

# **Resurgent Nigeria**

**Issues in Nigerian  
Intellectual History**

**A Festschrift in Honour  
of Dahiru Yahya**

**edited by**

**Sa'idu Babura Ahmad**

**Ibrahim Khaleel Abdussalam**

# Resurgent Nigeria Issues in Nigerian Intellectual History

A Festschrift in Honour of Dahiru Yahya

*edited by*

Sa'idu Babura Ahmad

Ibrahim Khaleel Abdussalam

UNIVERSITY OF IBADAN LIBRARY

UNIVERSITY PRESS PLC

IBADAN

2011

University Press PLC  
IBADAN ABA ABEOKUTA ABUJA AJEGUNLE AKURE BENIN  
CALABAR IKEJA IKORODU ILORIN JOS KADUNA KANO  
MAIDUGURI MAKURDI MINNA ONITSHA OSOGBO OWERRI  
PORT HARCOURT WARRI YABA ZARIA

© Sa'idu Babura Ahmad, Ibrahim Khaleel Abdussalam (eds.) 2011

First Published 2011

All Rights Reserved

ISBN 978 978 069 795 2

Published by University Press PLC  
Three Crowns Building, Jericho, P.M.B. 5095, Ibadan, Nigeria  
E-mail: unipress@universitypressplc.com  
Website: www.universitypressplc.com

## Contents

<i>Biodata</i>	ix
<i>Acknowledgements</i>	xxiii
<i>Foreword</i>	xxiv
<i>Introduction</i>	xxx
<b>Section I: The Tragedy of Truth</b>	<b>1</b>
1. Of the Progress of Knowledge and Development of Society: Keynote Address I – Sa'ad Abubakar, FHSN, OFR	3
2. The Success that Failed: Keynote Address II – Nur Alkali, CON, FHSN	12
<b>Section II: Intellectual Issues in the History of the Nigerian State</b>	<b>21</b>
3. Transcending the Limits of Modern Historiography: An Assessment of the Historiographical Approach of Dahiru Yahya – Samaila Suleiman	23
4. The Changing Nature of Nigerian History, 19th Century to the Present – A.I. Yandaki	41
5. Another Intellectual History: Life Narratives and the Foundations of the Nigerian State – Isma'il A. Tsiga	50
6. Leadership and Good Governance: Lessons from the Founders of the Sokoto Caliphate for Contemporary Nigeria – Asma'u G. Saeed	66
7. The Nigerian State and the Responsibility of Historians – Isah Mohammed Abbass	88



<b>Section III: The Struggle for Identity</b>	<b>103</b>
8. From the Sarauta System to the Shari'ah: Islam and Good Governance in Pre-Colonial Hausaland – M.D. Suleiman	105
9. Voices After the Maxim Gun: Intellectual and Literary Opposition to Colonial Rule in Northern Nigeria – Aliyu S. Alabi	124
10. Boko Haram: A Militant Uprising of a Muslim Organization – Tahir Abdu Fagge	147
11. The Challenges of the Mosque as a Centre of Mass Mobilization: A Case Study of Kano Central Mosque – Kabiru Haruna Isa	162
12. The "North" in the 21st Century: An Assessment of the British Colonial Legacy in Nigeria – Dalha Waziri	175
<b>Section IV: The Economy of Corruption</b>	<b>187</b>
13. Economic Development or Economic Servitude: Nigerian Economy Since Independence – Abdurrahman Umar, MCIPR	189
14. Nigeria and the Challenges of Corruption, Democracy and Nation-Building – Omar Farouk Ibrahim	204
15. Commercial Buses and Economic Growth in the Kano Metropolis, 1967-2000: An Assessment – Yusuf Umar Madugu	213
16. The Relevance of Poverty Reduction Strategies of the Sokoto Caliphate – Aliyu Abubakar Kware and Murtala Ahmed Rufa'i	227
<b>Section V: The Comedy of Ethnicity</b>	<b>247</b>
17. The Political Economy of Hausa and Yoruba Conflicts, 1999-2004 – Rasheed Olaniyi	249

18. Igala-Hausa Relations: An Aspect of Inter-Group Relations in the Pre-Colonial Period – Mohammed Sanni Abdulkadir	279
19. Igbo Migrants, the Indigenous Hausa Merchant Class and the Nigerian Civil War in Kano, Northern Nigeria: Challenges and Opportunities Revisited – Ahmed Bako	287
20. History and Coexistence in the Nigerian State: The Case of Jos – Ibrahim Khaleel Abdussalam	306
21. Post-Civil War Inter-Ethnic Relations in Midwest Nigeria – Daniel Olisa Iweze	330

**Section VI: Nostalgia for History** **349**

22. The Transformation of Traditional Rulership in North-Eastern Nigeria: 1903-2010 – Sa'ad Abubakar, FHSN, OFR	351
23. The Response of the Emirs to British Colonialism in Northern Nigeria – A.R. Mohammed	378
24. British Colonialism and the Crisis of the Deposition of District Heads in Zazzau Emirate, 1907-1950 – Haliru Sirajo	391

**Section VII: Looking Back at Other Matters** **405**

25. Nigeria and the Liberation Struggle in Southern Africa – Muhammadu Mustapha Gwadabe	407
--	-----

Notes on Contributors	430
-----------------------	-----

Index	433
-------	-----

## The Political Economy of Hausa and Yoruba Conflicts, 1999-2004

Rasheed Olaniyi

### Introduction

This paper adopts the political economy approach to discuss the historical relations between two of Nigeria's most powerful ethnic groups, the Hausa and the Yoruba, who alternate from peaceful cohabitation and conflict. Political economy broadly analyzes the structure of political power, the class content of the state, the influence of state policy on the economy, socio-economic formation and the mutual influence of various socio-economic systems existing in the modern world.<sup>2</sup> The productive forces, the nature and level of their development, principally determine the economic relations within society. The relations of production exert an enduring influence on the productive forces.<sup>3</sup>

The contradiction arising from the relations of production and the allocation of resources could produce inequalities and imbalance, leading to conflicts. The concept of socio-economic formation includes other important elements such as: the superstructure, which is the existing system of political, judicial rule of law and ideological notions. The socio-economic formation is characterized by the aggregation of (1) the productive forces of the given society, (2) the system of relations of production constituting the society's economic structure or basis, and (3) superstructure in the form of political, juridical and ideological relations and ideas, and the corresponding institutions and organizations.<sup>4</sup>

Mustapha further argues that ethnic conflict is not specifically about 'primeval' differences, but about what unites them in the economic and political spheres.<sup>5</sup> Mustapha cited Bardhan that the political and economic logic of exclusion and competition over limited resources accounted for



the 'madness' of ethnic conflicts.<sup>6</sup> The theory of competition over scarce resources would be valuable in analyzing the widespread ethnic conflicts in Nigeria, especially between the Hausa and the Yoruba.

The political economy thesis of ethnic conflicts was further analyzed in the work of Mbaku.<sup>7</sup> He argues that pervasive ethnic conflicts ravaged post-independence Africa due primarily to the adoption at independence of institutional arrangements that (1) failed to adequately constrain the power of government, (2) did not guarantee economic freedoms and (3) failed to provide procedures for the peaceful resolution of the conflict of interests of the various ethnic groups.<sup>8</sup> The character of the state promoted prebendary and patronage, which excluded many groups and social classes from effective and full participation in economic and political markets. According to Mbaku, "Many of the excluded ethnic groups turned to violence as a way to minimize further marginalization."<sup>9</sup> He observes that in the post-independence period, ethnic competition intensified and culminated in the resurgence of the ethnic group as an important organizational structure for resource competition.<sup>10</sup> Added to this, religion remains an important source of discrimination and mobilization.<sup>11</sup> In post-independent Nigeria, access to political markets and the control of the allocation of resources provoke ethnic competition and conflict,<sup>12</sup> and the elite seeking public office often organize their campaigns along ethnic lines.<sup>13</sup>

### Historical Connectivity

Both the Hausa and Yoruba ethnic identities have developed over time with inaccurate images of their own history and interactions. The force of colonial historiography and stereotypes still prevails in ethnic discourses. Indeed, the paucity of empirically grounded history produced rancorous tendencies in ethnic relations. Hausa and Yoruba cultures did not develop in isolation of one another. There were profound cultural exchanges across centuries between the two. In the old Oyo Empire, the Hausa were assigned highly privileged positions in political institutions. Linguistically, *alafia* or *lafia* (peace) and *wahala* (adversity) are two words that have everyday usage by the Hausa and the Yoruba, and are equally experienced by both in the trajectory of their ethnic relations.

