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Blood and Melody: *The Enugu Mine Massacre of 1949 and Chief Stephen Osadebe's Anthem of Remembrance*

By Chukwunwike Ossai

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BLOOD AND MELODY

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What Took Place On November 18, 1949, the white soldiers shot and killed coal workers in Enugu Iva Valley Mine during a protest. This calamity made the people of Nigeria rise and fight for their freedom. Highlife Music Legend Chief Stephen Osadebe released a song titled "Onuigbo" to remember the sad event. How The Killing Took Place How the whites maltreated coal workers: Coal mining in Enugu started in 1915 in order to generate income for Britain. Workers went through a lot They worked 12-16 hours every day No safety equipment Low income (3 shillings/day) Abused by white masters

Why Workers Embarked on Strike. Mine owners failed to pay workers, but increased their workload. Sacked 21 workers who complained. November 18: About 3,000 workers gathered in Iva Valley

How The Tragedy Occurred A white Police Officer by the name of F.S Philips ordered the soldiers to shoot 21 workers died instantly (but were 50-70 in total). More than 50 were injured. A group called the 'Centre for Memories' in Enugu provided BBC Igbo with some of these names. They include: Sunday Anyasodo, Livinus Okechukwuma, William Nwehu, Felix Nnaji, Ogbania Chime and Moses Ikegbu. The others are Okafor Ageni, Augustine Nwokoma, Onoh Onyia, James Ekeowa, Nwachukwu Ugwu, Ngwu Nwafor, Jonathan Ezeani

How it Affected Nigeria It motivated Nigerians to fight the whites and helped Nigeria gain independence faster. It was also the first big

protest against the British after World War II.

How People Remember It It is being remembered by workers' unions every year, with Memorials in the New Market roundabout, It is being taught in schools (but not revealing the true story)



Chief Stephen Osita Osadebe

- Osadebe's Song "Onuigbo" About The Song:. Released in 1984 in the "Osondi Owendi" album. "Onuigbo" means "voice of the Igbo people". He used the music in talking about politics (in highlife style) Meaning Of The Song Igbo Words and English Meanings "Onuigbo kwenu" ("Igbo voice, greet us"- to make the people remember) "Ndi nwuru n'ogbu" ("People who died in the killing"-direct talk about victims) "Ka anyi cheta ha" ("Let's remember them"- tell people not to forget) "Onye obula no n'ala" ("Everyone on earth "- show that it is everyone's business) How The Music Sounds. Slow highlife like a bad burial song. Sounds of horns like mine whistle. Sounds of drums like workers digging coal Why

People Love It. Workers' unions use it as their own. It is being played anytime they remember the dead workers. Help keep its history alive as the military prevents people from talking. Why Onuigbo is Important 1. It Shows True History. Preserves stories hidden by the government 2. It Makes People Feel Better. Helps families of deceased workers 3. Workers' War Song. It gives new workers the power to fight for their rights 4. It Makes The Igbo Remember Everything. It helps all Ndi Igbo know the history What Is Happening Now. The place where the coal workers were killed doesn't have a sign. People still play "Onuigbo" on Workers' Day. Young musicians use part of the song in modernised protest songs. People are still seeking an apology from the U.K. government The Enugu killing and Osadebe's song titled "Onuigbo" show how workers suffered, how music fights, and why we must not forget the incident. Osadebe used music to make sure people didn't forget their bad history. As Nigeria still fights for workers and its true history, this story is still very important to date. References

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An enthusiast in tech with deep passion for studying and showcasing the vibrant cultural heritage of southern Nigeria . Combining my skill with my obsession towards African history and traditions to create contributions that impacts the digital space.



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