machinery to create an organization of African states.

In retaliation for Zik’s criticism of Ghana, the Ghanaian government drew attention to Zik’s odd constitutional position speaking for the Queen, so fretted over by the CRO. Ghana’s state-controlled *Ghanaian Times* captioned a photo of Azikiwe with the suggestive, “Dr. Azikiwe ... Voice of London?,” and reminded readers that “as head of the state of Nigeria [Azikiwe] represents the Queen of England.” A.K. Barden, George Padmore’s successor at Ghana’s Bureau of African Affairs, even claimed that Zik’s speech “*was prepared in London and read in Lagos.*”<sup>105</sup>

With the absence of the Casablanca powers, and under Azikiwe’s chairmanship, the Lagos Conference adopted a draft charter for an “Inter-African and Malagasy Organization,” prepared in advance by the Liberian delegation. As a result, in his farewell address closing the conference, Azikiwe claimed the conference “demonstrated the maturity and statesmanship” of the leaders present, and even declared a sort of epochal change: “Today is no longer an era of anti-colonialist harangues. This is the time for positive action...”<sup>106</sup> The new organization’s delegates met again in Lagos from 20-21 December 1962, which would prove consequential

because the charter provided the basis for the Charter of the Organization of African Unity, accepted as a last-minute compromise at the Addis Ababa Conference in May 1963.<sup>107</sup> Even though Azikiwe, still Governor-General and not a true head of state, did not attend the Addis Ababa Conference, his imprint would be felt in the document it produced. By the end of his life, Zik seemed to find this another hollow victory: in an outline for a piece on pan-Africanism during his lifetime, he listed “Lagos Conference of 1962 / Founding of the OAU / Another International Debating Society.”<sup>108</sup>

By October 1963, he would be President, not Governor-General, having succeeded in forcing Sir Abubakar to convert Nigeria into a republic. However, he had not succeeded in converting the Governor-Generalship into an executive presidency; instead, Zik simply changed the gilded cage of the Governor-General for that of an equally ceremonial presidency.<sup>109</sup> Somewhat akin to Azikiwe’s invocation of Hamlet in his poetic description of sacrificially accepting the Governor-Generalship, his inauguration as President prophesied tragedy, as “the guns of the new Saladins, being lowered in salute, pointed directly at the new President.”<sup>110</sup>

Despite becoming President, Zik did not find the influence he had sought through back channels and audacity during his years as Governor-General; as the new High Commissioner described it, “he is respected as a figurehead but carries little weight,” still “engag[ing] in ineffectual political intrigue behind the scenes.”<sup>111</sup> Yet, Lord Head’s final message as High Commissioner also warned “if there is ever a serious political upheaval Zik will always be a force to be reckoned with.”<sup>112</sup> Thus, in his first real attempt to exert power, Azikiwe sought to annul the results of the disputed 1964 federal election which re-elected Sir Abubakar’s NPC, no longer in alliance with Zik’s NCNC. The chaos which followed certainly accelerated Nigeria’s descent into ungovernability, leading to the coup in January 1966 which ousted Azikiwe, and

murdered Sir Abubakar and the Sardauna.<sup>113</sup> With Nkrumah's removal in Ghana on 24 February 1966, only weeks after Azikiwe's, both moderate and radical visions for a united Africa unraveled along with their chief proponents.

During the Nigerian Civil War which followed the coup, Azikiwe would argue for Biafra's right to secede and enjoy the recognition of its fellow African states. In contrast, the Organization of African Unity which he had helped to create for refused to countenance any interference in Nigeria's internal affairs.<sup>114</sup> In supporting Biafra, Zik had come a long way from his faith in an automatic and inevitable African unity, as he had articulated in *Renascent Africa*. Ironically, the pan-African institution which Zik had helped build abetted Federal Nigeria's destruction of eastern Nigeria, in the name of preserving the Nigerian and African unity to which Azikiwe himself had devoted so much of his life.

