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Author(s): Samuel N. Nwabara

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ENCOUNTER WITH THE LONG JU-JU, NOVEMBER 1901
TO MAY 1902—A PRELUDE TO THE BRITISH MILITARY
EXPEDITIONS IN IBOLAND

Samuel N. Nwabara

Prior to the revocation of the Royal Niger Charter in 1899, the greater part of Ibo hinterland had not been visited, let alone occupied, by any white man. With the assumption of power by the imperial government, inland penetration became a matter of serious concern. Yet the Government thought that peaceful penetration was quite impossible so long as the Aros ruled the entire Ibo land by means of their powerful Ju-Ju. The way out of the Aro domination, therefore, was a complete military showdown.

The problem posed by the Aros in relation to opening up the interior of Ibo land to trade had quite early engaged the attention of the Royal Niger Company and the high commissioner, Niger Coast Protectorate. Before the revocation of the company's charter, a plan to attack the Aros and destroy the Long Ju-Ju was hatched by the high commissioner, Sir Ralph Moor, in a despatch to the Under-Secretary of State, dated September 9, 1899. A copy of this despatch was sent by the Colonial Office to George Taubman Goldie to ascertain his opinion. In a reply dated November 17, 1899, he confessed that the question of the power of the "Omotchukus (or Long Ju-Ju)" had for over twenty years been before him, and that if the Royal Niger Company had had its way, the Long Ju-Ju would have been overthrown in 1886. After preliminary observations about certain points raised in the despatch, he agreed it was high time for action.¹

Similarly Sir Frederick Lugard was given a copy of the letter for his opinion on the practicability of organizing the necessary force of 87 officers, 1,550 men and 2,100 carriers requested by Moor. He advised postponement of action until he returned to Nigeria from his vacation in Britain, but stated that any help from Northern Nigeria was contingent upon the possibility of a crisis which would interfere with the despatch of so large a body of troops (about 750). Referring to the expenditure involved in the operations Lugard thought it was difficult to conclude that the common revenue could necessarily pay for an expedition which had not been foreseen previously and included in the estimates.²

While the Under-Secretary of State was consulting expert opinion, local officers were preparing for the invasion because according to intelligence, the influence of the Aros was widely felt. Thus, before the

¹ C.O. 444/4, George Taubman Goldie to Under-Secretary of State, November 17, 1899.

² C.O. 444/4, F. Lugard to Under-Secretary of State, November 20, 1899.

actual attack began in November, a small contingent of 100 men was stationed in two places—sixty at Azumiri and forty at Eket—to assist the political officer in upholding government prestige.³ It was also considered necessary to keep a strong detachment around Oguta district where the people were reported truculent. To quiet them, the Royal Niger Company gave them gifts amounting to £250 in 1898 and again in 1899.⁴

To justify such an unprecedented operation on the Lower Niger, Moor spelled out the objects of the expedition in a carefully worded memorandum:

- A. To abolish the slave trade which is actively carried on throughout the entire territories belonging to, and dominated by, the Aro tribe.
- B. To abolish the fetish of the Aros known as 'Long Ju-Ju' which, by superstition and fraud causes many evils amongst the Ibo tribes generally, and to all the outlying tribes of the entire Protectorate, who continually appeal to it. While this Ju-Ju exists it is impossible to establish effective Government in the territories.
- C. To open up the whole of the Ibo country lying between the Cross River and the Niger to civilization and trade, and to induce the natives to engage in the legitimate trade of collecting natural products of their country and developing it to the best advantage.
- D. To introduce a currency in lieu of slaves, brass rods, and other forms of native currency that exist in the territories, and which from their nature and cumbersomeness are opposed to advance in any direction.
- E. Finally, to establish throughout the territories a labour market to take the place of slavery.⁵

The area of operation was also defined by the high commissioner: to the north, from Oguta Lake to Unwana on the Cross River, Bende and the Abam districts; on the east from the Cross River to the Aro settlements behind Umon and towards Uwet, known as Oni-Tortis; on the west, the country to the east and south of Oguta up to and including the Orashi and Enginni rivers; on the south, all the unfriendly tribes opposed to the government. Specific instructions were given to destroy the various Aro towns (there were fourteen in all),⁶ especially

³ C.O. 520/2, 1900, No. 166, Lt. Col. H. L. Gallwey to Secretary of State for the Colonies in reply to telegram requesting troops for Ashanti.