The colonial moment remained salient in understanding the trend of ethnic conflicts between the Hausa and the Yoruba. Even though the North and South protectorates were amalgamated in 1914, they remained

politically segregated until the Richard's Constitution in 1946. In the 1950s, political and ideological differences, competition for resources and power at the centre marked the core of ethnic tensions between the two. Within the colonial context, ethnic relations between them were not only regulated but were a paradox. Colonial rule brought a profound climate of mistrust and suspicion between the two ethnic groups due to the role each played in the British conquest of their territories. In different contexts, both were used as allies to prosecute the war of conquest. The British created an apparatus and institution of violence to suppress resistance and ensure public order. Both constituted the apparatus of this colonial violence. Some of the trusted veteran soldiers and spies were appointed as rulers over 'stateless' societies. The British, however, prevented unity between the two ethnic groups through the use of stereotypes and divide and rule tactics. While the British used Hausa soldiers in the conquest of Yorubaland, the Yoruba formed part of the forces in the capitulation of Northern Nigeria to British rule.

Both the Hausa and the Yoruba were described as having possessed the ability to evolve an organized system and exceptional intelligence. The Yoruba earned the admiration of being devoted to democracy and publicity.<sup>14</sup> But Lugard considered the troops composed of Muslim Sudanic people as better soldiers than the southern tribes. According to Osuntokun:

The Yoruba, like the Hausa-Fulani, were marked out by the (colonial) administration as a proud and haughty people whose loyalty should be cultivated by strengthening their traditional political institutions and trying as much as possible to separate the 'natural' leaders from the parvenu leaders who made their way to the top through education.<sup>15</sup>

He further states that:

The Yoruba were admired and loathed at the same time. They were seen as the most difficult people to administer because a sizeable fraction of them had become 'denationalised' through their affection for Western education, and in the tide of rising expectations this minuscule group was demanding too much from the (colonial) administration.<sup>16</sup>



According to Lady Lugard, "Kano was a strong place in Hausaland, possessing an organized army and a well-fortified town ..."17 She adds that, "Kano represented the principal military power of the northern states, and it was well understood that Kano was the power with which the British strength would be first seriously measured."18 Inadvertently, the colonial moment set the stage for mutual ethnic suspicion. Within the context of economic crisis and agitation against taxation and government policies during the World War I, there was a growing resentment against the Hausa in Yorubaland. As Osuntokun notes:

Pressure groups like the Ogboni (cult) and the guild of hunters (and war chiefs), some of whom resented the large Hausa settlements in Yorubaland as a licence the white man had given to their former enemies from the north. It is in the light of this medley of interests, sentiments and resentments that the Okeogun rebellion of 1916 could be understood.19

In March 1916, in the uprising against the imposition of the Red Cross Fund (one shilling for men and six pence for women), "about a thousand Hausa people in Iseyin barely escaped being massacred." They got wind of the plan for extermination and escaped.

Osuntokun suggests that:

The reason why the Hausa were marked out for extermination could have been historical, commercial or religious. The northern Yoruba never really trusted Hausa-Fulani people for historical reasons, the series of wars by Jihadists from Ilorin and the devastating impact. Secondly, the Hausa were used by the British as 'spies' and 'political agents' all over Nigeria, and although Yoruba and Hausa predominated in the Nigeria Regiment, the British had always sent Hausa detachments to Iseyin in the past to shoot down rebels.20

The Yoruba performed similar inglorious roles in Northern Nigeria by acting as 'spies', political agents, police officers and soldiers to pacify rebellions. Within the space of the long years of segregation, each of the regions accused each other of being allies of the British overlord. Yoruba leaders indicted the Hausa for being pro-British, while the Hausa held Yoruba politicians in distrust on analogous grounds. As Jose remarks:

The Yoruba had literally ruled Nigeria since the British came to the exclusion of the Hausa and Ibo. While the Yoruba had produced the second generation of graduates in law, medicine and engineering, the Ibo were just starting the first generation. But the Hausa had not started at all.21

This accounted for the preponderance of Yoruba educated elite in the civil service of northern Nigeria. Jose observes that:

Yoruba had played a leading and influential role in the government from the amalgamation in 1914 and until the election of 1951 brought in the NPC as the majority party in the House of Representatives.22

He further observes that:

Chief Awolowo and his lieutenants in the Yoruba Action Group had always shown contempt for the northerners – the condescending attitude people of Lagos had for the Hausa "beggars". ...What Yoruba politicians did not realize early enough was that when they attacked the northerners' way of life, they were in effect attacking the religion of the most northerners – Islam.23

The vicissitudes of the great depression in the 1930s further provoked ethnic tension arising from commercial competition between the Hausa and the Yoruba. According to Abner Cohen, in 1934 the Yoruba made an attempt to disintegrate the monopoly created by Hausa traders in the kolanut trade in many parts of Yorubaland. Hausa traders dictated prices to the Yoruba kolanut farmers, and incipient ethnicity emerged in the contest over who should "pay the *lada*", a commission for trade in kolanuts, the Yoruba farmers or the Hausa buyers. The farmers who hitherto had paid it wanted the buyers to take over payment.24 In the Ibadan cattle market in the early 1930s, both the cattle landlords and butchers were Hausa. However, the Yoruba began to displace the Hausa as butchers.

These competitions were a byproduct of the social inequality and exploitation inherent in the capitalist mode of production, which colonial rule introduced.25 Between 1928 and 1948, associational ethnicity gathered more momentum. It was a period marked by the Great Depression and the World War II that witnessed scarcity, inequality and



socio-economic insecurity. The elite converged on mediocrity to mobilize/manipulate the masses on the platform of primordial ethnic identity. According to Ifidon, "The Nigeria of the 1950s had been made unviable by centrifugal regional tendencies, and barely held together by the British colonial administrative tendencies."<sup>26</sup> At the general conference held at Ibadan in 1950, "The first separatist tendency of the north was exhibited when the North threatened to pull out of the country unless it got half of the legislative seats at the National Legislative Council."<sup>27</sup> According to A.H.M. Kirk-Greene, the concession to the North "was to dominate the shaping of Nigeria's political culture until the first republic exploded sixteen years later."<sup>28</sup>

By and large, in the nationalist struggle for independence, the formation of political parties reflected ethno-regional affiliations. In post-independence politics, the political elite mobilized and manipulated ethnic identity to sustain authoritarian rules. The ethnic tension between the Hausa and the Yoruba was further aggravated by the annulment of the June 12, 1993 presidential election popularly won by the late M.K.O. Abiola. The Yoruba felt politically dominated and alienated. The tragic consequences of these events were ethnic conflicts between the two, particularly in Lagos and Ogun States.

Since 1999, unprecedented and episodic violent conflicts have occurred between the Hausa and the Yoruba within the context of the democratization process and neo-liberal economic transition. The era of neo-liberal political and economic transitions ended splendid hospitality between the two ethnic groups and ushered in mutual suspicion, violent conflicts and hostilities. In this work, it is argued that conflict was inevitable between the two groups given the contention for political power that was historically situated. In 1999, as the political transition intensified, conflict of interests occurred between the Hausa at the threshold of losing power and the Yoruba at the summit of gaining it.

