

CRITICS OUTNUMBER RESULTS OF PUBLIC OPINION POLL IN METROPOLITAN CITIES

By E. P. W. da COSTA

(Managing Director, The Indian Institute of Public Opinion)

WEST Asia has slowly drifted out of the news: perhaps because in India at least we have passed the saturation point. This is as well because its emotional content has been reduced in the process, and a more detached assessment of the frighteningly rapid rush of events and of the Government of India's actions is now possible.

It was for this reason that the Indian Institute of Public Opinion deferred its survey on the subject till the second week of July when the dust of controversy was settling. It was, indeed, revived temporarily by a breeze at a Congress Parliamentary Party meeting when the Prime Minister is reported to have said that the people were behind the Government's West Asian policy. This report does not seem to have affected the results of the poll: but in any case the evidence that appears from the survey is to the contrary: majority Indian literate opinion in the four metropolitan cities of Bombay, Calcutta, Madras and Delhi is critical of the Government's stand.

Somewhat oversimplified, one might say that only one-fourth of the respondents feel that our friendship with the Arab world should remain a paramount consideration in framing our foreign policy. Nearly double that proportion think we should treat both Arabs and Israel "at par" and judge each issue as it arises on its merits. More specifically only one in three, in answer to a separate question, considers that India was right in extending unqualified support to the Arab cause. Two out of every three respondents are of the view that the country needs to take a more objective and impartial stand.

PATTERN OF RESPONSE

Is metropolitan opinion synonymous with Indian opinion? As a statement of fact, obviously not, for it possesses no rural content and the great cities contain a much higher level of sophistication than does urban India as a whole. Nevertheless, the Indian Institute's surveys have shown a remarkable similarity between the results of the Congress vote in the four metropolitan cities together and India as a whole, which have been borne out in no less than four General Elections. Again, other surveys on international questions have demonstrated the point that when the larger "don't know" figures in smaller cities are excluded, the pattern of positive response between the four metropolitan cities and other Indian towns is the same. This is not surprising since the metropolitan newspapers dominate the field of international reporting: the provincial newspapers are largely camp-followers.

Few international crises, the poll shows, have impinged upon the consciousness of the Indian people as the recent West Asian conflict has. One of the most striking results of the current survey is the high degree of awareness of the West Asian crisis: as many as 95% of the respondents had heard or read about this war—the highest figure ever recorded in surveys on an issue where this country was not directly involved.

Four out of 10 persons hold Israel responsible for starting the war. About one-fourth, on the other hand, blame the UAR. The pattern of opinion, however, is not uniform in all the four cities. In Calcutta, for instance, a larger percentage (56%) holds Israel entirely responsible. In Madras and Bombay, it is the other way round: proportions larger than in Calcutta and Delhi—both of which

questions are analysed. Thus, for instance, only one out of preponderantly lay the blame for starting the war on Israel—lay the blame at the door of the United Arab Republic.

The structure of opinion acquires a different character when responses to certain other four persons interviewed thinks that the UAR was justified in closing the Gulf of Aqaba to Israeli shipping. Four out of 10, on the other hand, hold that the UAR had no right to close the Gulf. In Madras as many as two out of three persons share this view. It is only in Calcutta that the pattern is reversed: 40% think the UAR was "justified" whereas only 15% question the UAR's right to close the Gulf.

How has the war affected the popular stock of the principal countries involved in the conflict? For a newcomer in

TABLE I

Speaking of our foreign policy in West Asia would you say we should continue to support the Arabs or should we treat both Arabs and Israel at par and judge every issue on its merits?

	Percentages				
	Bombay	Calcutta	Delhi	Madras	Total
Should continue to support Arabs	21	31	25	15	24
Should treat both Arabs and Israel at par	55	23	54	74	49
We should support Israel/should not support Arabs	—	—	—	3	—
Can't say	21	39	14	7	22
Not applicable—Have not heard of war	3	7	7	1	5
Total	100	100	100	100	100

TABLE II

Do you think India was right in her support of the Arab cause or do you feel we should have taken a more objective and impartial stand on the issue?