## Conclusion

A prophetic work about the 1966 coup, Chinua Achebe's *Man of the People* evoked the disappointment that emerged from Nigeria's independence, using poetry as a dirge rather than Zik's laudatory style: looking back at independence's hopes, one young idealist read his lines written "during the intoxicating months of high hope soon after Independence... 'I will return home to her – many centuries have I wandered - / And I will make my offering at the feet of my lovely Mother: / I will rebuild her house, the holy places they raped and plundered, / And I will make it fine with black wood, bronzes, and terracotta.'" The young man can only cry at the verses, with their hopes so misplaced.<sup>115</sup>

By 1965, as Nigeria descended into disunity and chaos, then-President Azikiwe had embraced his powerlessness as president, writing in *Foreign Affairs* that he had been happy to “play the role of a prisoner in a gilded cage,” but only a strong executive presidency could save Nigeria from disintegration.<sup>119</sup> In one move, Azikiwe exonerated himself from Nigeria’s current woes by emphasizing his powerlessness and forwarded himself as a way out. However, whereas Zik had succeeded in working behind the scenes to maneuver Nigeria into a leadership role in pan-Africanism, he did not succeed when he used his presidential power overtly, first in attempting to de-certify Sir Abubakar’s re-election victory in the 1964 general election and then in proposing constitutional change to an executive presidency.

Rather than building on the reputation which transcended partisan politics, and which had catapulted him to the presidency, through which he used his personal relationships to advance a pan-African agenda, Azikiwe tried to propel himself to the forefront. Since by 1964 and 1965 he was not alone in pushing himself forward as the solution to Nigeria and Africa’s ills, this effort served to fracture rather than unify the troubled Nigerian body politic. Had Zik been able to embrace the gilded cage of Nigeria’s presidency, as he had embraced the gilded cage of the Governor-Generalship, perhaps he could have applied the same energy to preserving Nigerian unity and republicanism which he had brought to pan-Africanism. Azikiwe’s strength as Governor-General contrasts with his impotence as President and demonstrates that sometimes a gilded cage can channel power effectively, not imprison it.

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\*Acknowledgements: My intense thanks to Professor Mrs. Uche Azikiwe, Ph.D., for granting me access to the Rt. Hon. Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe’s private library at Onuiyi Haven, as well as to Mr. Vincent Ekwelem and the staff at the Nnamdi Azikiwe Library of the University of Nigeria, Nsukka, for all their help during my visit in May 2017; as well as to the Social Science Research Council’s Mellon International Dissertation Research Fellowship, which funded my research. John 3:30.

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<sup>1</sup> Wole Soyinka, "A Dance of the Forests," in *Five Plays* (Ibadan: Oxford University Press, 1964), 30.

<sup>2</sup> Wole Soyinka, *Ibadan: The Penkelemes Years: A Memoir, 1946-1965* (Ibadan: Bookcraft, 1994), 87.

<sup>3</sup> Soyinka, *Ibadan*, 87.

<sup>4</sup> For his reasoning, see Nnamdi Azikiwe, "Address Delivered at the Meeting of the National Executive Committee of the NCNC, Which Was Held at the Lagos City College, Yaba, on December 22, 1959," in *Zik: A Selection from the Speeches of Nnamdi Azikiwe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1961), 204–7.

<sup>5</sup> As explained by Nnamdi Azikiwe, *Respect for Human Dignity: An Inaugural Address by His Excellency Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe, Governor-General and Commander-in-Chief, Federation of Nigeria, 16 November, 1960* (Enugu: Government Printer, 1960), 3.