There has been an increase in the incidence of conflicts between the Hausa and Yoruba settler communities living outside their respective home regions and between the two in the major cities of southwestern and northern Nigeria. These rising inter-ethnic and communal conflicts and clashes resulted in the loss of hundreds of lives and massive destruction. Combatants on both sides have used all means for the prosecution of their objectives, including torture, physical mutilation and murder. In Nigeria, an attempt to re-establish democratic governance

was challenged by the unabating trend of ethnic conflicts. At the onset of military rule in 1966, ethnic associations were disbanded, but at the verge of military retreat in 1999, there was an explosion in the number of ethnic associations.<sup>29</sup> There was a banality of militarized ethnicity.

Nigeria has witnessed a boom in religiosity (traditional, Islamic, and Christian) and the pervasiveness of religious and ethnic sentiments sanctioned killings and violence. People killed by ethnic and religious sentiments. According to Mamdani, "The modern political sensibility sees most political violence as necessary to historical progress. Since the French Revolution, violence has come to be seen as the midwife of history."<sup>30</sup> In cultural terms, political violence, ethnic or communal conflicts in Africa were attributed to the absence of modernity.<sup>31</sup>

In sum, the post-military era in Nigeria witnessed the pervasive struggle in all the geo-political zones for self-determination. In the legal regime, there was *Shari'ah* in the northwest and northeast. In the self-determination in resource control, ethnic militias and the elite in the south-south led. In self-determination in terms of regional autonomy and the restructuring of the Nigerian federalism, ethnic militias and the elite in the southwest championed that cause. The elite and militia groups in the Middle Belt preoccupied themselves with the question of self-determination in the assertion of ethnic and indigene identity. The Igbo elite, the legislature and ethnic militia groups are still nostalgic about self-determination in terms of confederacy and the rebirth of Biafra, which threatened the legitimacy of the Nigerian state. All the self-determinations provoked conflicts, political instability, insecurity, communal hostilities and the resurgence of xenophobia, as well as nostalgia similar to the 1966 political crisis and the civil war atmosphere between 1967 and 1970. The most successful of all the self-determination struggles was the legal reform in northwest and northeast Nigeria, which introduced the criminal aspects of the existing *Shari'ah* law. There was a rise in consciousness and self-development throughout the *Shari'ah* states. The violence of self-determination remains lingering and unabated. Agbese submits that, "The end of the Cold War helped to create a political space in which ethnic, cultural and religious groups that had been dis-empowered, dispossessed and marginalized could assert and reassert their identities."<sup>32</sup>

Among the Yoruba, the *Afenifere* replaced the *Egbe Omo Oduduwa* that was outlawed in 1966 while the OPC (Oodua People's Congress)



and many others sprouted. Between 1993 and 2000, Yorubaland became the seething base of agitation towards autonomy. Agitation against marginalization was articulated through pan-Yoruba conferences within Nigeria and in the diaspora. In northern Nigeria, the introduction of the *Sharī'ah*, which Zamfara State pioneered in 1999, heightened the tension in the dichotomy of citizenship. According to Sklar, "... the introduction of *Sharī'ah* for Muslims meant that there would be two categories of citizens in the state, each category based on religion; each with its own set of rights and penalties."<sup>35</sup> The period 1999 – 2003 witnessed an unprecedented combination of events in the political and economic history of Nigeria, such as democratic rule and neo-liberal economic reforms. The decline in industrial production, the upsurge in ethnic and religious identities, spontaneous ethnic and religious conflicts and the oil boom (excess money from sales of crude oil) – the accumulation of economic surplus at the disposal of the Nigerian state were other factors. It is therefore instructive to note that the structure of the Nigerian society, particularly political economy, is conducive to ethnic conflicts.

Under the Obasanjo presidency, there were attempts in northern Nigeria to resist public policies that sought to deny the North of the gains made during the military era. In some ways, public policies were perceived to reduce the inequities caused by historical discrimination and reduce their wealth as well as standard of living.<sup>36</sup> Government policies not only constituted an arena for ethnic struggles, they also aggravated the nature of ethnic tensions and conflicts. Agbese illustrates that, "The state based pattern of capital accumulation in which the ruling classes use their access to state power as a mechanism for the private appropriation of wealth encourages the manipulation of ethnic and other forms of primordial identities."<sup>37</sup>

### Political Elite and Stereotypical Notions

Falola makes the point that, "To treat the Yoruba-speaking peoples as a unit can only be justified on cultural and linguistic similarities... Yorubaland was never a single socio-political unit."<sup>38</sup> As he argues, the power elite imposed the myth of Yoruba nation. Political incoherency among the Yoruba was eloquently articulated by Chief Awolowo:

The Yorubas, for instance, belong to the same racial stock. But they are divided into a number of tribes and clans, each of which claims and strives to be independent of the others. The same is true of Hausas, though the ruling Fulanis, and the religion of Islam, exercise a strong unifying influence on them, which is absent among the Yorubas.<sup>39</sup>

He continued that, "Politically, the best-organized groups are the Hausa, including the Fulani, who form the ruling class in the north, and the Yoruba."<sup>40</sup>

Despite this commendation on the political organization, derogatory and uncomplimentary remarks influenced the mindset of many Yoruba politicians, journalists, and public office holders, which exacerbated divisive tendencies in their conduct with the Hausa. Mediocrity blighted the Yoruba tradition of cultural pluralism by derogatorily attributing to 'others' the stereotypes of 'enemies, rivals, competitors, and people of inferior intellect.'<sup>41</sup>

During the 1959 general election campaigns, party politics and diversity in political ideology heightened friction between the Yoruba and the Hausa. The Northern People's Congress (NPC) regarded the Action Group electioneering campaign against the thriving feudal political system in Northern Nigeria with abhorrence and repugnance. There was a spectre of suspicion between the northern and western Nigerian political elite who were apprehensive of each other plotting to destabilize their sphere of political stronghold. Awolowo was apprehensive of a possible Jihad against the Yoruba from the north. According to Chief Awolowo:

Sir Ahmadu (Bello) contended that NPC's new decision to invade the South politically was a reply to the recent invasion of the North by southern political parties ... Sir Ahmadu (Bello) claimed that like his great grandfather, Shehu Othman Dan Fodio whom, he said after his conquests, divided the conquered country between his two sons, 'I too after conquering the South will also divide Nigeria into two to be taken charge of by two of my lieutenants.'<sup>42</sup>

It was not until the January 1950 Constitutional Review Conference held at Ibadan that the Hausa and Yoruba leaders met for the first time to hold consultation on the political future of Nigeria. At the 1950



Constitutional Conference in Ibadan, a stalemate ensued when delegates from Northern Nigeria objected to the ministerial system of government that was considered antithetical to their political interest. It was argued that the North suffered from the paucity of indigenous civil servants to serve the ministers as Permanent Secretaries. It was a meeting of historic proportions which laid the foundation of trust between the two.<sup>43</sup> This brave step built serious momentum for a historic breakthrough from the British-imposed dichotomies, but it was short-lived.

The gain of the Ibadan accord was squandered by the political intrigues that followed the transformation of ethno-regional groups, such as the *Egbe Omo Oduduwa* and the *Jam'iyyar Mutanen Arewa*, into political parties. In a large measure, the political parties were introspective in their orientation. The Action Group was formed in 1950, but was officially launched on 28 April 1951 at Owo. The changes brought about by the emergent political parties altered the nascent power relations between the two groups. Events following the 1953 motion of the Action Group (AG), the Yoruba political party, agitating for self-government in 1956 intensified the hostility. When the AG presented the motion in March 1953, Northern political leaders, especially Sir Ahmadu Bello, insisted that the self-government question must be based on an equal footing. He unequivocally stressed that the North required human capital development and infrastructure and urged other regions to proceed with their self-governments. Northern leaders came under virulent attacks.

In the 1959 general election campaigns, the AG faced stiff opposition and assaults in many parts of Northern Nigeria which was the stronghold of the Northern People's Congress. Prior to the 1959 federal election, majority of the AG members agreed that the party should take part in the NPC-NCNC coalition to form a National Government. Awolowo had earlier held a reception for Tafawa Balewa when the latter visited him at Ibadan on 17 October 1957 for the same purpose. AG leaders considered the visit very historic.<sup>44</sup> But attempts by Chief S.L. Akintola to fraternize with the NPC were received with indignity and mudslinging by the Yoruba politicians. The fraternity was considered an effrontery and an atrocity.