	Percentages				
	Bombay	Calcutta	Delhi	Madras	Total
India was right	22	36	26	20	27
Should have taken a more objective, impartial stand	62	22	54	75	50
Can't say	13	35	13	4	18
Not applicable—Have not heard of war	3	7	7	1	5
Total	100	100	100	100	100

Here again Calcutta stands alone in its approval—though marginal—of the Government's stand. In Bombay (62%) and Madras (75%)—in the latter more so—opinion is highly critical of Government's view. The differences from Calcutta are statistically very significant and suggest some relation with political opinion. This in fact is borne out when the figures are broken down to give the association of opinion with the main All-India political parties as shown in Table III below:

TABLE III (I)

1. Speaking of our foreign policy in West Asia, would you say we should continue to support the Arabs or should we treat both Arabs and Israel at par and judge every issue on its merits?

	Percentages				
	Voting Intention				
	Cong.	P.S.P./S.S.P.	Com. Swa.	Jana Sangh	
Should continue to support Arabs	25	28	37	17	15
Should treat both Arabs and Israel at par	44	47	31	62	60
We should support Israel/should not support Arabs	1	—	—	4	4
Can't say	24	25	24	15	18
Not applicable/have not heard of war	6	—	8	2	3

TABLE III (2)

2. Do you think India was right on her support of the Arab cause or do you feel we should have taken a more objective and impartial stand on the issue?

	Percentages				
	Voting Intention				
	Cong.	P.S.P./S.S.P.	Com. Swa.	Jana Sangh	
India was right	30	28	38	17	16
Should have taken a more objective impartial stand	44	50	31	71	67
Can't say	20	22	22	10	14
Not applicable/have not heard of war	6	—	9	2	3

the reckoning of Indian people Israel has emerged with a remarkably favourable image in this country after the war. A question was asked: "In general has this war in any way affected your image of the two major countries (the UAR and Israel) involved in the conflict?" A majority of those who expressed an opinion said Israel has risen in their estimation after the war. In Madras, one observes an even more marked improvement in the popular image of Israel than in other cities.

The UAR—an old timer in the Institute's annual international surveys which till recently had a favourable image in the country—seems to have suffered a substantial setback in popular esteem. Four out of 10 persons feel that their image of the UAR has deteriorated. Furthermore, while 46% described their image of the UAR as "very good" or "good" a year ago, this figure has now dropped to 27%.

Response to two questions are set forth in their main categories in Table I and Table II. These figures leave little doubt that the majority of respondents in the poll do not share the Government's view. They are more neutral and call for a "less active" association with the Arabs. Thus only one-fourth of respondents feel that friendship with Arabs should remain a paramount consideration in our foreign policy. Nearly double the proportion, on the

other hand, think that we should treat both Arabs and Israel "at par" and judge every issue involved on its merits. In Madras, this view is shared by nearly three-fourths. On the other extreme is Calcutta with only a little less than one-fourth subscribing to the same view. Out of every three persons who expressed an opinion on the issue, only one person feels that India was right in extending unqualified support to the Arab cause, whereas two out of every three persons are of the view that this country should have taken a "more objective and impartial" stand.

The Rightist vote, Swatantra and Jana Sangh, is very critical of the official view. The Communists are not in the sense that the percentage supporting the Arabs is higher than the percentage calling for a change. But the Communists are the only All-India Party that displays this preference. In the case of the Congress Party and the PSP or SSP, there is a marked preference for a less open commitment to the Arab countries. It is true there is no support for Israel in these groups, but the urge for a

greater degree of neutrality is unmistakable.

These results suggest that the broad pattern of newspaper criticism of the Government of India's policy on West Asia in leading editorials in national newspapers is reflected fairly well in literate opinion in the metropolitan cities. This seems to be the case with most international issues: it is a nice point as to whether the newspapers are registering opinion here or are an active instrument in creating it. The fact there is generally a disposition for respondents to follow "the party" line on such subjects is not conclusive for, in this case, the Congress Party line is certainly not reflected, if the official view is the party line. But there is another real possibility which deserves investigation. In the age of Congress ascendancy, the Press, when it differed from the Congress, was generally out of step with public opinion. Today, with the Congress rapidly losing ground, the Press may be reasserting its pre-independence rôle of being more in tune with the electorate than the government of the day.

LOKSABHA ADJOURNED SINE DIE

From Our Parliamentary Correspondent

NEW DELHI, Aug. 18.—The Lok Sabha adjourned sine die on August 12 after a gruelling three-month budget session, its last day being the most rigorous of all. The House sat till 8-30 p.m. while important business was literally hustled through; this has stopped only when a member successfully challenged the quorum in disgust.