<sup>6</sup> Michael I. Okpara, *Before the Dawn: Being the Full Text of the Presidential Address Delivered by Dr. the Honourable Michael I. Okpara, M.H.A., National President of the NCNC, at the Party's Annual Convention Held in Lagos on September 10 & 11, 1960* (Lagos: NCNC National Headquarters, 1960), 11. Hints of Okpara's rivalry with Azikiwe appeared as early as 1962, when a British journalist described Okpara as "not simply a rubber stamp for Zikism," who had "quietly but firmly established himself in the affections of his people." Gerald Howson, "Profile: A Visit with Dr. Okpara," *Africa Report* 7, no. 10 (November 1962), 24.

<sup>7</sup> Soyinka, *Ibadan*, 88. This article uses Azikiwe and his nickname, Zik, interchangeably, just as Azikiwe and his contemporaries did.

<sup>8</sup> Ayo Fasanmi quoted in Obafemi Awolowo, *Adventures in Power: My March through Prison* (Lagos: Macmillan Nigeria Publishers, 1985), 129.

<sup>9</sup> "Zik - Man Above Politics: Dr. Azikiwe, President of the Nigerian Senate," *West African Review*, September 1960, 24, MCF 10/99, School of Oriental and African Studies Library, London [hereafter SOAS].

<sup>10</sup> Kenneth Post and Michael Vickers, *Structure and Conflict in Nigeria, 1960-1966* (London: Heinemann, 1973); Larry Diamond, *Class, Ethnicity and Democracy in Nigeria: The Failure of the First Republic* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1988); Odinchezo M. Ikejiani-Clark, "Governor-Generalship/Presidency of Nigeria," in *Azikiwe and the African Revolution*, ed. Miriam Ikejiani-Clark and Michael S. O. Olisa (Onitsha: Africana-FEP Publishers, 1989), 245–64; a recent exception is the brief discussion in Apollos O. Nwauwa, "Nnamdi Azikiwe: High Priest of National Unity," in *Nigerian Political Leaders: Visions, Actions, and Legacies*, ed. Apollos O. Nwauwa and Julius O. Adekunle (Glassboro, NJ: Goldline and Jacobs Publishing, 2015), 20–22.

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<sup>11</sup> Lord Arthur Head, “First Impressions: United Kingdom High Commissioner in the Federation of Nigeria to the Minister of State for Commonwealth Relations,” December 28, 1960, 438 and 447, DO 201/11, The National Archives, Kew [hereafter TNA]; Head, “Federation of Nigeria: Prospects and Problems,” January 11, 1962, 323, DO 201/13, TNA; Head, “Waiting for Awo,” June 29, 1962, 368, DO 201/13, TNA.

<sup>12</sup> Joseph Palmer to Secretary of State, August 1, 1962, 2, NSF Box 144, John F. Kennedy Presidential Library, Boston [hereafter JFKPL].

<sup>14</sup> James Coleman, *Nigeria: Background to Nationalism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1958), 222; “Notes on Points Arising in Discussions with the Secretary of State (Stanley) on Wednesday, 27th October and Thursday, 28th October, 1943,” October 28, 1943, CO 554/132/18, TNA.

<sup>15</sup> K. A. B. Jones-Quartey, *A Life of Azikiwe* (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1965); Nnamdi Azikiwe, *My Odyssey: An Autobiography* (London: C. Hurst, 1970).

<sup>16</sup> P. Olisanwuche Esedebe, “Nnamdi Azikiwe as a Pan-African Theorist,” in *Azikiwe and the African Revolution*, 93–114. For more on Casely Hayford and British West Africa as a zone of thought among West African elites, see J. Ayodele Langley, *Pan-Africanism and Nationalism in West Africa, 1900-1945* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1973).

<sup>17</sup> Nnamdi Azikiwe, *Liberia in World Politics* (London: A.H. Stockwell, 1934).

<sup>18</sup> Ben N. Azikiwe, “In Defense of Liberia,” *Journal of Negro History* 17, no. 1 (January 1932): 50.

