

“Biafra Born” Micro-Refineries Operating in Nigeria? Lessons for Nigeria/Africa! (IDEAS for Making Nigeria Better) – *By Tayo K. Solagbade*

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I am passionate about influencing positive change in Nigeria. That’s why I often write what some have called “epistles” in most online discussions 😊

At a point, it occurred to me that adding such voluminous content (*sometimes 2000 words long!*) to another person’s thread can be impolite. Plus, **tracking, archiving and retrieving** ideas posted, for future reference can be difficult. Much gets buried under new “status” updates!
What if Facebook shuts down, or loses all its data?

The above made me commence publishing most of my serious musings in PDF form, and invite interested persons to simply click on a direct download link to read more.

This is **Issue No. 3** in the series. For past issue(s), Google this: ***My Ideas for Making Nigeria Better, tayo solagbade.***



I picked up my brand new copy of Achebe's book, along with Larry King's "How to Talk to Anyone, Anytime, Anywhere" from an enterprising young male Igbo roadside book seller. Few days later I'd devoured both books, and painted various blocks of text in highlight ink, to aid my intended re-reading of them. Someone I later visited saw Achebe's, and told me he'd ordered his copy via Amazon.com, but had not had "time" to read it.

So he was not aware of the amazing fact revealed by Achebe about just how capable we are (and have always been!), of refining our own crude oil!! Hmm...was it not once said that "if you want to hide something from a (.....) man, put it in a book"?

Why This Approach?

I’m trying to make it easier to refer people I engage with, to my thoughts and ideas. So I do NOT have to repeat myself each time. **More of us can do this!**

At some point, I’m hopeful that we can **COLLATE** all our ideas, to develop - **and IMPLEMENT!** - useful actions plans that will change Nigeria for the better!

Why No Details (Even a By-Line!) About Me in this PDF?

Yes. Not even a by-line. This initiative is about Nigeria – not me. If you’re keen, Google **“Tayo Solagbade”**. **What you learn should make you take my ideas seriously** 😊

Chinua Achebe
wrote...*

**“Let me give one
more dimension of
what we were
hoping to do in
Biafra...”**

**See page 157 of his book titled
“There Was A Country”**

**“We were told, for instance, that
technologically we would have to rely for a
long, long time on the British and the West
for everything.**

**European oil companies insisted that oil-
industry technology was so complex that
we would never ever in the next 500 years
be able to figure it out.**

We knew that wasn't true.

**In fact, we learned to refine our own oil
during the two and a half years of the
struggle, because we were blockaded.**

**We were able to demonstrate that it was
possible for African people, entirely on their
own, to refine oil.” – Chinua Achebe**

The “Biafra Born” Micro- Refineries Are ALIVE!

Yes – and here’s why I say this:

Before April 2013, I watched a documentary/news report on a Nigerian TV station, which revealed that illegal crude oil refining happens in the Niger Delta.

Apparently, courageous individuals in that area (some suggest militants are involved), have established crude, but highly functional refineries.

This enables them refine crude oil, which they then sell in the black market.

Investing in the European and American style refineries would have required great expense, and possibly greater land mass.

The use of unconventional refining methods developed by “blockaded” people fighting a war, with very limited funding/resources, to me, is the only way the reported operations could flourish the way they currently do. And I believe they have their origins in the micro-refineries Achebe wrote about!

Another Reason I Believe My “Theory” is Correct:

We’ve had periodic instances of poorly refined petrol (and Kerosene!) causing havoc in Nigeria, NNPC often had to take the rap.

It is my considered opinion that the “illegal” micro-refineries mentioned above, probably produced those products which got into the Nigerian market!

They most probably did not deliberately make them bad. Instead, I believe problems occurred during periods when they had technical challenges with their “equipment”, processing or manpower.

Nigeria Can Use Biafra Born “Micro-Refineries”

Whatever be the case, if those illegal micro-refineries are flourishing today, it’s because their products are being purchased. That proves they are useable. Otherwise they would not be selling!

Nigeria currently sends crude oil abroad for refining. If groups of lowly funded individuals can refine fuel for local consumption and “export”, imagine if Nigeria chose to use the same technology to establish improved versions of those **low cost** “micro-refineries” across the country?

Entrepreneurs Can Do It

Government ONLY needs to do is provide the guidelines, operating framework, and refrain from interfering. The illegal operators would possibly be encouraged to seek partnership with legitimized bodies to take advantage of the new dispensation,

New players would emerge locally, and from abroad, to partake in what is likely to be a profitable arrangement for all stakeholders. Nigeria’s power supply situation would improve greatly!

Let’s Learn from History!

We, as Nigerians (and Africans) **today**, need to be better students of history. I have a small but growing collection of books, that chronicle the happenings of the 1966 coup, and the Biafran war.

And when possible (like during my just ended 2 week stay in Nigeria), **I narrate what I read, to my half-Igbo kids (my wife hails from Obosi, Anambra state), and ask them to discuss useful lessons that they can apply in their lives.**

I’m convinced doing the above will help them mature into young adults, who are free from uninformed biases, and narrow, jaundiced perspectives of their fellow citizens. They will always relate fairly, and impartially with others.

It is my hope that more of us will provide our kids this kind of “real-world relevant education”, to COMPLEMENT the western schooling they currently get.

This is so they KNOW that right from the early days, Africans have always had the ability, and to do ANYTHING white people could do.

They only need to BELIEVE in themselves, and WORK TOGETHER!

That’s a powerful lesson I’ve chosen to use the Biafran story to teach my kids! I urge you to consider doing the same.

You may wish to start by getting your personal copy of Achebe’s excellent book.

See details on the next page.

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See page 157 of his book titled “There Was
A Country: A Personal History of Biafra”.*

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Tayo Solagbade

21 hours ago via BlackBerry

TK SOLAGBADE

Cotonou, 12th November 2013 at 09.51

Facebook can be a powerful weapon for making positive change happen in society. However, historical evidence strongly indicates that happens in cases when most of those who use it in a particular society walk their ONLINE talk, in their daily, personal and work lives OFFLINE. Hmm...

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Edentu Oroso Food for thought there. I thought about this some time ago. If all the online preaching is anything to go by, Nioeria certainly will be a paradise. I share in your sentiment.