The last day's important business included the passage of the controversial Bill to set up an industrial security force to a Select Committee, and when a determined Opposition attempt to block this failed, all groups except one or two Jana Sangh and Independent members staged a walk-out in protest. The Bill was then sent to the committee without difficulty.

Some of the Opposition members returned later to take part in the debate on the Official Secrets Bill which was also passed. This, and a brief debate on the Jagendragadkar Commission's report, were the only official business possible today. The debate on the Education Commission's report could not be held—and, so there will be no policy announcement on August 15 as planned—nor could two or three other important items be taken up.

The discussion on the D.A. Commission's report was initiated by Mr. M. L. Sondhi (J.S.) by interrupting the acrimonious debate on the Industrial Security Forces Bill; several members gave warning of a one-day token strike if their demands for increased D.A. were not met.

Mr. Morarji Desai was as uncompromising in his reply: he asked Opposition leaders to think twice before calling the strike, but he stood firmly by his statement that the Government would take no rash step.

The pumping in of Rs 175 crores into the economy, needed to implement the D.A. Commission's recommendations, would lead inevitably to a rise in prices that would harm all sections of the population. He could not consider giving higher D.A. to Central Government employees only, since the Centre had to act in concert with the States.

Mr. Desai also turned down the D.A. Commission's recommendation that a pay commission be appointed every two years; this could not be done irrespective of the Government's ability to meet increased demands.

Before it could take up Mr. Sondhi's motion on D.A., the House got embroiled in an acrimonious debate over a procedural issue. As soon as it was 3 p.m.—the time fixed for the motion—Mr. Uma Nath (C.P.I.-M) rose on a point of order seeking that all other business be suspended and Mr. Sondhi be asked to move his motion.

This was evidently done to get the permission of the House to

refer its Bill on setting up an industrial security force to a joint committee of both Houses of Parliament.

For nearly 20 minutes Opposition members including Mr. S. Kundu and Mr. S. M. Banerjee had been arguing that Parliament had no competence to set up such a force as it was nothing but a Central police in the guise of the word "force". They quoted the Constitution to show that creation of such a force which would have powers of search and arrest, came under subjects "exclusively" allotted to the States.

Falling on to the next item on the last day of the current session could mean that the issue would be shelved till the next session and this was what the Government benches fought hard to avoid. Sensing the strong feelings of the Opposition voiced by Mr. Madhu Limaye and others on the issue of time and in view of the demand by several members that they be heard before a ruling was given on Parliament's competence to legislate on the subject, the Deputy Speaker, Mr. Khadilkar, declared the item "postponed" and called upon Mr. Sondhi to move his motion.

This aroused a flurry in the Treasury benches. Mr. Ram Subhag Singh, Minister for Parliamentary Affairs, moved a formal motion that discussion on the Industrial Security Forces Bill be continued before taking up any other item.

This was a signal for another uproar from the Opposition which Congressmen tried to match with equally loud counter-protests. Mr. Madhu Limaye quoted rules to prove that what the Minister had suggested was not permissible.

At this stage Mr. Sanjeeva Reddy took the Chair and after some more discussion a compromise was struck. Mr. Sondhi was allowed to proceed with his motion first. But it was agreed that the Home Minister's motion on the Industrial Security Forces Bill would also be taken up later during the day.

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REVIVAL OF ARTS APPRECIATED ABROAD

By NARAYANA MENON

TWENTY years of independence. This is a good time for stocktaking. It will be futile to pretend that we haven't a considerable achievement, though this achievement may not be commensurate with our hopes and our aspirations.

As a nation we seem to revel in self-depreciation and to make a cult of running ourselves down (though we feel terribly indignant if anyone else dares to do so). The prophets of doom, all around us at all levels. There are, however, areas in which even they would admit that the image of India both at home and abroad has a bright side. Whether this constitutes an incongruity or whether it is in keeping with the general changing pattern of things depends on how you look at it.

I am now referring to developments in the arts. There has been, in the last twenty years, a great stimulus within the country in virtually every field—music and the dance; painting and sculpture; architecture; literature; theatre; films. And echoes of this have reached practically all the corners of the world, bringing first, realization, and then, appreciation, even acclamation.