<sup>19</sup> On Azikiwe’s use of celebrity, see Oliver Coates, “‘His telegrams appear to be hysterical, but he is very astute’: Azikiwe’s spectacular self and the 1945 General Strike in Nigeria,” *Journal of African Cultural Studies* 30, no. 3 (September 2018): 227-42 and for an earlier episode and the culture of West African newspapers, see Stephanie Newell, *The Power to Name: A History of Anonymity in Colonial West Africa* (Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 2013); on the circulation of Nigerian newspapers, see Leslie James, “The Flying Newspapermen and the Time-Space of Late Colonial Nigeria,” *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 60, no. 3 (2018), 574-9.

<sup>21</sup> Jason C. Parker, “‘Made-in-America Revolutions’? The ‘Black University’ and the American Role in the Decolonization of the Black Atlantic,” *Journal of American History* 96, no. 3 (2009): 731–32; Obi Nwakanma, “Harlem, the ‘New Negro,’ and the Cultural Roots of Azikiwe’s Nationalist Politics,” *History Compass* 15, no. 8 (August 2017), <https://doi.org/10.1111/hic3.12402>; for a critique of Azikiwe’s vagueness, Michael J. C. Echeruo,

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“Nnamdi Azikiwe and Nineteenth-Century Nigerian Thought,” *Journal of Modern African Studies* 12, no. 2 (June 1974): 245–63.

<sup>22</sup> Nnamdi Azikiwe, *Renascent Africa* (Lagos: Zik’s Press, 1937), 8–10, 25–32.

<sup>23</sup> Azikiwe, *Renascent Africa*, 48.

<sup>24</sup> Azikiwe, *Renascent Africa*, 90–91. Emphasis in original; see also 98, 124–125, 252–258, and 288–289.

<sup>25</sup> For various accounts of black internationalism in which Azikiwe figures prominently, see Philip S. Zachernuk, *Colonial Subjects: An African Intelligentsia and Atlantic Ideas* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 2000); Jonathan Derrick, *Africa’s “Agitators”: Militant Anti-Colonialism in Africa and the West, 1918–1939* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008); Marc Matera, *Black London: The Imperial Metropolis and Decolonization in the Twentieth Century* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2015).

<sup>26</sup> “Report of Fifth Annual Convention Held at Enugu, From January 6–10, 1954,” 1954, Micr. Afr. 608, Papers of Adegoke Adelabu, Oxford University, Bodleian Library; Marika Sherwood, “The Pan-African Conference, Kumasi, 1953,” in *The Kwame Nkrumah Centenary Colloquium Proceedings*, ed. T. Manuh and A. Sawyerr (Accra: Kwame Nkrumah Centenary Committee, 2013).

<sup>27</sup> Nnamdi Azikiwe, Insert for “At Home and Abroad,” interview by Shonfield, Radio, May 7, 1957, 1–2, Onuiyi Haven, Zik’s Library.

<sup>28</sup> “Ghana-Guinea ‘Wedlock,’” *Daily Service*, November 27, 1958, FCO 141/13649, TNA.

<sup>29</sup> “American Journalist, Dr Marguerite Cartwright, Says Dr. Azikiwe’s Message to Accra Conference Was Hailed on All Sides,” *Eastern Nigeria Information Service*, December 19, 1958, 1, Percival Leroy Prattis Papers, Box 144–4, Folder 2, Moorland-Spingarn Research Center, Howard University [hereafter MSRC].

<sup>30</sup> Basil Davidson, *Black Star: A View of the Life and Times of Kwame Nkrumah* (London: Allen Lane, 1973), 29–30; Parker, “‘Made-in-America Revolutions’?,” 732–33.

<sup>31</sup> A point made at the time by “Towards a West African Federation (April 1959),” in *Nigeria: The Birth of Africa’s Greatest Country Volume One: From the Pages of DRUM Magazine*, ed. Sally Dyson (Ibadan: Spectrum Books, 1993), 120.