⁴ C.O. 520/2, Gallwey to Secretary of State, July 21, 1900.

⁵ C.O. 520/10, Memorandum of Instructions with regard to the Aro Expedition, November 12, 1901; See also C.O. 520/12, High Commissioner Sir R. Moor to Mr. Chamberlain (Despatch relating to Field Operations), No. 183.

⁶ C. Captain W. J. Venour, "The Aro Country in Southern Nigeria," *Geographical Journal*, No. 1, Vol. XX, July 1902, p. 88. C.O. 520/10, Intelligence, Aro Field Force, No. 2 Column. The Aro villages are—Ibom, Ojari, Ndoti, Isimpu, Amaso, Amanagwu, Obinkita, Omo-Chuku, Ugwuakuma, Omomgka, Omo-Torti, Elugu, Ibunta, Amait o.

those of the "Inokuns" or Obinkita Aros. Since it was possible that non-Aro sections might join the Aros, instructions were given to attack the Abams, Ehoffias (Ohafias), Abarabas (Abribas), and the Qua tribe, particularly the Igas known to have been friendly with the Nwosu Torti settlement.⁷ Thus the area involved in the expedition extended from the east of the Cross River to the Niger, or about 6,000 square miles, nearly 120 miles from east to west and ninety miles from south to north.⁸

On July 31, 1901, the Secretary of State telegraphed Moor approving military operations against the Aros in the approaching dry season, and in a memorandum dated August 20 commented upon some of the objects of the expedition. It appeared to him to furnish an opportunity for considering the action that could be taken in regard to the important and complicated question of labour supply in Southern Nigeria, and he hoped that the results of the expedition would effect a marked and salutary change on slavery in that part of West Africa.⁹ Approval was completed by a despatch from the Secretary of State for the Colonies to the Secretary of State for War, stating that in consequence of slave-raiding and acts of aggression on the part of the Aro tribe in Southern Nigeria it had been decided to send an expedition against the Aros about December, 1901.¹⁰

Owing to the inability of Northern Nigeria to supply the required number of troops, the original estimate was revised to 317 of all ranks from Northern Nigeria, West African Frontier Force; 262 of all ranks from Lagos Battalion, West African Frontier; 1,150 of all ranks from Southern Nigeria Regiment, 14 special service officers, 2 special service non-commissioned officers, 28 civil officers with 2,334 carriers, of whom 235 were specially enlisted gun carriers.¹¹

After Lt.-Col. A. F. Montanaro, officer commanding Aro Field Force, learned that Arochuku was the capital of Aro tribe, the home of the Long Ju-Ju, and located not far from the Cross River town, Itu, he carefully mapped out the plan of operations on the pattern of major wars. The immediate objective was the subjugation of all fourteen Aro towns. The troop dispositions are best described in Montanaro's military terms:

No. 1 Column, consisting of 16 Europeans, 300 Native rank and file, 1 M/m gun, 1 Maxim gun, 35 gun-carriers, and 548 general carriers, under the command of Captain A. T. Jackson, Worcester Regiment, concentrated at Oguta on December 1st, with orders to march to Oweri.

⁷ C.O. 520/10, Sir R. Moor, Memorandum of Instructions with regard to the Aro Expedition, November 12, 1901.

⁸ C.O. 520/17, Despatch relating to Field Operations.

⁹ C.O. 520/8, Secretary of State to Sir R. Moor, No. 291, August 20, 1901.

¹⁰ C.O. 520/8 Secretary of State to Secretary of War, No. M/27584, August 10, 1901.

¹¹ C.O. 520/17, Despatch relating to Field Operations.

No. 2 Column, consisting of 19 Europeans, 451 Native Rank and file, 2 M/m guns, 2 Maxim guns, 126 gun-carriers, and 350 general carriers, under the command of Captain (Local Major) A. M. N. Mackenzie, Royal Artillery, concentrated at Ungwana, on November 18, with orders to advance into the Ahofia country, and cut off the Abams, Eddas, and Ahofias from co-operating with the Aros.

No. 3 Column, consisting of 20 Europeans, 375 general carriers, under the command of Brevet-Major (Local Lieutenant-Colonel) A. Festing, D.S.O., Royal Irish Regiment, concentrated at Akwete with orders to march to Oweri, join issue there with No. 1 Column, and then proceed as a combined force under Lt.-Colonel Festing to Bandi, there joining hands with No. 2 Column.