Some leaders in the AG hierarchy resented the rapport between Akintola and the Northern Nigerian political leaders.<sup>45</sup> The stake of the AG and indeed the Yoruba in the post-independence National

Government became a bone of contention between Awolowo and Akintola. Awolowo preferred to be in opposition as opposed to Akintola who looked forward to collaboration with other political parties in the formation of the National Government. In Akintola's view, this was the only means through which the Yoruba could benefit from the gains of independence they tenaciously fought for. On 2 February 1962, Akintola was castigated as a traitor who sold the Yoruba to the Hausa for hosting the Sardauna in Ibadan while the AG party convention was going on in Jos.<sup>46</sup>

In this way, the dialectics of power in the south-west and political intrigues in the AG had ripple effects on Hausa and Yoruba relations. As Jose noted:

Chief Akintola and his supporters who wanted the Action Group to work with the NPC in a coalition government so that the Yorubas could participate when the national cake was being shared out were the minority in the party. Chief Awolowo and his supporters who held to the Yoruba adage, which translated into English means: 'rather than prostrate to Hausa man, let us commit suicide,' were in the majority.<sup>47</sup>

A personality clash occurred between Awolowo and Akintola. The former accused the latter of usurpation of power to become both the premier and leader of the party, while the latter accused the former of aspiring to become the *de facto* premier despite being the leader of the party. Akintola had canvassed the idea of regional security, which prevents any regional government from using its resources tantamount to destabilizing other regional governments by supporting their opponents. During the first Republic, Prince Okunade Sijuade (now the Ooni of Ife) brokered a meeting between Chief Obafemi Awolowo and Sir Ahmadu Bello in his efforts aimed at uniting them. However, he was castigated as "driving the Yoruba into perpetual slavery."<sup>48</sup>

On 11 March 1964, Akintola was obliged to explain to the Western Region the formation of the Nigerian National Alliance (NNA) that comprised the NNDR, the NPC, the Mid-West Democratic Front, and several political parties in the ethnic minority areas of Eastern Nigeria and the Niger Delta. From a deep sense of history and resolution to bring to the realm of politics the inter-ethnic relations between the Hausa and the Yoruba, Akintola asserted that:



It is, I think, pertinent at this stage to draw attention to a fact, which is often overlooked by the people of Western Nigeria. Very strong cultural links, social and religious, exist between us and the people of Northern Nigeria. All over the world, natural advantages of this type are put to work and used to advantage as the basis of close understanding. We in Western Nigeria have, although sheer neglect and loyalty to such friends as we have made in the past, allowed ourselves to be manoeuvred into a position in which for several years we were hardly on speaking terms with leaders of opinion and thought in Northern Nigeria. In my view, the continuance of this policy is nothing short of criminal folly, and it is my firm resolve to steer the affairs of this region resolutely in the opposite direction. I have no apologies to offer in this regard. I am content to be judged by the outcome of events and history.<sup>49</sup>

Akintola's foray in politics was made to broaden the horizon of the Yoruba in national politics, as opposed to the ethnically complacent politics of Awolowo and other members in the AG. By aligning with Northern politicians, Akintola merely revitalized the Ibadan political accord between Yoruba Obas and northern Emirs in 1950.

### **The June 12, 1993 Presidential Election and the Upsurge of Political Insurgency**

The June 12 debacle was largely a failure of the Nigerian political class. As a political party, the Social Democratic Party (SDP) was too weak to defend the June 12 mandate. It was not surprising then that it conceded to the political manoeuvres of the military. Many politicians abandoned the party and scrambled for political appointments in the interim government and the military government that followed. Pro-June 12 activists and close confidants of Abiola wittingly or unwittingly gave the late General Sani Abacha the needed support to take over power from the Interim National Government (ING), and foreclosed the mandate. Most of the former pro-June 12 elements abandoned the struggle and supported Abacha even before Abiola's death. Chief Ebenezer Babatope, a pro-June 12, did not only serve under Abacha as a Minister but also campaigned for his self-succession. This changing political act was prompted by the alleged Abiola role in the National Party of Nigeria (NPN) during the second Republic to scuttle the presidential ambition of Chief Awolowo.

At the outset of the transition programme in 1998, the *Afenifere* (a Pan-Yoruba organization) leaders opined that the failure to shift power to the south might precipitate the end of Nigeria. It would be difficult to convince the Yoruba that they belonged to Nigeria. This threat made the All (Nigerian) Peoples Party and the People's Democratic Party, considered as northern dominated parties, to concede their presidential tickets to the southwest. The decision produced two Yoruba, Chief Obasanjo and Chief Olu Falae, as presidential candidates. For the *Afenifere*, the central question remained: Will an Awoist ever emerge as Nigeria's president?

The *Afenifere* and NADECO's grouse about the Abacha government was aggravated by a gross record of human rights abuse, the incarceration of civil rights activists and the assassinations of Alhaja Kudirat Abiola, Chief Alfred Rewane and Madam Bisoye Tejuoso, as well as the assassination attempts on Chief Abraham Adesanya. Soaring unemployment, grinding poverty and collapsing infrastructure, as well as the condemnation of the nation by the international organizations, marked Abacha's administration. According to the leader of the *Afenifere*, Abacha's administration witnessed a "programmed and sustained offensive against the Yoruba in form of unwarranted harassment, persecution, discrimination and humiliation by a tiny clique of military hegemonists aided by their civilian collaborators with whom they transiently control federal power, and resources."<sup>51</sup>

The Yoruba felt that the ruling elite of the Hausa obstructed their attempt to restructure Nigeria in such a way that the Yoruba would be autonomous in the control of their own resources and develop at their own pace. This was summed up by General Alani Akinrinade, "... Yoruba autonomy is neither irredentism nor secession. We simply want the space, free space, which is our birthright, to develop at our pace without let or hindrance."<sup>52</sup>

The Yoruba agenda centres on what Kimenyi calls "Ethnic governmental units that possess a fair degree of autonomy", since "African experience with unitary states has been disappointing."<sup>53</sup> The election of Obasanjo symbolized a dramatic shift in Nigerian politics. There was apparent collapse of the traditional north-east alliance that dominated the first and second republics. The paradox of the shift was that the coalition in the political terrain could not foster cordial ethnic relations between the Hausa and the Yoruba. Indeed, some Yoruba leaders claimed that the victory of Obasanjo through the support of



northern elite was the continuation of Yoruba domination by the Hausa oligarchy through other means.

### Boom in Ethnic Identity

Hausa and Yoruba conflicts were manifestations of the dysfunction that underscore the trajectory of the Nigerian state formation traversing the colonial and post-colonial epochs. The conflicts were a logical outcome of the brazen mischief and political bickering of the power elite; the manifestation of the distortion in the nature of citizenship pre-eminently characterized by exclusion, the prevailing regime of inequality, the ailing economy and the burgeoning informal sector which increasingly witnessed fierce competition among the peasants. The conflicts could be considered as the war of the subalterns. The displaced aggression of the subalterns prevented them from confronting the exploiters and the elite in their domain. The war could not alter the existing *status quo* of exploitation prevailing in the conflict-prone communities. Conflicts were fought over markets; and competition intensified over the control of diminishing resources. Flashpoints remained peril-urban neighbourhoods, a 'masses republic'. In these encounters, the socialization of youths on the perception of other ethnic groups requires investigation.