Let me take the field of music and the dance, not because they represent necessarily any greater degree of achievement, but because these are areas with which I am most familiar, and with which I have been connected most.

That there has been a great renaissance in music no one will seriously question. I doubt if the music of India has flourished with greater joy and intensity, revealing itself in all its splendour and communicating at all levels, reaching the widest possible public, at any other period of comparable duration in its long history. And I would say the same thing about the dance. I know many eyebrows will be raised at a statement like this because, where music is concerned, at all times (and, let me say, in all places) people invariably think nostalgically of the past, and long for the values of a vanished period even when the standards and values may not be really comparable, and even when we have no real data or knowledge to evaluate the present.

There are many factors at the back of this cultural rejuvenation. First of all there is the stimulus of independence itself. Independence brought in its train a greater awareness of the national heritage, a greater pride in it, and a greater incentive to scale the heights. This is true not only of India, but of all the developing nations. In its wake came institutions and organizations, instruments of mass communication, even forms of patronage, all of which helped the process. Several universities have set up departments of music. Colleges and schools have sprung up everywhere. National Academies for the furtherance of the arts have been set up. Broadcasting took classical music to homes where the sound of classical music had never reached before. Government in the Ministry of Education played a significant rôle in establishing scholarships, assisting educational institutions, sending and receiving cultural delegations, etc. The Press too played a part in all this, not only by the wide dissemination of ideas and information, but also through columns devoted to the review and criticism of activities in the various artistic fields.

I know that National Academies and Government institutions are always convenient and obvious targets of attack and criticism, and that one gets quite impatient with the conservatism, the mild bureaucratic methods, the administration and the organization of institutions and agencies of this kind. But in spite of all that, they do

serve a useful purpose and are able to create openings and opportunities, act as fertilizing forces and provide grounds for germinating ideas. It is not the direct and concrete achievements of the academies that are as important as the indirect and unseen openings and opportunities that they often create.

The Sangeet Natak Akademi, for instance, has directly or indirectly helped provide dancers of the eminence and quality of Balasaraswati, Shambho Maharaj, Sundar Prasad, Birju Maharaj, Amubh Singh with facilities for teaching and thus pass on their art to succeeding generations. The Akademi has assisted institutions like the Kerala Kalamandalam, Kalakshetra, Darpana, to strengthen their programmes of study and teaching. It has set up a School of Drama where the teaching of dramatic art has been possible at a level and in conditions which would have been difficult to achieve anywhere else. The Ministry of Education has been able to offer hundreds of scholarships for young musicians and dancers so that they could study for periods of two to three years under leading teachers without let or hindrance. Government has also sent out (and received) delegations of dancers and musicians to all parts of the world. Such exchanges are arranged within various limitations, but with all that, they have provided opportunities of travel and for assimilation of ideas which would have been inaccessible to dozens of our artists.

The beginnings of an awareness by the outside world of the quality and character of our music and dance can be traced to these early delegations. I am not forgetting the entrepreneurs who have, on their own, gone abroad and given the outside world a glimpse of our heritage in the field of music and the dance, even earlier. Several of our leading musicians and dancers have performed in various parts of Europe including the Soviet Union, in Canada, the USA, in Japan, in Australia and New Zealand, at music and dance festivals, private recitals, broadcast and television programmes.

A landmark in the presentation of our music and dance abroad was the Edinburgh International Festival of 1963. Indian participation at the Festival consisted of six recitals devoted to classical Indian music—two by Subbulakshmi; one by Ali Akbar Khan; one by Ravi Shankar; a duet by Ali Akbar and Ravi Shankar; and a "Tala-Vadya-Kacheri" a concert of percussion instruments led by Palghat Raghu. Balasaraswati gave eight recitals of Bharatanatyam.

The whole series opened with a discussion programme (in which Yehudi Menuhin was one of the speakers) on the scope of the Indian concerts. Then there was a special programme in which Indian and Western musicians tried to explore areas common to the two systems with illustrations. A new work by the young Indian composer Vanraj Bhatia written specially for the Festival was one of the attractions of this "East-West Miscellany".

