

Anambra and the Failure of a Nation.

"Anambra and the Failure of a Nation." *Africa News Service* 3 May 2007. *General OneFile*. Web. 28 Sept. 2010.

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Lagos, May 03, 2007 (Vanguard/All Africa Global Media via COMTEX) -- EXCEPT for the absence of standards in our schools, every secondary school boy should know the story of Nigeria before October 1, 1960. The British had forcefully taken control of the country in the name of colonialism, by which the resources of the country were greedily appropriated by the colonialist. While colonialism lasted, Nigerians were treated like second-class citizens in their country, because they did not have a say on how they were governed. If you do thorough studies of those turbulent times, you will be convinced that Nigerians of those days despised colonialism, but were helpless in the face of colonialist's superior fire power.

Most Nigerians that had the privilege of overseas education came home with the pollen of freedom, which soon germinated throughout the country. Thus, the cry for independence became intensified.

With the growing consciousness of freedom and independence, especially within the United Nations, the 60s witnessed the granting of independence to many African countries. No doubt, the resistance of the nationalists was also a contributing factor. In line with global happenings, Nigeria got her own independence on October 1, 1960. With independence, freedom was born: the birth of self-determination. Nigeria was liberated as a nation from the deadly shackles of colonialism and she became the master and mistress of her affairs, with her policies stage-managed by her sons and daughters. It was the greatest liberation for the actualization of the people's potentialities. The high ambition of the liberated Nigeria was to transform herself into a developed nation in no distant time. Now that we are in the 46th year of our independence, we ought to have proved our mettle in the task of self-governance.

However, evaluating our journey so far, I wish to state that Nigeria was not quite prepared for independence. If the country were still under the colonial rule till today, perhaps it would have been better for everybody. If we are not capable of self-governance as the unfolding events suggest, at least we should have been humble enough to admit that. I am quite aware that these may sound unpatriotic to some people, especially those of us who pretend to be more Nigerian than others. This class of people include those who see themselves along the corridors of power and carry on as if they took part with Lord Lugard in founding Nigeria many years ago.

Let us face it: What, in all honesty, do we have to point at as that remarkable achievement we have recorded since independence? Nothing! It has remained the history of degenerative looseness, lack of basic infrastructure, intrigues and political hooliganism. Most of the facilities this country had under colonial government are, rather than being improved upon, degenerating. Once in a while, when a genuine patriot accidentally gets into the position of governance, the forces of darkness will go after him.

When the colonialist were here, the railway was a recognised mode of transportation, but now, it is completely dead. Most of the cities we are proud of in Nigeria today, perhaps excepting Abuja, were all developed by the colonialists. Talking about Abuja, the money used by our people to develop it would have been used by the colonialists to develop about four of that city.

Look at some of our young states and see the chaos being built in the name of cities. What is even annoying is that rather than leave the achievement of the colonialists if we cannot improve on them, we distort them and make them lose their aesthetic credentials. A typical example of these is the Railway Compound at Ebute Metta, Lagos. A beautifully planned place with a lot of spaces that give it a natural and inviting look. Courtesy of Nigerians, the spaces are gone and houses have started to crowd together suggesting that the place is being tampered with by bedlam.

Even to conduct simple elections, we have completely failed. Sometimes you wonder why our leaders behave as if they do not have the interest of the people at heart. With what happened recently in the country, especially in Anambra State, you are really left to wonder where we are going to. It is not essentially about particular individuals, but about the misplacement of what ought to be edifying priorities. Why on earth could somebody witness what happened in Anambra and in good conscience say that elections took place? Some of us think it is all about enthroning an individual who has been variously referred to as the anointed one or the Emperor's son and the personal gain derivable therefrom.

What happened in Anambra, and by extension, the entire country betrays our sense of honour and propriety. How can somebody comfortably answer the Governor or the President on the basis of April 14th and 21st charades? But even as we wonder, some have started to gleefully refer to themselves as governors-elect. This tells you that some have passed the stage of worrying about grave illegal and immoral conditions.

I pity other states that do not have ready solutions to what I call full-grown madness in the system. As for us in Anambra State, Peter Obi's case is capable of settling at least the gubernatorial confusion. Certainly Dr. Chris Ngige and co. will seek the nullification of the charade called elections. It is only the court that can stop all these gyrations by granting Obi his constitutionally guaranteed four years. The judiciary has not disappointed thus far.

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Gale Document Number:A162978014