In 1999, democratic governance signalled the era of brigandage which denied the citizens the social rights to education, social facilities, health and economic gains within national politics. Politics degenerated into a "means to personal enrichment", rather than the overall welfare of the community. Many Nigerians relied on their ethnic or religious groups as the basis for emotional identity. The 'policy of exclusion' resulted in mutual distrust, providing safety in ethnic and religious inclinations, which in turn bred hatred and repulsion. According to Hamza:

The relative deprivation theory asserts that a people's capacity for revenge through the means of violence is contingent on the result of the comparison it makes with others, meaning, if a community perceives that the community is being favoured at their own expense, rebellion becomes a natural response.<sup>54</sup>

Under the Obasanjo presidency, Yoruba identity could not create the envisioned political unity. There was a conspicuous absence of a leader

to speak for the Yoruba at the national conference for political reforms. There were diametrically opposed interests:

The prevarication is between Afenifere that wants the region to come up with a common agenda that presupposes three main things – true federalism, regionalism and parliamentary system and restructuring – and the South West governors, who favour autonomous status for local governments, presidential rule and strong opposition against regionalism.<sup>55</sup>

According to Liadi Tella:

The Afenifere, YCE, the governors, Bashorun Rock, Egbe Igbimo Yoruba and the Lagos delegation all have different agenda. Which one will the conference take? When you refuse to appoint a leader, what you have is a kind of Portuguese parliament. And what you have is confusion. The Yoruba nation is in confusion now and our leaders must find a way out.<sup>56</sup>

These factors have also continued to impede intra-group solidarity and unity except when it becomes necessary to compete with other groups.<sup>57</sup> The political process in Nigeria is not devoid of Yoruba and Hausa collaboration and alliance. It is therefore ahistorical to consider the northern and western regions as monolithic entities. In the first republic, Chief Akintola was a close ally of Sir Ahmadu Bello. In the second republic, Gen. Olusegun Obasanjo obliged to the electoral verdict by handing over to Alhaji Shehu Usman Shagari. Shagari enjoyed support from many Yoruba politicians. In the aborted third republic, the Kaduna Mafia signed a political pact with Chief Awolowo. Before the annulment of the June 12 presidential election, Chief Abiola garnered more votes in northern Nigeria than Bashir Othman Tofa, a Hausa of Kanuri ancestry. In the fourth republic, Chief Olusegun Obasanjo earned enormous political goodwill from northern Nigeria more than in his homeland in southwestern Nigeria. But this glaring evidence of alliances has remained obscene due to identity politics. General Sani Abacha "nursed the paradoxically revolutionary dream of annulling the old northern establishment and the entire Nigerian political class..."<sup>58</sup>

The annulment of the June 12, 1993 presidential election, popularly perceived to have been won by MKO Abiola, and the agitation for its



reinstatement created an unprecedented political impasse not seen since the outbreak of the civil war of 1967–1970. The annulment of the election was perceived to have been motivated partly by the geographical/ethnic identity of its Yoruba winner that it was orchestrated to preserve the monopoly of the presidency in the north to the exclusion of the southerners.<sup>59</sup> The Yoruba mounted opposition against successive governments in the post-June 12 era. Such governments, including the interim government headed by Chief Ernest Shonekan, General Sani Abacha, General Abubakar Abdulsalami and Chief Olusegun Obasanjo, were considered as illegitimate. Annual celebrations of the June 12 became a major institution and many state governments in the southwest declared June 12 as public holiday.

The looming spectre of political uncertainty accelerated the pace of organized ethnicity among the Yoruba. The surfeit of ethnic-based associations was floated unequivocally and agitated for the restoration of the June 12 mandate, political restructuring and autonomy. In northern Nigeria, there was a proliferation of Yoruba ethnic associations in both rural and urban communities. Dormant associations were revived and new ones of more centralized nature were added. These associations made a dramatic swift in their goals from the previous agenda of developing their hometowns to enriching the welfare of their members. Broadly, the June 12 debacle transcends ethnic power struggle between the Yoruba and the Hausa, but highlights the political brinkmanship between progressive and conservative forces. In the build-up to the party nomination of M.K.O. Abiola as the flag bearer of the SDP, there were political forces from Yorubaland who attempted to jettison the presidential ambition based on his role in scuttling the presidential ambition of Chief Awolowo in the second republic.

The degree of elite collusion and collision is germane in unravelling the Hausa-Yoruba conflict. The myth of northern political domination is often peddled in many parts of southern Nigeria, especially the southwest. It was a convenient *alibi* peddled by politicians and their accolades in academia to portray the Yoruba as a 'minority ethnic group', in terms of power relations, marginalized and dominated by the Hausa. According to David-West, "Northern 'domination' or the 'monopoly' of the presidency is far from being due to a nebulous divine dispensation" and the swinging pendulum of power.<sup>60</sup> "It is the south's constant and decisive support to a northern domination or control."<sup>61</sup> The south

has always been privy to the myth of northern domination. The 1979 election was marred by the two-third of 19 states debacle. It was the 'legal mathematical wizardry' of a Yoruba legal luminary, Chief Richard Akinjide, which finally sealed Chief Awolowo's protestations of Shagari being declared the winner. The installation of Shagari as President through the collaboration of Yoruba elite was a devastating blow to the presidential ambition of Chief Awolowo. In the 1983 election, some powerful elements in the Kaduna Mafia who were disenchanted with the Shagari administration reached an accord with Awolowo and supported his presidential ambition. In the 1993 election, Shehu Musa Yar'Adua, through the tacit support of political entrepreneurs, easily trashed Olu Falae in Oyo State and made impressive victory in many states of the southwest. At Ibadan, he defeated Layi Balogun, an indefatigable son of the soil.

The annulment of June 12 renewed and exacerbated old rivalries and the apprehension the Yoruba had nurtured against the Hausa. The annulment of the June 12 1993 presidential election was perceived as an ethnic agenda of the Hausa aristocracy to perpetually control political power in Nigeria. The annulment scuttled and truncated the pan-Nigeria identity that the massive support for Abiola's presidency garnered. The unrelenting attack on Yoruba elite by Abacha's military junta reinforced the apprehension of the Yoruba that the Hausa orchestrated plans to "exterminate them." It was equally perceived that the Hausa aimed at checkmating the political ascendancy of the Yoruba. But in whose interest did Abacha rule? Abacha's primary constituency was the military and he was not accountable to anybody. Abacha used maximum power to crush his known and perceived detractors in various parts of the country. He ridiculed the traditional power and political authority of the Sokoto Caliphate by summarily deposing Sultan Ibrahim Dasuki. Before his demise, he was on the verge of deposing the Emir of Kano or, as it was rumoured, partitioning the Emirate into two by creating another one for his multi-millionaire friend, Dankabo. A study of primary sources on the annulment of June 12 elections reveals that those who collaborated on the issue belonged to at least two political groups with basically contradictory interests. The conflicting interests of the two groups could be explained within the context of the internal partisan politics among the Yoruba and military dictatorship. First, even though the Yoruba had aspired to rule Nigeria, Abiola was perceived as a major



opponent of Chief Awolowo and therefore not pursuing Yoruba agenda. As a businessman and government contractor, Abiola was a close ally of the military establishment.

As stated in the Yoruba Agenda:

Every Yoruba has a covenant to solemnly undertake, with God's help, to seek, with all his mind and might, every opportunity to achieve autonomy and self government for Yorubaland within one Nigeria.<sup>64</sup>

Throughout history, men with *déjà vu* of injustice have resorted to violence in furtherance of their idealistic vision. According to Gani Adams, violence is inevitable if Nigeria is to find justice. As he stated, "You can't give birth to a child without blood. If there is no blood, this country cannot believe in justice."<sup>65</sup> Political repression galvanized the process of insurgency and formation of pan-Yoruba organizations which mobilized the Yoruba towards political autonomy. On 29 August 1995, the Odua Peoples Congress (OPC) was formed at Mushin area of Lagos by nine original members.<sup>66</sup> The OPC alleged structural imbalances in public service. Northerners were said to have occupied the hierarchy and dominated military and para-military services and the federal civil service.<sup>67</sup>

The popular perception of the OPC in many parts of Nigeria, particularly in the north, was that, it represents the military wing of the pan-Yoruba organization, the *Afenifere*, just as the Alliance for Democracy is its political outfit. On the contrary, the OPC constitutes terror in Yorubaland, its traditional stronghold. The OPC violence impaired the soul of the Yoruba, which it claims to protect, by exacerbating disunity rather than social cohesion. Internally, wrangling polarizes it and the spectre of insecurity imposed by the arbitrary use of violence has created massive social anomie. Indeed, the OPC has not in any way aided the Yoruba cause. Rather, it has given the Yoruba the pervasive identity of militancy, "the wild, wild west." And for most of Obasanjo's administration, the southwest did not achieve a facelift in terms of infrastructural developments witnessed in other parts of Nigeria. In a large measure, the dividend of democracy was eroded in Yorubaland as poverty, unemployment and school crises persisted. By 1999, the OPC had transited from civil agitations and violent protests to ethnic massacres.