No. 4 Column, consisting of 19 Europeans, 1 Native Officer, 479 Native rank and file, 1 M/m gun, 1.7 pr. gun, 1 rocket tube, 2 Maxim guns, 13 gun-carriers and 225 general carriers, under the command of Captain (Local Major) W. C. G. Heneker, Connaught Rangers, concentrated at Itu, with orders to make feint advances towards Aro-Chuku, and so cause the enemy to keep the bulk of his forces in the corner of the country where the capital lay.¹²

The Aros themselves were well aware of the intensive planning and massive preparations for the invasion of their capital. Indeed, with what was effectively an intelligence network sympathisers covering Southern Nigeria, Aro leaders had little difficulty in learning about British dispositions. The intelligence about the alliance of Obegu with the British, and how the Obegu were being used against the interests of Aro was particularly crucial, and the Aro generals decided to punish the renegades from the Aro Confederacy. Making use of their "flying" squads, the Abams, the troops from Ogwe and the warriors of Ehe, the Aros stormed Obegu town before dawn on November 21, 1901.¹³ "They wrecked and burnt King Anamabu's quarters, killing a number of people calculated at eighty. They also burnt the Government Rest House and destroyed the water casks Mr. Douglass placed at Obegu for troops."¹⁴

According to a British account of the massacre, the Obegu people were perfectly unprepared, being all asleep "although they have been continually warned to guard the roads towards the interior."¹⁵ That was not, however, sufficient reason for failure to protect and defend a weaker ally. The Aros attacked Obegu because she was friendly with the British and acted as a spy against them. It was reasonable to expect that

¹² *Ibid.* Also C.O. 520/10, Moor to S/S, November 24, 1901.

¹³ C.O. 520/10, Moor to S/S, December 1, 1901.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

the British, knowing the danger into which they had placed the Obegu by the alliance, should have provided adequate protection. Moor in his final despatch brought out the enormity of the event:

A few days before the operations commenced a most deplorable massacre of some 400 men, women and children, mostly women and children, was carried out in the hinterland of the Opobo district, at a town called Obegu. The Aros had long threatened to attack the tribes friendly to the Government, and though the people of Obegu had been warned to keep careful watch, they were unfortunately caught napping by a conglomerate force of the various sections of the Aro tribe, together with other Ibos unfriendly to them, and their town was destroyed with the slaughter of the people above mentioned.¹⁶

The Obegu massacre, so carefully planned and executed, and defeating British expert intelligence, gave the commandant Aro Field Force, Lt.-Col. Montanaro, a foretaste of what the Aro generals had in store for him. Certainly it was a terrifying object lesson for him. Lt.-Col. Montanaro's immediate reaction was to order all columns into action against Aro. Both the Obegu massacre and the commencement of action were telegraphed to the Secretary of State for the Colonies.¹⁷

The first contact with the Aro forces was on November 29, 1901, when a British camp was formed at Esu-Itu. The camp was promptly attacked before it could be organized for action. What saved it from being routed was the presence of the gunboat *Jackdaw* on the Enyong, whose accurate firing enfiladed the Aro advance unit, and sent it into retreat. On December 2, the No. 1 Column was ordered out of Oguta to Owerri, and arrived there on the 5th with no opposition. But No. 3 Column, which left Akwete on December 1, met with stiff opposition in the Ogwe-Ehehia district. Here the column encountered three to four-foot deep trenches which were covered with logs, but the millimeter guns destroyed the stockades. For three days the fighting continued, during which time the Ogwe warriors cut off the British water supply, thereby causing them much suffering.¹⁸

At Ehehia on December 3, the attack on the British camp was intensified, resulting in five casualties—two carriers killed, one soldier slightly wounded, and two carriers severely wounded. The column was continually sniped at between Oza and Omu-Ogu, and when it reached Omu-Ogu at about 9.45 a.m, it had suffered four casualties. The column continued to be harassed by snipers and before reaching Omo-Ekechi, where a halt was made, eight more casualties had resulted.¹⁹ Leaving Omo-Ekechi, the column reached the left bank of Imo River, north of Umuahia, and halted. On December 7, the troops were ferried across

¹⁶ C.O. 520/17, *Loc. Cit.*

¹⁷ C.O. 520/10, Moor to Chamberlain (43870).