<sup>32</sup> Nnamdi Azikiwe, “An Address of Welcome Presented on Behalf of the Government and People of Eastern Nigeria, to Dr the Hon. Kwame Nkrumah, Prime Minister of Ghana, on the Occasion of His Visit to the Eastern

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House of Assembly, at Enugu, on February 3, 1959,” in *Zik: A Selection from the Speeches of Nnamdi Azikiwe*, 68–69.

<sup>33</sup> “Current Intelligence Weekly Summary: Political Tensions in Nigeria,” July 1, 1959, 11, CIA-RDP79-00927A002300070001-1, CIA Records Search Tool [hereafter CREST].

<sup>34</sup> Governor, Enugu to Governor, Ibadan, November 24, 1958, FCO 141/13649, TNA.

<sup>35</sup> “Political Tensions in Nigeria,” 10.

<sup>36</sup> K. W. J. Post, *The Nigerian Federal Election of 1959: Politics and Administration in a Developing Political System*. (Oxford: Nigerian Institute of Social and Economic Research, Oxford University Press, 1963), 300–301.

<sup>37</sup> Governor, Enugu to Governor, Ibadan, November 24, 1958, FCO 141/13649, TNA; see also Governor-General, Lagos to Governor, Ibadan, November 23, 1958, 2, FCO 141/13649, TNA.

<sup>38</sup> Nnamdi Azikiwe, “From an Address Delivered by Dr Nnamdi Azikiwe, Premier of Eastern Nigeria and National President of the National Council of Nigeria and the Cameroons, on July 31, 1959, at the Carlton Rooms, Maida Vale, London W.9 under the Auspices of the London Branch of the NCNC with Dr T.O. Elias, LL.M., Ph.D., Teaching Fellow in Law at Oxford University in the Chair,” in *Zik: A Selection from the Speeches of Nnamdi Azikiwe*, 70–74.

<sup>39</sup> Azikiwe, “Address to London Branch of the NCNC, July 31, 1959,” in *Zik*, 71–72.

<sup>40</sup> Azikiwe, “Address to London Branch of the NCNC, July 31, 1959,” in *Zik*, 71–72.

<sup>41</sup> For a brief survey of these developments, see David Williams, “How Deep the Split in West Africa?,” *Foreign Affairs* 40, no. 1 (October 1961): 118–27; Erasmus H. Kloran, Jr., “African Unification Movements,” *International Organization* 16, no. 2 (Spring 1962): 387–404. Some of the few works dealing with Saniquellie are Colin Legum, *Pan-Africanism: A Short Political Guide*, revised (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1965); Kwamina Panford, “Pan-Africanism, Africans in the Diaspora and the OAU,” *Western Journal of Black Studies* 20, no. 3 (Fall 1996): 147.

<sup>42</sup> Azikiwe, “Address to London Branch of the NCNC, July 31, 1959,” in *Zik*, 72–73.

<sup>43</sup> Azikiwe, “Address to London Branch of the NCNC, July 31, 1959,” in *Zik*, 72.

<sup>44</sup> Azikiwe, *Renascent Africa*, 10.

<sup>45</sup> Azikiwe, “Address to London Branch of the NCNC, July 31, 1959,” in *Zik*, 72.