The aftermath of the June 12 itself threw the Yoruba into internal power struggles and ideological discontents. The Hausa did not 'sit on the fence' concerning the aggression of the OPC to its vested interests and kinsmen. The Hausa floated a counter organization, the Arewa Peoples' Congress (APC) to checkmate the OPC's violent threats. The dangers posed by the activities of the OPC paradoxically acted as a catalyst for the revival of "one north." Under Alhaji Shehu Shagari, the Harmonization Committee had been formed to unite many of the elite associations such as the Turaki Committee, the Northern Elders Forum (NEF) and the United Development Foundation which provided leadership support to the APC.

The APC canvassed to maintain the *status quo*. Both in structure and operation, the APC sharply contrasted the OPC. The APC has regional identity and invariably protects Yoruba elements, while the OPC has ethnic appeal. Before his death in 2007, Chief Sunday Awoniyi, a Yoruba from Kogi State, was the Chairman of the Arewa Consultative Forum, a pan-Northern Nigerian organization, elitist and amorphous in nature. On the other hand, the OPC has standing, registered and organized membership with mass grassroots support. While OPC orchestrated ethnic violence against targeted groups/individuals, the APC is yet to be linked directly to any violence. Many of the perpetrators of the conflicts in northern Nigeria remain the *Almajiri*, the *Yandaba* and street urchins. Can one really categorize APC as ethnic militia? There are over 100 ethnic groups in northern Nigeria with Hausa, Nupe, Yoruba, Tiv, Kanuri, Fulani, Epira and Igala as major groups. The APC arose out of the political exigencies of checkmating the uncanny monopoly of OPC violence against Hausa communities in Lagos and various parts of Yorubaland. However, it could muster or set up an organizational structure or "standing army" parallel to the OPC. If anything, the APC remains an ideological and propagandist organization. Its identity is rather fluid without ethnic, religious and even regional appeal. Prior to the formation of the APC youth gangs such as the *Yandaba* in Kano, street urchins and students of the Qur'ān, *Almajiri*, carried out most of the violence in the north. These groups of disenfranchised youths continue to unleash violence at the slightest provocation. For the APC, the creation of an ethnic or regional army was rather elusive. The north is not a homogenous entity and has experienced violent religious confrontations more than any part of Nigeria.



The APC was endorsed by the Turaki Committee to checkmate the unconventional approach of the OPC to national events.<sup>68</sup> Contrary to popular belief, the Gamji Club and the Arewa Consultative Forum are more vociferous and assertive than the APC in matters that affect the northern interest. According to Alhaji Sagir Mohammed (Wazirin Ringim), the APC is a "child of necessity" and condemns the proliferation of ethnic militias:

Let the government first and foremost ban the OPC, ban APC, and ban TPC. Not only banning them, it should be seen to do it in a manner that no OPC could come again. If the OPC disappears, the APC will also disappear. After all, we came to being as a result of necessity. If the OPC disappears, we (APC) will disappear and we will form a cultural organization for the unification of the north.<sup>69</sup>

But the OPC leaders maintained that the organization could not die and that an unregistered organization could not be proscribed.

It was widely rumoured that the APC planned to build a standing army around the crop of retired military men of northern Nigeria. According to a report:

Unlike the OPC whose members are not disciplined and well trained and who rely on charms, the APC field personnel will be mainly retired military officers who will require little training in the use of guns.<sup>70</sup>

It was alleged that the standing army would be based in the north and transported to any troubled spot to revenge assaults on citizens of northern Nigeria origin. The APC, however, adopted a non-violent approach in its operation. It was suggested that the APC leadership discarded the idea of a standing army since the situation did not warrant it and the organization was apprehensive of a clampdown by the government. Rather than build a standing army, the APC relies on the existing structure of violence, the *Yandaba* and street urchins. The APC uses Islamic religion and ethnic sentiments to mobilize the *Yandaba* to action and sometimes with financial inducements.

For a long time, the APC has devoted its resources to publicity and remained 'media hype.' According to Opeseitan:

... when the *Nigerian Tribune* visited some northern cities, awareness of the indigenes about the APC was vague and remote. The people, who spoke with the *Nigerian Tribune* said they learnt of the APC through the radio and discussions in town.<sup>71</sup>

Hausa communities in other parts of Nigeria were contacted to mobilize and organize themselves into the APC in order to be vigilant. The original plan was to launch the APC in all states of the federation.<sup>72</sup> In Jos where the indigene and settler question is raging, the Plateau Democratic Youth (PDY) vowed to resist the launching of the APC.<sup>73</sup> One of the leaders/founders of the APC is Alhaji Sagir Mohammed (Wazirin Ringim). He was a Permanent Secretary (Government House) and Commissioner of Information in Kano State and a Commissioner of Education in Jigawa State. He was an Intelligence Officer in the Nigerian Army before he voluntarily retired as a Captain. He noted that under the Obasanjo presidency there was the over-dominance of the Middle-Belt in the political representation of the north, contrary to the spirit of the constitution; that there was a massive retirement of military and political appointees that saw a substantial number of the Hausa flushed out under the guise of restructuring. This was alleged to be in line with the plan of General T.Y. Danjuma, the Minister of Defence, that 30,000 military men and women would be demobilized to have a small but professional army. There was also the claim that an interdenominational service was organized by the Presidency for thanksgiving and spiritual carnival without regard to the multi-religious sensitivity of Nigeria; that there was the implementation of the *Afenifere* agenda and the execution of AD's programmes, as out of 49 ministers, 20 were Yoruba.<sup>74</sup>

The OPC saga raised several questions among Nigerians. To some it was an epitome of Yoruba arrogance and aggressive nationalism that perceived the victory in the 1999 polls as a triumph of southern democrats over northern oligarchists. Many northern leaders perceived the

'problem' of the Oodua People's Congress (OPC) as a manifestation of 'failure of the Yoruba to manage power.' The argument is that since 1959, the Yoruba political community (combining leaders and the politically mobilized masses) has, by being left out in the political rain, developed more skills in managing protests and opposition than in managing being in power ...<sup>75</sup>



The internal contradictions in Yorubaland could be described in terms of what Samuel Huntington calls, "consciousness without cohesion".<sup>76</sup> However, many Nigerians thought that the OPC threat was treated with "placative gestures."<sup>77</sup> In the OPC saga, Bola Tinubu seemed powerless due to the "dangerous constitutional lacuna which confers on a state governor the empty status of chief security officer, but effectively denies him the wherewithal to function as such."<sup>78</sup> President Obasanjo cautioned Governor Tinubu and the leaders of the southwest region on the menace of OPC to the nation.<sup>79</sup>

The OPC described the threat of the declaration of a State of Emergency in Lagos State as an attempt by the Hausa to govern Lagos through the use of emergency powers.<sup>80</sup> After the Ketu mayhem, Major General Adeyinka Adebayo observed that the OPC's, "aim was to foment trouble and destabilize the country."<sup>81</sup> Senator Wahab Dosumu, representing Lagos West, remarked that it was not correct to associate AD leaders with the actions of the OPC members and that the 114 people killed in Ketu were Lagosians irrespective of where they came from. He added that Governor Tinubu was incapacitated by the security structure in the country, which denied governors the power over the police.<sup>82</sup>

### **Tendentiousness of the Media**

Differential access to the media creates a wedge and animosity and allowed mistrust to thrive in the Hausa and Yoruba relations. The Hausa are contemptuous of the print media located in the southwest, which allegedly uses stereotypes to denigrate their culture and the religion of Islam. The Hausa relies on electronic media located in foreign capitals and broadcasted in Hausa to the exclusion of the Yoruba and other non-Hausa speakers. The disparity in the access to the media creates a wider communication gap and a deliberate distortion of facts on national issues. Indisputably, the radio has a broader reach and acceptability as the key communication channel in northern Nigeria and among the Hausa diaspora in Yorubaland and elsewhere. Hausa migrants in Yorubaland often listen to international radio broadcasts in Hausa such as the British Broadcasting Service (BBC), Hausa Service and the Voice of America (VOA) rather than radio stations broadcasting in Yoruba or English.<sup>83</sup> Radio listening has created communal affinity, solidarity and culture in the Hausa diaspora. Discrepant access to the media stimulates tension and suspicion through the spread of rumours and

distorted facts which often precipitate violence. It obstructs the prospect of dialogue and deepens the dichotomy of citizenship, rumour peddling and propaganda.