At the end of the Festival, *The Times* summed up the series as an "Indian Music Lesson" and said:

"If this Edinburgh Festival has done nothing else, it has disproved completely the old Western complaint that Indian Music consists of amorphous meanderings up and down an exotic scale for 45 minutes at

a stretch. The Indian concerts this year have shown in generous measure, not only something of the diversity of style and texture in north and south Indian music, the gripping effect and heady atmosphere of an extended raga; they have with the aid of careful explanations, written and spoken, coaxed Edinburgh audiences into listening to this music, perhaps without conscious effort, in its own terms and not those of our own music" (Italics mine).

As for the dance recitals, *The Times* critic said: "Recognized as the greatest interpreter of Bharatanatyam... Balasaraswati's art throws out no sop to Western taste, yet fascinates on its own very precise terms. It is dancing of infinite nuance and subtlety. Her mudras have an unusual expressiveness, but also a pure and sensuous beauty. For Western taste her dancing at times is too demanding in its insistence on tiny variations and detailing. Yet it also has a quality of greatness that cannot be immediately apprehended."

This was a real breakthrough. Today, Ravi Shankar and Ali Akbar are household words in Europe and America. And their recitals attract audiences comparable to those at the recitals of any Western celebrity. And the list is growing. Subbulakshmi's recital at the United Nations and her American tour; Bismillah's performances at the Commonwealth Arts Festival, the Montreal Expo '67 followed by the American tour; Balasaraswati's visits to Europe and America, dancing and teaching; the European, Canadian and American tour of the Kathakali group from the Kerala Kalamandalam; not to mention other southern and northern musicians and dancers who have left the imprint of our music and dancing in various parts of Europe and America and the rest of the world.

Many other interesting things are happening in the field of Music. Long-playing records of Indian music are now readily available the world over, some of them coming within the "top ten". The recent disc in which Ravi Shankar and Yehudi Menuhin played together has captured the imagination of the public in a big way. Indian discs are bringing in a sizable amount of foreign exchange. Indian musicians, Ravi Shankar in particular, have composed incidental music for Western films, for TV programmes. Several Indian musicians at this very moment are teaching music at American Universities. Several European and American musicians are studying Indian music seriously, some of them reaching professional standards of performance. Indian music has captured the attention not only of composers, performers and serious students of music but also of jazz musicians, pop singers and the youth. The star has become an important export item!

There are a few Indian musicians who have made a mark even in the field of Western music. Of these, the most celebrated is Zubin Mehta whose rise to greatness and fame reads like a fairy tale—"one of the most spectacular ascents to fame in many a decade" said *Time* magazine. I have just heard his fine LP (Respighi's *Feste Romane* and Strauss' *Don Juan*) recorded in the pavilion of Los Angeles' new Music Centre and it shows that Mehta can achieve what he wants: "I do not want cold, mechanical perfection. Rather, I want a warm expansive tone without the explosive attack one hears from some of the famous orchestras".

Of a very different calibre was Victor Paranjoti who travelled with the amateur chorus in Europe in 1966 endearing many hearts to himself and to India. Wherever he travelled he trailed clouds of affection and goodwill. Compared to Zubin Mehta, Victor was an amateur. I do not mean it in a derogatory sense. I mean it in the

real sense of the word, a man who did things primarily for the love of doing it. He had "undoubtedly a flair akin to genius" said the *Daily Telegraph* reviewing a concert at the Wigmore Hall, London.

The dance has also left deep impressions everywhere. Balasaraswati, Yamini Krishnamurti, Shanta Rao, Mrinalini Sarabhai and her group, the Kalakshetra group, the Kerala Kalamandalam group, the Bharatiya Kala Kendra group (including Birju Maharaj) have all travelled widely and raised much interest and wonder in the minds of the spectators.

I have dilated a little too long on music and the dance because, as I said earlier, these are areas with which I am most familiar. The image of India that we have created in these fields is a distinguished one, and something that one could be proud of. This has cut right across barriers of political prejudice and ignorance, fulminations against non-alignment and India's political affiliations.

The other arts too have contributed in no small measure to the strengthening of this image. The films of Satyajit Ray have illuminated many international festivals and attracted attention not only to himself but to the country of his origin. I mention only one name in the world of films because Satyajit Ray's own achievement overshadows everybody else's on the international scene. But there have been, and are, others who have been good ambassadors of India's film world. The latest name that comes to one's mind is that of M.F. Husain whose short film *Through the Eyes of a Painter* has only just recently won a Golden Bear at Berlin. Indian documentaries, incidentally, have won several international awards all over the world.

