

THE LOWER NIGER AND THE REALITY OF 2015
Being the Text of the Key Note Address of
FRED AGBEYEGBE, ESQ., President, Lower Niger Congress
at the Press Conference of the Congress on Monday 20th April, 2015
at the ... Hotel, Ikoyi, Lagos.

Even though many disputations around our constitutional foundation remain unattended to and particularly without any hope of federalism being ushered in into Nigeria, Nigeria has, once again, had an Election, which the international community with their so-called interest in the workings of Democracy, have adjudged peaceful, free and fair, from reports submitted by their appointed observers.

We are, nevertheless, compelled to observe that, even if the rest of the world cannot see through the facade of a penchant for Democracy, we, the ethnic nationalities, minorities, owners of the resources, victims of and for whose sake the Nigerian brand of Democracy was wrought, are aware that their commercial interests in a “peaceful” Nigeria, overrides any pretended interest in Democracy.

Why else should the European Union and the United States of America, the citadels of the principles of equality, equity, fairness and justice, accept rules of Democracy couched from a slavery-enacting document like the 1999 Nigerian Constitution imposed by one group in Nigeria over all else who had no participation in its

making and from whence comes the Nigerian notion of Democracy, considering that that Constitution is the instrument mandating the Elections they come to Nigeria to observe?

Perhaps it is better left to posterity to ponder Foreign Secretary Kerry's goading to quick Elections in Nigeria in the same 2015, in which, based upon knowledge that so many ethnicities are entrapped in its slavery, some other Americans predict that 2015 would usher in the death of Nigeria as a nation state. For our part, the writing is now on all walls, that it is time that those of us entrapped in the Lower Niger, the area more at the receiving end of Nigeria's feudalistic system driven by the 1999 Constitution, should, soonest, examine our obviously un-abating status of slaves.

REASONS

- 1. The practice of Democracy in Nigeria proceeds from the slavery-enacting 1999 Constitution.**
- 2. The only aspect of Nigerian Democracy only partly in tandem with the notion in the European Union and the United States of America, the originators of the notion, is the word Majority. Whereas the minority may not even have its say; the majority must always have their way.**

3. The only aspect of Democracy Nigeria is interested in is its notion of majority having its way so they can decide the fate of the occupants of the Lower Niger, occupy their lands, issue licences to foreigners to exploit its resources and sell and share the proceeds.
4. It is only at Elections mandated by the slavery-enacting 1999 Constitution that opinions upon the fate of the Lower Niger can be aired.
5. All evidence point to the fact that the 1999 Constitution is a devilish masterly crafted and skewed document which, whilst it mandates very nauseating and oppressive protocols, not even Angels can operate let alone break its shackles.

Examples:

Not even the son of the Lower Niger, President Goodluck Ebele Jonathan, having sworn an Oath to Protect, Preserve, Administer and Defend the 1999 Constitution, was able to break its shackles.

- i. Against the background of the prevalence of the view that all the problems destabilising Nigeria emanate from the 1999 Constitution, President Jonathan heeded the long standing demands for a National Conference by the promulgation of a National Conference. It was hoped that for the first

time, the owners of the Nigerian land mass and the resources therein, its ethnic nationalities, would be given the opportunity to fashion out a New Constitution with federalism ingrained therein.

Not only were the ethnic nationalities and particularly those who had grouses about the unacceptability of the 1999 Constitution deliberately kept largely out of the Conference in preference for those who attended to mock and trivialise the notion of the Conference; the Conference was also rigged against them in order to prevent them agitating for changes in the status quo. The President in his Inaugural Address at the Conference said: "if it is necessary to write a new Constitution, then, so be it." That did not happen even though the need for a new Constitution was staring everybody and the Nation in the face. But our Son, President Jonathan failed completely and allowed Market Women, Bricklayers, Professionals and Trade Unionists to decide our destinies in a sham National Conference that achieved nothing protective of our interests.