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- <sup>46</sup> “The Defence of Nigeria: An NCNC Policy Paper,” February 27, 1959, 1, Funmilayo Ransome-Kuti Papers, Box 73, Folder 3, Kenneth Dike Library Special Collections, University of Ibadan.
- <sup>47</sup> Post, *Nigerian Federal Election of 1959*, 310, 314.
- <sup>48</sup> Post, *Nigerian Federal Election of 1959*, 373, Table 21.
- <sup>49</sup> Sir James Robertson, *Transition in Africa: From Direct Rule to Independence* (New York: Barnes & Noble Books, 1974), 236.
- <sup>50</sup> Azikiwe, “Address to National Executive Committee of the NCNC, December 22, 1959,” 204..
- <sup>51</sup> Nnamdi Azikiwe, “Reasons for the December 1959 Decision,” circa 1960, Personal Reasons, 1, “What I Believe” Folder, Onuiyi Haven, Zik’s Library; Azikiwe, “Address to National Executive Committee of the NCNC, December 22, 1959,” 205-6.
- <sup>52</sup> Azikiwe, “Address to National Executive Committee of the NCNC, December 22, 1959,” 208.
- <sup>53</sup> Azikiwe, “Reasons for the December 1959 Decision,” Personal Reasons, 1.
- <sup>54</sup> “Current Intelligence Weekly Summary: Nigerian Prime Minister Balewa,” July 20, 1961, 4, NSF Box 144, JFKPL; Post, *Nigerian Federal Election of 1959*, 441.
- <sup>55</sup> Nnamdi Azikiwe, “Sacrifice (January 26, 1960),” in *Meditations: A Collection of Poems* (Nsukka: African Book Company, 1965), 95.
- <sup>56</sup> Nnamdi Azikiwe, “One Nigeria (July 3, 1960),” in *Meditations: A Collection of Poems*, 97.
- <sup>57</sup> It is unclear who first characterized Zik as a “prisoner in a gilded cage,” but he utilized and popularized the sobriquet by referencing it in his inaugural address.
- <sup>58</sup> Azikiwe, *Respect for Human Dignity*, 11–12.
- <sup>59</sup> Azikiwe, “Reasons for the December 1959 Decision,” Personal Reasons, 2.
- <sup>60</sup> Azikiwe, “Address to National Executive Committee of the NCNC, December 22, 1959,” 205.
- <sup>61</sup> Post, *Nigerian Federal Election of 1959*, 441.
- <sup>62</sup> Lord Arthur Head, “Still Waiting for Awo,” November 27, 1962, 380, DO 201/13, TNA.
- <sup>63</sup> For an exhaustive discussion of the Agreement, see Marco Wyss, “A Post-Imperial Cold War Paradox: The Anglo-Nigerian Defence Agreement 1958-62,” *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 44, no. 6 (2016): 976-1000. Azikiwe expressed his support for the Agreement in “A speech delivered by Zik in the Senate after the debate on an adjournment motion on 4<sup>th</sup> May 1960, when he clarified the issues in connection with the outline of a

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proposed Defence Agreement between the United Kingdom and Nigeria,” in Nnamdi Azikiwe, *Zik: A Selection from the Speeches of Nnamdi Azikiwe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1961), 145-6.

<sup>64</sup> “Current Intelligence Weekly Summary: Nigeria Becomes Independent,” September 29, 1960, 7, CIA-RDP79-00927A002900050001-7, CREST; Leon G. Dorros, “National Intelligence Estimate on Probable Developments in Nigeria,” October 18, 1960, 4, CIA-RDP79R01012A019000010021-9, CREST.

<sup>65</sup> S.J.G. Fingland to D.W.S. Hunt, August 24, 1960, 2, CO 554/2536, TNA.

<sup>66</sup> Averell Harriman, “Telegram to Dillon (State) from Lagos, 7 September 1960,” in *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1958-1960*, ed. Harriet Dashiell Schwar and Stanley Shaloff, vol. 14: Africa (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1992), 221 [hereafter *FRUS 1958-60 14*].

<sup>67</sup> John S.D. Eisenhower, “Memorandum of Conference with President Eisenhower, 8 October 1960,” *FRUS 1958-60 14*: 229–31.

<sup>68</sup> “Post-Cairo Meeting of Ambassadorial Committee to Decide List of Invitees to Bled Conference,” June 6, 1961, 1, NSF Robert W. Komer Files, Box 439, JFKPL; George Kennan to Secretary of State, Telegram, July 15, 1961, 2, NSF Box 209A, JFKPL.

<sup>69</sup> George Kennan to Secretary of State, Telegram, July 31, 1961, 3, NSF Robert W. Komer Files, Box 439, JFKPL.