¹⁸ C.O. 520/10, No. 7, from O.C. Aro Field Force, December 19, 1901, and C.O. 520/17

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

the river, reaching Owerri on the 9th, where they joined No. 1 Column. The combined columns started for Bende on December 11 and arrived there via Udo on December 16. By the time Columns 1, 2 and 3 reached Nde Okori (Aro) on the 18th, Column 3 had sustained thirty-nine casualties.²⁰

Moor regarded the entry of the combined columns into Nde Okori as the final stage of the main operations, and he wrote to the Secretary of State that he hoped his next report would be to the effect that a decisive blow had been dealt and the Aro power broken.²¹ The hope was realized on December 24, when Lt.-Col. Montanaro reported the occupation of Arochuku with No. 4 Column, and the surrender of six chiefs: Ezeala and Kamalu of Ojari, Okori-N'Kachu and Ijormanta of Amanagu, Ifu-Wanze-Ngodo of Ibum and Uboja of Ojari.²²

Upon receiving notification of the capture of Arochuku, Moor jubilantly telegraphed Joseph Chamberlain, the Secretary of State for the Colonies: "Arochuku occupied 24th November by Montanaro and No. 4 Column. Continuous fighting 35 hrs. slight casualties".²³ Reuter was more detailed. It reported in addition the incessant fighting around Arochuku since its occupation, and the frequent gun rushes in which the enemy losses were heavier than the British.²⁴

Following the occupation of Arochuku, the Long Juju was completely destroyed, and Okori-Torti, a paramount chief alleged to have been behind the Obegu massacre, was captured. Yet the Aros continued to fight, their heads bloody but not bowed. After a temporary setback, the Obinkita unit regrouped and attacked from the north on December 25 with such considerable numbers and determined spirit that the British commander put two millimeter guns into full use. For two days the fighting raged with each side bringing to bear its maximum fighting force upon the other. In spite of better equipment, the British Command did not find the Aro forces inferior in tactics and strategy. "The enemy," wrote the officer commanding Aro Field Force, "has shown himself to be a most persistent and dogged foe, and I . . . had no idea that savages could make such a stand, and my line of communication requires careful guarding".²⁵

Thus between December 25, 1901, and January 13, 1902, the British forces were engaged in fighting in the Arochuku neighbourhood in an attempt to crush the enemy, but the more they fought, the more opposition they met. Eventually, the war spread beyond the immediate vicinity of Arochuku to the districts across the Cross River, and the Ibo districts south of Arochuku.²⁶ The towns involved to which the different

²⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹ C.O. 520/10, Moor to S/S, No. 435, Dec. 28, 1901.

²² C.O. 520/10, Montanaro to Moor, Dec. 24, 1901.

²³ C.O. 520/10, Moor to Chamberlain, 45840/1901, Dec. 29, 1901.

²⁴ C.O. 520/10, Reuter, Dec., 1901.

²⁵ C.O. 520/10, Montanaro to Moor, No. 9, December 25, 1901.

²⁶ C.O. 520/13, Moor to S/S, No. 17, January 14, 1902.

columns were despatched included Uwet and all the towns between the Cross and Kwa Rivers, which fronted ten miles on a line drawn between Big Ikpa and Enan. The Ibo towns were Akwete, Azumini, Osikpo, Iba, Alimini, Elele, Umuodo, Omuma, Asa, Bende, Aba, Omoba and northern Oguta.²⁷

The object of these wars, according to the officer commandant, was to disarm the inhabitants of all rifles and cap guns. But in carrying out the orders, every column engaged in the fight met with strong resistance. To the Ibos it was no longer the Aro war with the British, but a general assault upon the Ibo nation—an assault which must be repulsed to the last man. The gravity of the situation on both sides was superbly summarized by the high commissioner, Moor, in a telegram to the Secretary of State for the Colonies, and since it is a military classic it is here reproduced:

5161/1902

Telegram High Commissioner Sir Ralph Moor to Mr. Chamberlain (Received Colonial Office 4 p.m. 5th February, 1902)