- ii. **Recently, Nigeria was at cross roads on the issue of whether or not INEC's postponement of an Election should continue. The President constituted a National Council of State to advise. It was the putting on exhibition the audacious high and the mighty who epitomised the principle of one law for the high and another for the low. At the high point of their audacity, they were accountable to no one, played their game of musical chairs coups with impunity and were, by and large, the creators of the present Nigerian dilemma since after Independence and not only were they not sanctioned, they also got immunity in the same 1999 Constitution. In the event, they constitute the most formidable group who would forever work against a new Constitution for obvious reasons:**
 - a. **General Abdusalam Abubakar; a coupist successor "Head of State"- who blatantly termed a Constitution containing Unitary provisions "Federal Constitution";**

who lied on the pages of the 1999 Constitution that it was given by all Nigerians to themselves.

- b. General Mohammadu Buhari, -
who became Head of State by coupling a Head of State, Alhaji Shehu Shagari, chosen by Nigerians through the ballot box;
who had made laws and jailed Nigerian journalists for telling the truth;
who, after his kith and kin had promised to make Nigeria ungovernable for the victor, had given impetus to Boko Haram by not being sportsmanlike enough to accept defeat after losing the 2011 Election.
- c. General Ibrahim Babangida: who couped General Buhari; ; who annulled the election of MKO Abiola elected by Nigerians through the ballot box; who unilaterally and single-handedly substituted Earnest Sonekan who contested no election for MKO who did;
- d. Earnest Sonekan, a Lawyer, whose Government an un-appealed and still subsisting Nigerian Court of Law Judgment declared was an illegal government and yet,

has always been invited and has always attended the National Council of State Meetings at tax payer's expense.

- 6. Not even a myriad of elections can resolve our peculiar circumstances, the simple reason being that we have come to the conclusion that politicians and their elections cannot bring us the respite we need.**

- 7. It is fundamental to every Constitutional Instrument that it should contain checks and balances protecting the essence of its constituent parts. Not only does the 1999 Constitution have no constituent parts, being only one instrument, if the reasons for not signing his accent given by the President are correct; i.e. if even the modicum enshrined in 1999 Constitution, few as they are, are now affronted in the manner suggested by the President, resulting in his refusal to execute same; then it cannot be far into the future that, one day, we will all wake up to find that our over-ambitious controllers of other people's lives parading themselves as our fellow countrymen, have decreed that all those they dislike be sent to the gallows.**

We have no doubt in our minds that non action on our part or leaving our fate in the hands of our politicians, will for ever

consign us to the yoke of the predatory will of British imperialists, the admonitions of Inspirator, Sir Ahmadu Bello, through to the most recent pronouncements of the inheritors of Sir Ahmadu's legacy; as captured in their avowed sentiments below:

"We have released Northern Nigeria from the leading strings of the Treasury. The promising and well conducted youth is now on an allowance of his own and is about to effect an alliance with a Southern lady of means. I have issued the special license and Sir Fredrick Lugard will perform the ceremony. May the union be fruitful and the couple constant". Secretary of the Colonies, Lord Harcourt, boss of Fredrick Lugard, referring to the import and purport of the annexation of then Protectorate of Southern Nigeria with the then Protectorate of Northern Nigeria, Cablegram of 31st December 1913.

2, "The new Nation called Nigeria should be an estate of our great-grandfather Uthman Dan Fodio. We must ruthlessly prevent a change of power. We use the minorities of the North as willing tools and the South as a conquered territory and never allow them to rule over us and never allow them to have control over their future" Premier of Northern Nigeria, Sir Ahmadu Bello, Parrot Newspapers, 12th October, 1960.

- 1. In 1992, a leading Northerner said: "In this country, all of us need one another. Hausa need Igbos, Igbos need Yoruba and the Yorubas need the Northerners. Everyone has a gift from God. Northerners are endowed by God with leadership qualities. The Yoruba man knows how to earn a living and has diplomatic qualities. The Igbo is**

gifted in commerce, trade and technological innovation. God so created us individually for a purpose and with different gifts. Others are created as kings, students and doctors. We all need each other. If there are no followers, a king will not exist; if there are no students, a teacher will not be required."

The member of the "ruling class" that engaged in establishing this Nigerian caste system and occupational categorisation, did not even mention any of the other ethnic nationalities since they were obviously of no consequence.