The elite in each of the regions has developed and perfected the medium of propaganda suitable and accessible to their kinsmen for easy mobilization. While the elite in the southwest rely on the indigenous print media, its counterpart in the north utilizes the foreign based electronic (radio) media that broadcast in Hausa. This prevents dialogue and exacerbates differences along regional, ethnic and religious divides, especially among the masses who are dogmatic about such propagandas. The media patronized by Nigerians act as tools of propaganda and provoke conflicts.

### **Power Shift: Yoruba and Hausa's New Encounter**

The euphoria that followed the return to democratic rule in May 1999 was shortlived as the nation became engulfed in internecine ethnic conflicts within a few months. There was a struggle for political power and equitable distribution of resources. The turn of the 20th century witnessed explosion in ethnic and religious identities with devastating consequences on the unity of Nigeria. In the southwest, the OPC epitomized militant ethnic identity, while in the north the introduction of *Sharī'ah* law marked the resurgence of theocracy, and in several instances stoked up religious fervour and violence. The intransigence of social groups to transcend the exclusionary boundaries of religion and ethnicity aggravated tension and triggered violence. There was a breakdown of social reciprocities of mutual tolerance spurred by political inequality and inter-group intolerance. Indeed, the OPC violence gathered more momentum with the changes taking place in some states of the north, the launching of the *Sharī'ah* in Zamfara State, which other states emulated. The OPC galvanized its call for autonomy as it considered the implication of the *Sharī'ah* as, "to your tents oh Israel." According to the Ani:

The imposition of Sharia law is widely viewed as a form of ethnic persecution by the mostly Christian southerners living in northern Nigeria. It has increased public backing in Lagos for the OPC's demand for political autonomy or even outright independence for south-western Nigeria.<sup>84</sup>



An increase in the number of cultural organizations among the Yoruba performing overlapping functions of promoting Yoruba unity/interest, but often clashing due to personal aggrandizement and disparaging political interests, was witnessed. The return to democratic government created a vent for the resurgence and reactivation of cultural associations among the Yoruba. According to the YCE:

Our own point of departure really was the fact that the Afenifere was said to be the Alliance for Democracy and we felt we needed a Pan-Yoruba organization that will not be partisan. This was what led to the creation of the YCE ... There are a lot of Yoruba socio-cultural organizations: You have the YCE, the Yoruba *Parapo*, the Oduduwa Assembly, and so on. They are providing leadership for the Yoruba people, for the young generation coming up.<sup>85</sup>

Dr Fredrick Fasheun noted that Afenifere is an umbrella Yoruba political organization while the OPC is a socio-cultural pressure group in Yorubaland.<sup>86</sup>

Ethnic conflicts between the Hausa and the Yoruba became inevitable due to the emergent political economy of democratic governance. The elite of the core north, the Hausa, perceived the Obasanjo's presidency as a betrayal of trust. It was alleged that Obasanjo was determined to reverse the trend of history – the gains of the northerners under military rule. They had overwhelmingly supported Obasanjo due to his performance between 1976 and 1979. He was considered the “material for national cohesion, fairness, equal opportunity and a sense of belonging within the Nigerian polity.”<sup>87</sup> Indeed, the Yoruba political establishment exercised much doubt about the transition programme and the candidature of Obasanjo.<sup>88</sup>

Obasanjo's policies were perceived as that of *Afenifere* agenda that is anti-core north in all its ramifications. According to Wada Nas, the *Afenifere* agenda of the Obasanjo administration reflected in the steady elimination of the Hausa in the economy – award of contracts, the purge in the military, lack of trust for the Hausa in sensitive national positions and appointments of Christian northerners and the marginalization of the north in the civil service.

In this context, Obasanjo's presidency was a battlefield characterized by interest aggregation, power contestations among the political blocs and internecine rivalry among the power elite. Obasanjo encountered

the twin excesses and arrogance of the Afenifere and the northern oligarchy, which is made up of the Kaduna Mafia, Turaki Committee, and the Northern Elders Forum. The northern oligarchy's power base was not ethnicity but regionalism and sectionalism. Yoruba oligarchy is ethnic chauvinism characterized by anachronism, quest for absolute power and autocratic. These features boomeranged on the Afenifere, as the organization witnessed internal crisis, intrigues and separatist tendencies. The weakness of the Afenifere in providing the required leadership inadvertently paved the way for unprecedented youth vagrancy and militarism.

### Conclusion

This study elucidated that the claims of exclusion from the state and the economy culminated in the fostering of ethnic consciousness and violence. The conflicts between the Hausa and the Yoruba have in some ways debunked the marginalization thesis that skewed the minority question in ethnic terms and number-game. There are also political minorities. Marginalization cannot be therefore interpreted in ethnic terms but in terms of access to power and resources. The collective inability to make a shift in political discourse from mundane/parochial issues of statism, power shift, zoning and quota system reduced the national discourse to sentimental issues. These created a breeding ground for ethno religious sentiments and secessionist consciousness. The elite's cry of marginalization has been used for power bargaining which occasionally led to conflagrations and ethnocentrism. The phenomenon of ethnic marginalization was used in the contest for political power and conflicts. The elite manipulated the historic rivalries between the Hausa and the Yoruba to create ethnic intolerance and conflicting tendencies.



**Endnotes**

- 1 The author acknowledges the funding of the research project by the Independent Research Trust, USA and the profound support of its entire staff and board of trustees. Malam Ibrahim Muazzam, former Acting Director of the Centre for Research and Documentation (CRD) Kano was generous in providing valuable documents indispensable for this research. I thank all my interlocutors whose unwavering support enabled me complete the research for this paper.
- 2 Y. Popov (1984), *Essays in Political Economy: Imperialism and the Developing Countries*, Moscow: Progress Publishers, p. 49.
- 3 Popov, pp. 48 – 49.
- 4 Popov, p. 50.
- 5 Mustapha 2004, p. 167.
- 6 P. Bardhan (1996), *Method in the Madness? A Political-Economy Analysis of Ethnic Conflict in Less Developed Countries*. Working Paper No. C96-070, Centre for International and Development Economics Research, University of California, Berkeley, cited by Mustapha, 2004, p. 167.
- 7 J.M. Mbaku (2001), "Ethnicity, Constitutionalism, and Governance in Africa" in J.M. Mbaku, P.O. Agbese and M.S. Kimenyi (eds.), *Ethnicity and Governance in the Third World*. Burlington: Ashgate, pp. 59 – 99.
- 8 Mbaku, p. 59.
- 9 Mbaku, p. 60.
- 10 Mbaku, p. 61.
- 11 Mbaku, p. 62.
- 12 Mbaku, p.65.
- 13 Mbaku, p.65.
- 14 L. Lugard (1922), *The Dual Mandate in British Tropical Africa*, p. 506.
- 15 A. Osuntokun (1979), *Nigeria in the First World War*. London: Longman, p. 119.
- 16 Osuntokun, p. 119.
- 17 F.T. Shaw (1905), p. 439.
- 18 Shaw, p. 441.
- 19 Osuntokun, p. 119.
- 20 Osuntokun, p. 124.