Husain's main vocation in life is as a painter, and Indian painters, some of them residing abroad, have also put India on the map of the art world. Those internationally known include Krishen Khanna, Gaitonde, Samant, Newton Souza, Akbar Padamsee, Raza and many others who have been accepted both at home and abroad and won recognition even in the most fastidious circles.

Indian literature has quite a vogue abroad today. Some of the finest literature that is being created in the country has not been exported, though an occasional translation finds its way into the European and American market. Those who write in English find a ready audience and among those who have brought credit to India should be mentioned R. K. Narayan, Bhabhani Bhattacharya, Khushwant Singh, Ruth Jhabwala, Dom Moraes, Ved Mehta.

Expo '67 is the latest culmination of what Edinburgh started and the Commonwealth Festival continued. A leading Montreal paper, reviewing the Indian pavilion, wrote of India as "the cradle of the most ancient civilization which is still the home of millions of craftsmen... Everything that passes through the hands of these craftsmen becomes a work of art whether it be a silk piece with gay and flamboyant colours, a finely chiseled out statuette or a tool recently made". And commenting on the National Day and Week programme which featured Ali Akbar, Ravi Shankar, Bismillah, Yamini Krishnamurti and a Kathakali group, the leading English paper of Montreal said: "Each event was equally stimulating and long before the weekend was over, it became impossible to digest fully the wealth of detail, of new ideas and material being presented".

Altogether, at a time when both at home and abroad the country has been accused of inactivity and lethargy, indiscipline and violent outbursts, indecision and weakness these areas of promise and achievement are heart-warming.

BOOK REVIEWS

POLITICS & THE UNIONS

Political Involvement of India's

Trade Unions. By N. Patlabi Raman. (Asia, Rs 20.)

'Labour in India', wrote Mahatma Gandhi after the 1918 Ahmedabad textile strike, "is still extremely unorganized. It is not everywhere wisely guided". About half a century later, Mr Raman concludes that trade unions have become "pawns on the chess-board of politics". Modern unionism was born simultaneously with the mass political movement for independence, which needed the support of the mass of industrial workers. Nationalism was the primary force; Communism emerged as an independent factor only later. And it was the outsiders, especially those supplied by the political movements, who took the initiative in organizing trade unions. But, if the trade union movement owes its difficulties to outside leadership, it owes most of its achievements also to the fact "that at least this type of leadership has been available".

At the same time, the formal independence of the unions has been a mere facade behind which has developed "a labyrinth of relationships" with political parties with which funds are exchanged and which determine the basic policies and action. Mr Raman substantiates his point by referring to the frequency with which leaders, when they changed their own political colour, took with them the union or unions led by them. Political involvement has led to "structural disunity on a staggering scale". Attempts at unity have failed, because it has not been sought as an ideal "but as a tactic to serve diverse, often conflicting, political interests". This has exposed unions to "exploitation" by the employers for their own ends. Other results are inter-union and intra-union warfare, workers' indiscipline, complication of the issue of union recognition.

After a successful, though at times scrappy, attempt to put these points in perspective, Mr Raman somewhat uncertainly deals with the trade unions' relationship with the Government. Here again political involvement has "invited" interference from the State. During British rule the Government stepped in "to check the use of trade unions against the interests of the State, whether it was by nationalists or the Communists". After independence, the Congress has been "no less serious or firm than its British predecessors in putting down Communist activity in trade unions". Congress "entered the game through the sponsorship and control of the INTUC". An interesting, if sometimes controversial, assessment.

GEOGRAPHY

Longmans Dictionary of Geography. Edited by Dudley Stamp. (Longmans, 65s.)

New Geography 1966-67. By John Laffin. (Abelard-Schuman, 15s.)

Sir Dudley Stamp needs no introduction to students of geography; his dictionary bears the mark of his great scholarship in every entry. The enhanced emphasis on economic geography makes the work invaluable, for political changes hit the headlines more easily than economic developments do; the former are usually more dramatic but economic realities shape politics more decisively than is generally appreciated.

Mr Laffin is an excellent handbook, trying desperately to be up to date in face of rapid change. It is hardly his fault that there is no reference to Biafra, formerly a part of Nigeria but now a republic seeking recognition.