2. In 1993, a Southerner won an Election; it was annulled and the Southerner was eventually killed in Prison.
3. In 1999, a Northern Head of State imposed a Constitution upon the Country and lied on the pages of the imposed Constitution that all of Nigeria gave the "Constitution" to themselves. Meanwhile that Constitution, by its provisions, perpetually ensures that Ahmadu Bello's Battle Script is observed to the letter.
4. In 2009 a Northern legislator, Bala N'Allah, told the House of Representatives: "What is happening in the Niger Delta is pure criminality of the highest order, arising from total disregard for constituted authority. In Iraq, thousands of people lost their lives because of an

insurrection against the government during the reign of former Iraqi leader, Saddam Hussein. We can do away with 20 million militants for the rest 120 million Nigerians to live.”

“Militants” are Southerners fighting to retrieve their sovereignty and control over their God-given Resources.

5. In 2011, when a Lower Niger Southerner won a Presidential Election, he was promised by some Northerners that the Country will be made ungovernable for him. Thereafter, a Northern Terror Group waxed stronger and stronger committing acts of horrendous terror.

Behold, even though that threat was carried out to the letter on the backdrop of claims by Northerners that they are the ones born to rule, alas, the enacted impediments to governance did not feature in the consideration of the self-appointed assessors of performance.

It is as difficult to fathom the reason and or motive for these inflammatory declarations against supposedly fellow countrymen as it is difficult see what they are meant to achieve. Are they the product of contempt for the minorities and owners of the lands and the resources under them? Are they made to provoke anger that would justify a jihad so that the battle superiority of the makers can be settled once and for all? What is most baffling of all, and it is becoming like the story of Boko Haram, are we to

believe that there is no voice up North that command respect enough to call for a halt?

On the chance that it is the outcome of ignorance as to neighbourly behaviour, perhaps it will be worthwhile to have retorts to two of the rumoured last stand of the provokers in the matter of ownership of the oil under the Lower Niger soil and river base. "The oil offshore the Sea fronts of the Lower Niger belongs to the North because it was granted Nigeria by International Law of the Sea which grant depends on the size of the country and since the North commands ownership of the North, the oil belongs to the North". May be, but that does not take into consideration that if the Lower Niger ceases, for whatever reason, to be part of Nigeria, that reasoning falls flat on its face.

Or is it the one that says that "oil owners should take their oil so that land owners can take their lands and charge rent for it; including Abuja". With all due respect, there is no argument more flippant. If the provokers cannot see that the oil owners would, if invited, here and now, change peace that includes their oil, for Abuja; then they need to put on another thinking cap. The retorts are not to regard the contemptible and dehumanising statements from our fellow countrymen as unserious jokes; that surmise would certainly be to the detriment of the Lower Niger.

Rather than dissipate energy and time crystal gazing for reasons for unprovoked animosity, it is better in the situation that the Lower Niger is in, to remember and ponder the facts that:

- 1. The Yoruba Nation that could be looked to for insisting upon what is right, has been split into factions with outward evidence that the game of seeking and insisting upon equality, equity, fairness, justice and the control of one's own destiny afforded by federalism, has been lost, even in Yoruba Land;**
- 2. Our Chiefs merely look on, waiting for Politicians and Presidents from dry land to teach them how to swim in their own waters and rivers and how to not protect their ethnic patrimonies in the name of forging a Nigeria that suites other peoples' fancies except their own;**
- 3. Our politicians, especially because of their quest for lucre, that unfortunate determinant that suggest which company they keep, have demonstrated their crass inability to protect our interests against the onslaught of predators, and considering that their number is less than 1% of our total population; ideas of what to do and how to do, must leave their court.**
- 4. Our restive youths now believe that we must have come into some hidden pact which, either out of shame or for whatever reason, we have refused or been unable to explain to them why we accept our plight; especially in the pompous way in**

which our fellow countrymen talk down at us about their superiority;

And remember that it will be foolhardy to anticipate any change in their classification as “slaves and second-class citizens” by those who claim the right to rule and therefore have a duty to themselves and their posterity to decide whether to continue to subscribe to a system detrimental to their interests, since time is running out for us. Lamentations must, from now on, be a solution of the past. There is need to convene, soonest, a Solemn Assembly, to determine our fate and I so urge the Lower Niger. Long live the peoples of the Lower Niger.



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