No. 8 Column operating from Arochuku middle of January met great opposition; captured prisoners responsible for Obegu massacre, over three hundred guns, casualties: Captain Rose, Northern Nigeria slightly wounded, one man killed, seven severely, three slightly wounded. Column operating Uwet district middle of January: enemy entrenched drove out bayonet casualties: three men severely wounded. Columns operating near Bende about 18th January punished enemy severely; casualties: Captain Graham, Special Service Officer, slightly wounded; one man killed, eight wounded, one missing. Second objective detailed in my despatch No. 17, 14th of January: Column marching Arochuku to Akwete at the end of January: severe fighting Obinkita Kwa countries enemy suffered heavily, two hundred guns captured. Casualties Captain Sabine, Lagos Constabulary severely wounded, eye; Lieutenant Cockerell severely chest; Sergeant Major Jordan severely thigh; Sergeant Major Bramwell slightly wounded; all Northern Nigeria: four men killed six wounded; Columns marching Itu to Akwete at the end of January met obstinate resistance, enemy suffered severely, 3,000 guns captured. Casualties three killed fifteen wounded. Company marching Enan to Essene 29th January attacked by enemy in force in open. Casualties Lieutenant Campbell, Southern Nigeria, severely wounded right wrist, two men severely, one slightly wounded. Total war guns destroyed exceeds 6,000. All wounded doing well. Sabine [and] Cockerell wounded, Paulson, Northern Nigeria invalided, leave by first mail. Moor.²⁸

²⁷ C.O. 520/17, *Loc. Cit.*

²⁸ C.O. 520/13, Moor to Chamberlain, 5161/1902.

Trial of "War Criminals"

While the battle raged, the officer commanding Aro Field Force set up a tribunal to try war criminals. On January 22, 1902, a tribunal consisting of Lt. B. L. Rodly, 1st Cheshire Regiment, President, and Lt. G. A. S. Williams, Royal Fusilliers, member, tried Chiefs Abiakari and Ekpenyong of Umon on the following charges:

Knowingly doing acts calculated to imperil the success of a portion of His Majesty's forces—in that they

(1) Did fail to forward despatches to the officer Commanding Uwet Column without delay—and in that they

(2) When asked by Mr. James, Political Officer, Aro Field Force, for information concerning a road from Ikorana to Inoken country and provide guides for the road, did conceal the existence of such road and did fail to provide guides for the same when called upon to do so.²⁹

In their evidence for the Crown, Samuel Jaret, Interpreter Etim, and Adat-Abiakari corroborated the charge. Chief Abiakari admitted the charge with reasons which he said would not be disclosed at that moment. But the second chief, Ekpenyong-Ana, denied the receipt of the despatches as well as having people with sufficient knowledge of the road to act as guides. Both were found guilty and sentenced to five years imprisonment.³⁰

The conviction was not confirmed by the officer commanding Aro Field Force on the grounds of insufficient evidence. Despite the plea of Captain Hewett (president of the military tribunal), before the re-assembled court, that all evidence pointed to the fact that the convicts purposely concealed the road and failed to provide guides, the court recommended the prisoners to mercy.³¹

The matter did not end there. When the proceedings of the trials eventually reached London, the under-secretaries of the Colonial Office were surprised. "There seems to be no question," minuted one secretary, "of the illegality of the trials," and after reviewing the proceedings, the legal secretary, M. J. S. Risley, wrote:

It is difficult to see how these native chiefs could be amenable to the jurisdiction of a British military court. They are not of course 'persons subject to military law' within the Army Act and they did not, as far as I can judge, commit any offence against the ordinary laws of war.

If the territory in which these two chiefs lived is to be regarded as *not* being part of the Protectorate, it was either neutral or enemy territory. If neutral territory, the chiefs were obviously exempt from any interference of this kind: if enemy territory, they could only be

²⁹ C.O. 520/13, Form for Assembly and Proceedings of a Special Tribunal on the Aro Field Force, Ikorana, January 22, 1902

³⁰ *Ibid.*

³¹ *Ibid.*

tried by a British military court for actively or passively helping the enemy on the assumption that the Aro Expedition was an effective occupation of that territory—an assumption which I believe could hardly be maintained.

If however the territory is regarded (as I suppose it must be regarded) as being a part of the Protectorate, the chiefs could only have been tried by a military court under martial law, which I understand has not been proclaimed.

My conclusion is that, whatever the status of the territory the chiefs might not have been tried by a military court.³²

The high commissioner of Southern Nigeria was confidentially informed of the opinion of the Colonial Office, but there is no record that either of the chiefs was released as a result.