<sup>70</sup> O.O. Omolulu, “Visit to Monrovia,” January 9, 1960, 6–7, CO 554/2536, TNA.

<sup>71</sup> Dorros, “Probable Developments in Nigeria,” 3.

<sup>72</sup> Robertson, *Transition in Africa*, 236.

<sup>73</sup> D.W.S. Hunt, “The Departure of Sir James Robertson and the Inauguration of Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe as Governor-General,” November 21, 1960, 429, DO 201/11, TNA.

<sup>74</sup> Langston Hughes to Nnamdi Azikiwe, Telegram, September 30, 1960, Langston Hughes Papers Box 482, Folder 12190, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University [hereafter Beinecke].

<sup>75</sup> Langston Hughes, “At Lagos, Nov. 16 1960,” November 16, 1960, Langston Hughes Papers Box 482, Folder 12189, Beinecke.

<sup>76</sup> “Passengers for Lagos,” n.d., Langston Hughes Papers Box 482, Folder 12189, Beinecke; Obiwu, “The Pan-African Brotherhood of Langston Hughes and Nnamdi Azikiwe,” *Dialectical Anthropology* 31, no. 1–3 (November 2007): 160.

<sup>77</sup> Azikiwe, *Respect for Human Dignity*, 16.

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- <sup>78</sup> Soyinka, *Ibadan*, 88.
- <sup>79</sup> Azikiwe, *Respect for Human Dignity*, 7.
- <sup>80</sup> Azikiwe, *Respect for Human Dignity*, 9–11.
- <sup>81</sup> Azikiwe, *Respect for Human Dignity*, 12, 15.
- <sup>82</sup> Dorros, “Probable Developments in Nigeria,” 3.
- <sup>83</sup> Head, “First Impressions,” 447.
- <sup>84</sup> Awolowo, *March through Prison*, 110.
- <sup>85</sup> Hunt, “Inauguration,” 427, 428.
- <sup>86</sup> Lord Arthur Head to Duncan Sandys, February 10, 1961, 2, DO 177/73, TNA.
- <sup>87</sup> Sir Alexander Clutterbuck, “Talk between the Secretary of State and Dr. Azikiwe at Chatsworth on 29th July,” July 31, 1961, 1, DO 177/73, TNA.
- <sup>88</sup> Joseph Palmer to Secretary of State, October 14, 1961, 1, NSF Box 144, JFKPL.
- <sup>89</sup> Nnamdi Azikiwe, “The Future of Pan-Africa: Some Extracts from an Address by Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe, Governor-General of the Federation of Nigeria to West Africans in London,” *West African Review*, November 1961, 59, MCF 10/99, SOAS; “The Defence of Nigeria: An NCNC Policy Paper,” 3; also laid out in Akin Mabogunje, “Nigeria and Tomorrow’s Africa,” *Africa South*, December 1960, 105.
- <sup>90</sup> Azikiwe, “Future of Pan-Africa,” 61.
- <sup>91</sup> Nnamdi Azikiwe, *The Future of Pan-Africanism* (London: Nigeria High Commission, 1961), 17–18.
- <sup>92</sup> R.C. Cox to V.C. Martin, Minute, December 1, 1961, DO 195/93, TNA.
- <sup>93</sup> C.W. Dixon to R.C. Cox, Minute, November 30, 1961, DO 195/93, TNA.
- <sup>94</sup> Lord Arthur Head to CRO, December 4, 1961, 2, DO 195/93, TNA; CRO to Lord Arthur Head, December 16, 1961, DO 195/93, TNA.
- <sup>95</sup> Lord Arthur Head, “Nigeria Becomes a Republic,” October 7, 1963, 384, DO 201/14, TNA.
- <sup>96</sup> For more of the University of Nigeria, which constituted Azikiwe’s main interest beyond Nigerian and African politics, see the excellent work of Tim Livesey, *Nigeria’s University Age: Reframing Decolonisation and Development* (London: Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2017), especially chapter 6.
- <sup>97</sup> “Federal Republic of Nigeria?,” *The Times*, November 18, 1961, MCF 10/99, SOAS.
- <sup>98</sup> Head to CRO, December 4, 1961, 1.