- 21 I.B. Jose (1987), *Walking A Tight Rope: Power Play in Daily Times*. Ibadan: University Press Limited, p. 48.
- 22 Jose, p. 206.
- 23 Jose, pp. 47 and 48.
- 24 O. Nnoli (1978), *Ethnic Politics in Nigeria*. Enugu: Fourth Dimension Publishers, p. 71.
- 25 Nnoli, p. 87.
- 26 Ifidon, 2003, p. 24.
- 27 Ifidon, p. 13.
- 28 A.H.M. Kirk-Green, 1971, *Crisis and Conflict in Nigeria: A Documentary Sourcebook: 1966-1970*. London: Oxford University Press, p. 9.
- 29 P.P. Ekeh (2004), "Minorities and the Evolution of Federalism", in A.A.B. Agbaje, L. Diamond and E. Onwudiwe (eds.), *Nigeria's Struggle for Democracy and Good Governance: A Festschrift for Oyeleye Oyediran*. Ibadan: Ibadan University Press, p. 26.
- 30 M. Mamdani (2004), *Good Muslim, Bad Muslim: America, the Cold War, and the Roots of Terror*. Dakar: CODESRIA Book Series, p. 3.
- 31 Mamdani, p. 4.
- 32 P.O. Agbese (2001), "Managing Ethnic Relations in a Heterogenous Society: The Case of Nigeria", in J.M. Mbaku, Pita Ogaba Agbese and M.S. Kimenyi, (eds.), *Ethnicity and Governance in the Third World*. Burlington: Ashgate, p. 128.
- 33 Ekeh, p. 26.
- 34 R.L. Sklar (2004), "Foundations of Federal Government in Nigeria", in A.A.B. Agbaje, L. Diamond and E. Onwudiwe (eds.), *Nigeria's Struggle for Democracy and Good Governance: A Festschrift for Oyeleye Oyediran*. Ibadan: University Press, p. 7.
- 35 Sklar, p. 12.
- 36 Mbaku, p. 67.
- 37 Agbese, p. 127.
- 38 T. Falola (1986), p. 7.
- 39 O. Awolowo (1947), p. 32.
- 40 Awolowo, p. 48.
- 41 Falola, p. 2.
- 42 Awolowo, p. 3.
- 43 Jose, p. 32.



- 44 L. Adedibu (1997), *What I Saw on the Politics and Governance of Ibadan land and the Issue of June 12th, 1993*. Ibadan: H.U.A Nigeria Limited, p. 209.
- 45 Akintola, p. 67.
- 46 Chief Awolowo had hosted Sir Tafawa Balewa on 17 October 1957 on AG's participation in the National Government and Saradauna on 19 March 1959 on the attainment of independence by the Federation of Nigeria.
- 47 Jose, p. 206.
- 48 Adedibu, p. 362.
- 49 Akintola, p. 101.
- 50 S.A. Sodimu (1999), *Abraham Adesanya: The Unbowed Democrat*. Lagos: Multigraph Printers and Associates, p. 59.
- 51 Sodimu, p. 72.
- 52 "Yoruba Autonomy Certificate." Text of Speech made by General Alani Akinrinade at the official launching of the Egbe Omo Oduduwa in Washington DC, 2 May 1998.
- 53 M.S. Kimenyi (2001), "Harmonizing Ethnic Claims in Africa: A Proposal for Ethnic-based Federalism" ... p. 102.
- 54 P. Hamza, "Northern Unity: Whose Responsibility", in *New Nigeria Weekly*, 22 June 2002, p. 17.
- 55 H. Aruna, "With Divided Agenda, Yoruba Search for a Leader", in *Daily Independent*, 4 May 2005, p. C1.
- 56 Aruna, p. C3.
- 57 Bascom, 1969.
- 58 A. Williams, "The Mustapha Jokolo Affairs", in *Africa Today*, July 2005, p. 9.
- 59 Nwabueze, p. 106.
- 60 David-West, 2002.
- 61 David-West, 2002.
- 62 S. Adejumobi (2003), p. 172.
- 63 Adejumobi, p. 172.
- 64 Clifford Ndujihe, "National Conference: Glimses of a Likely Yoruba Agenda", in *The Guardian*, 24/1/2005, pp. 8 and 9.
- 65 K. Mairer, 1999, "Nigeria: A Second Chance?" in [http://www.unhcr.ch/refworld/country/writenet/wn14\\_99.htm](http://www.unhcr.ch/refworld/country/writenet/wn14_99.htm) p. 12.
- 66 Adejumonbi, 2003, p. 172.

- 67 G. Adams (2003), "Politics and Agenda of Ethnic Militias: The Case of OPC", p. 96.
- 68 B. Onakoya, "Northern Elders Endorse APC", in *Nigerian Tribune*, 21 January 2000, pp. 1 and 2.
- 69 I. Muhammed, "If you OPC us, We Shall APC you", in *Triumph*, 16 January 2000, p. 7.
- 70 B. Opeseitan, "How APC Plans to Strike", in *Nigerian Tribune*, 27 January 2000, pp. 1 and 2.
- 71 Opeseitan, pp. 1 and 2.
- 72 A. Ayodele, "North Jittery Over OPC", in *Sunday Tribune*, 15 January 2000, p. 4.
- 73 T. Obateru, "Plateau Youths Vow to Resist Planned APC Launching", in *Vanguard*, 8 February 2000.
- 74 Ibrahim Halilu Ibrahim, "Obasanjo Has Committed Impeachable Offences – Alhaji Sagir", interview in *Crystal*, November 1999.
- 75 O. Oculi, "Between PDP and OPC", in *The Guardian* January 5th, 2000, p. 41.
- 76 S.P. Huntington (1998), *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*. London: Touchstone Paperback Edition. Various accounts described President Obasanjo, the governors of the southwest, the Inspector-General of Police, Mr Musiliu Smith and the Police Affairs Minister, Major-General David Jemibewon (rtd) as OPC Godfathers. See Augsten Adamu, "Obasanjo is OPC Godfather Senators Allege", in *Daily Champion*, 21 January 2000, pp. 1 and 2.
- 77 "You Are Wrong Sir, Tinubu Replies", in *Saturday Champion*, 15 January 2000, p. 38.
- 78 "Obasanjo Writes Tinubu on OPC", in *Saturday Champion*, 15 January 2000, p. 38.
- 79 N. Francis, "OPC Leaders Meet in Kenya", in *Thisday*, 3 November 2000, p. 3.
- 80 *The Guardian*, 30 November 1999, p. 80.
- 81 A. Dunia, "Senate Moves to Probe OPC," in *New Nigerian*, 20 January 2000, pp. 1 and 2.
- 82 A. Tijani (2001, Draft copy), *Sabo Communities in Yorubaland in Historical Perspective, 1916 – 1967* (Phd Thesis: University of Ilorin), p. 239.



- 83 C. McGreal, "Nigeria's Ethnic Hatred Turn Lethal", 20 October 2000.
- 84 K. Olajide, "Our Goal is a Common Yoruba" – Acting Secretary of the Yoruba Council of Elders, YCE – *Igbimo Agba Yoruba*, in *Sunday Independent*, 14 November 2004, p. C9.
- 85 I. Ani, "Yorubas will Secede If ..." Interview with Dr Fredrick Fasheun, proprietor of Best Hope Clinic Mushin, in *Crystal*, August, 1999, p. 16.
- 86 Alhaji Wada Nas, "Obasanjo and the Afeniferes versus the Core North", in *New Nigerian*, July 1, 1999, p. 6.
- 87 B. Ige, "Foreword" to S.A. Sodimu (1999), *Abraham Adesanya: The Unbowed Democrat*. Lagos: Multigraph Printers and Associates.

UNIVERSITY OF IBADAN LIBRARY