On January 26, 1902, an Aro chief, Alige, appeared before a tribunal composed of Lt.-Col. A. Festing of the Royal Irish Fusillers, and H. F. Fraser of the 21st Lancers. He was charged with the "Violation of parole—in that he having sent in emissaries to the Government offering submission which was accepted again took up arms against the Government."³³ The trial, which followed the same procedure as the previous ones, ended with the conviction of the accused. In confirming the death sentence, Arthur Festing, who was president of the tribunal that had found him guilty, said that because it was impossible to communicate with a superior officer and necessary promptly to make an example, it was not practicable to delay the case for confirmation by any qualified officer superior to himself. Therefore, he directed that Chief Alige be executed without delay, and the execution was carried out on the same day.³⁴

A special tribunal convened at Akwete on February 12, 1902, consisted of Captain B. Faunice of the West Indies Regiment, president; Captain A. F. Stewart, Manchester Regiment, Lt. J. L. R. Perry, Southern Nigeria Battalion, West African Frontier Force (W.A.F.F.), members. The "criminal," Okori Torti, a chief of the N'Doti Aros of Oloko, was charged with "committing a civil offence, i.e. Murder, in that he on the 21st November, 1901, was an accessory before the fact to the murder of certain of the inhabitants of OBEGU a Treaty town situated in the Akwete district of Southern Nigeria."³⁵ The defendant pleaded not guilty to the charge.

Witnesses for the prosecution were called. The first, a woman named Wada, deposed on oath that prior to the Obegu massacre she heard

³² *Ibid.* Apparently communication reached the High Commissioner later since the Colonial Office Minutes were dated March 31. Even then the observation still stands that action was not taken to release the prisoners.

³³ C.O. 520/13, Form for Assembly and Proceedings of a Special Tribunal on the Aro Field Force, Ifugor, January 26, 1902.

³⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁵ C.O. 520/13 Form for Assembly and Proceedings of a Special Tribunal on the Aro Field Force, Akwete February 12, 1902

N'Doti people reach a decision to hire the Abam warriors to help Ehia people, and although Wosu Torti did not go to Obegu himself, he did send his brother (the accused) to direct the massacre of the Obegu people. The second witness, Wokocha of Omoakwa, swore that following the massacre he was sent for by the chief of Ehia, named Azo, and told that the Aro people wanted to speak to him. After interrogations in the presence of four others who had accompanied him, Okori Torti fined him a goat or 800 manillas in lieu, and a case of gin, for warning the Obegus that they were going to be attacked by the Aros. Because he could not pay the fine, a combined force of the Aros and Ehias marched to and destroyed his town, Omoakwa.³⁶

Cross-examined by the defendant, the witness answered that it was the accused who made the demand and not the Ehia chief. Okori Torti denied the charge that he and his brother Wosu Torti were party to the massacre. Other witnesses for the Crown included Ndu Wuisi of Oloko, Chief Ama-Ajor of Nde-Oron, Chief Okori Agwo of Isiugo, who on oath laid responsibility upon the Tortis. As might be expected, the defendant was convicted of murder and executed by hanging at Obegu on March 1, 1902, "in the presence of representatives of thirty-two towns."³⁷

On the same day and on the same charge, Ochi Endo, chief of Akano was found guilty and executed in the same manner as Okori Torti.³⁸ Fourteen Ogwe chiefs were arraigned on a similar charge on the very day, February 12, 1902. They were Adeali, Worgu, Yewolonemi, Amachi, Woko, Wankwo, Worgu Wachuku, Diki, Ebere, Isiguzo Waka, Wokojem, Woko Wasa, Diki Wogu and Webe. In the opening address Lt. Gallwey, the prosecutor, urged the tribunal to believe that the above prisoners were all representative chiefs of Ogwe who had signed a treaty with the government, binding themselves to refer all serious matters to the government instead of acting unilaterally, but had broken the treaty by the attack on Obegu—another treaty town.³⁹

Five witnesses gave evidence for the prosecution, corroborating the Ogwe chiefs' complicity in the Obegu incident. In a very strong defence Chief Worgu, on behalf of all the chiefs, argued that the Ogwe people were distressed about the massacre because the two towns—Obegu and Ogwe—intermarried and had many relatives on either side.⁴⁰ In a legally constituted court there would have been sufficient ground for discharge and acquittal, but instead the chiefs were found guilty, not as accessories before the fact, but after the fact, and sentenced to penal servitude for five years each.⁴¹ The executions before the representatives of several

³⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

towns were meant to frighten the Ibos into submission, but the contrary was the result. According to the officer commanding Aro Field Force, the battle came to an end in May, 1902; but judging by the events that immediately followed, the object of the Aro expedition was not quite achieved. That the British continued to fight the Ibos from December 1902 to 1916, and found them an administrative problem even after settlement, justifies the assertion.