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<sup>99</sup> Awolowo, *March through Prison*, 112.

<sup>100</sup> Sir Alex Clutterbuck to Brig. Sir Norman Gwatkin, May 5, 1961, DO 177/73, TNA.

<sup>101</sup> “Republic for Nigeria?,” *West Africa*, December 9, 1961, MCF 10/99, SOAS.

<sup>102</sup> R.C. Cox, Minute, January 29, 1962, DO 195/93, TNA; A.M. Palliser to E.M. Wilford, February 1, 1962, 1, DO 195/93, TNA; Joseph Palmer to Secretary of State, February 2, 1962, 1, NSF Box 144, JFKPL; Lord Arthur Head, “Conference of Independent African States,” February 7, 1962, 340, DO 201/13, TNA; J. Chadwick to Sir S. Garner, Minute, February 13, 1962, DO 195/93, TNA; J.H.A. Watson to Sir Roger Stevens, March 1, 1962, 1, DO 195/94, TNA.

<sup>103</sup> Nnamdi Azikiwe, “The Cause of African Unity,” January 25, 1962, 3, 8, Onuiyi Haven, Zik’s Library.

<sup>104</sup> John Ridley, “Seeking an African Image,” *Daily Telegraph*, February 2, 1962, DO 195/93, TNA.

<sup>105</sup> A.K. Barden, “Balance Sheet of the Lagos Talks,” *The Ghanaian Times*, February 2, 1962, DO 195/93, TNA. Emphasis in original.

<sup>106</sup> Head, “Conference of Independent African States,” 343.

<sup>107</sup> Lord Arthur Head, “Inter-African and Malagasy Organisation,” January 5, 1963, DO 201/14, TNA; “The Addis Ababa Conference and Its Aftermath,” July 11, 1963, 3–4, NSF Box 3, JFKPL, <https://www.jfklibrary.org/Asset-Viewer/Archives/JFKNSF-003-013.aspx>; B.Y. Bhoutros Ghali, “The Addis Ababa Conference,” *International Conciliation*, no. 546 (February 1964): 5–62.

<sup>108</sup> Nnamdi Azikiwe, “Notes for Section on Pan-Africanism,” circa 1991, Folder, “Oracle of Onitsha: Notes and Ideas,” Onuiyi Haven, Zik’s Library.

<sup>109</sup> “Current Intelligence Weekly Summary: Nigeria,” April 13, 1962, 20, CIA-RDP79-00927A003600020001-2, CREST; Head, “Nigeria Becomes a Republic,” 384–85.

<sup>110</sup> Head, “Nigeria Becomes a Republic,” 386.

<sup>111</sup> F. Cumming-Bruce, “Some Impressions of Nigeria’s Future,” December 5, 1964, 356, DO 201/15, TNA.

<sup>112</sup> Lord Arthur Head, “Lord Head’s Valedictory Address,” October 9, 1963, 391, DO 201/14, TNA.

<sup>113</sup> The scope of this article does not allow for discussion of the complicated politics around the 1964 General Election, but for more on this crucial moment in the demise of Nigeria’s First Republic, see especially Post and Vickers, *Structure and Conflict in Nigeria, 1960-1966* and Diamond, *Class, Ethnicity and Democracy in Nigeria*.

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<sup>114</sup> Cf. John J. Stremlau, *The International Politics of the Nigerian Civil War, 1967-1970* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1977), 131–32.

<sup>115</sup> Chinua Achebe, *A Man of the People* (London: Heinemann, 1966), 81.

<sup>119</sup> Nnamdi Azikiwe, “Essentials for Nigerian Survival,” *Foreign Affairs* 43, no. 3 (April 1965), 460.