

JANUARY 01, 1914. DAY OF NIGERIAN AMALGAMATION:

YORUBA DAY OF REGRET, YORUBA DAY OF REFLECTION.

The 1914 amalgamation of British named Northern and Southern protectorates of the areas north and south of the River Niger will forever remain a dark day of infamy in Yoruba history. On this day, without consulting us or seeking our mandate, Yoruba was unilaterally joined with some strange tribes and peoples to form a nebulous union called *Nigeria*.

The Yoruba Nation totally and completely rejects the *Amalgamation of Nigeria* treaty of January 01, 1914. We emphatically declare its abrogation and annulment.

There were only 28 persons involved in the so-called “amalgamation” of January, 1914. While 6 persons were Nigerians, the rest (22) were British, including Frederick Lugard himself, the architect of the amalgamation and the first Governor General, Lewis Harcourt (the secretary of state for the British colonies, and other European officers in charge of the two Protectorates.

The following were the ONLY NATIVES officially involved in the amalgamation ceremony:

- A lawyer, Sir Kitoyi Ajasa (**YORUBA**)
- His Highness, Siyanbola Onikepe Oladigbolu I, Alaafin of Oyo (**YORUBA**)
- Hon. R Henshaw (Obong of Calabar) (**EFIK**)
- Hon. Maiturare (Sarkin Mussulumi and Sultan of Sokoto) (**FULANI**)
- Hon. Abubakar (Shehu of Borno) (**KANURI**)
- Hon. Usuman (Emir of Kano) (**FULANI**)

No person of Yoruba extraction signed it. Only two Yoruba sons were present at the obnoxious charade; *Oba Siyanbola Onikepe Ladigbolu, the Alafin of Oyo* (1911 -1944) and *Sir Kitoyi Ajasa*, a Lagos lawyer (representing the African community in Lagos as a Legislative Council member of the Colony since 1902). They were not part of the signatories. The British represented themselves on both sides, and signed the documents on their behalves. Therefore the document does not bind us, in any form, whatsoever.

You should observe that there was more Fulani/Northern presence than any other “Nigerians” in the signage. The “pact” between the British and the Northern Fulani Oligarchy had been sealed for over a century and what we complain of today should never be a surprise to anyone who knows history. We are merely slaves living out the dreams and arrangements of unconcerned bourgeoisies, the British and the Fulani imperialists!

So Nigeria must be recognized as a business interest which the British imperialists, a foreign people, bequeathed to their partners, the Fulani Imperialists, also a foreign people, upon their camouflaged departure from Nigeria, in 1960, to safeguard and to use for the mutual interests of both.

The indigenous people, and the actual owners of the land, were never intended to be part of the equation.

Sadly, the Yoruba are part of the exploited, oppressed victims who are just realizing that they have no power in the land of their ancestors!

From that day, 107 years ago, the yoke of oppression, repression and forced labour had been placed on us, the Yoruba.

In the words of Lugard, "The North, largely dependent on a grant from the Imperial government, was barely able to balance its budget with the most parsimonious economy, and was starved of the necessary staff, and was unable to find funds to house its staff properly. Its energies were concentrated upon the development of the Native Administration and the revenue resulting from direct taxation. Its distance from the coast (250 miles) rendered its expansion of trade difficult. Thus the anomaly was presented of a country with aggregate revenue practically equal to its needs, but divided into two by an arbitrary line of latitude. One portion depended on a grant paid by the British taxpayer, which in the year before amalgamation stood at Pds 136,000=, while the other made an ever increasing revenue of Pds 1,138,000= in the same year.

What is critical and important are the reasons Lugard gave in his dispatches. They are as follows: He said the North is poor and they have no resources to run the protectorate of the North. That they have no access to the sea; and that the South has resources and educated peoples"

The British needed the Railway from the North to the Coast in the interest of British business. Amalgamation of the South (not of the people) became of crucial importance to British business interest. For this, the North and the South must be amalgamated.

Prior to this period, we the Yoruba (as separate sub units) had signed series of **treaties of trade and cooperation** with the British. We never **signed treaties of conquest and subjugation**. Certainly, we never ever signed the treaty of amalgamation with any non-Yoruba peoples!

But the British, through Lugard, unilaterally abrogated these treaties without any consultation with the Yoruba peoples of the various sub-units. Hear him:

"The position of the former "Lagos protectorate" was complicated by the existence of so many treaties and agreements." The Egba treaty of 1893 purported (imagine the word!) to guarantee the independence of the tribe, on the condition that they encouraged trade and Christian missions ... The treaties with the Yoruba, and with the many small tribes and "crowned kings," as they were called, (another condescending statement) were less explicit. Notwithstanding these treaties, the whole of the Lagos hinterland was declared a protectorate. Just like that!

That was a coup! A brigandage of the first order. And they stole a country, the Yoruba country, and our future, since then!

While other colonial powers, such as the Portuguese, became involved in the region by way of the slave trade as early as the fifteenth century, the British arrived in force only in the eighteenth century. It was

not until 1861 that they formally occupied their first Nigerian territory, Lagos, in a pretentious bid to “protect Christian converts and trading interests”, and to “further their anti-slavery campaign”. In 1884, the British occupied what would later become the Southern Protectorate and the Northern Protectorate piecemeal from 1900 to 1903. By 1903, the British controlled the territory that comprises modern-day Nigeria, but as three separate administrative blocks.

As early as 1898, the British considered combining the then-three protectorates to reduce the administrative burden on the British and allow the rich south to effectively subsidize the much less economically prosperous north. (The Lagos colony was later incorporated into the Southern Nigeria Protectorate for budgetary reasons). This is what Lord Lugard was referring to in his infamous description of how a marriage between the “rich wife of substance and means” (the south) and the “poor husband” (the north) would lead to a happy life for both. (Some have suspected that Lugard was also referring to the political supremacy of the north over the south). Rather than a happy life for both, what we have reaped have been death, despoliation and destruction!

It was this rickety contraption that was forcefully dragged to independence in 1960 with the British surreptitious planning to maintain control through their surrogates, the Fulani usurpers. This damning arrangement has survived till today under many guises.

It is therefore the eternal, unwavering duty of every Yoruba person to break this yoke and to join the movement to establish a Yoruba nation.

It is the mission of every Yoruba son and daughter to totally and completely reject the ***Amalgamation of Nigeria*** treaty of January 01, 1914.

Every constitution drafted since that constitution has been engineered to preserve the status quo, as with the 1979 constitution, as well as with its junior brother, the infamous, rabidly notorious 1999 variant.

This underscores the point why the Yoruba have joined other tribes of the South and the Middle Belt to declare “Force Majeure” and a sovereignty dispute with Nigeria over the 1999 constitution.

It is an abomination for managers of a company to take over the business from the owners, and then tie up the owners as their captive slaves. But that is what has happened in Nigeria. Over the years, government (represented by the Fulani and the British) who are just the managers, have seized power from the owners of the land, that is, the indigenous peoples. This has created a Nigeria that is the poverty capital of the world, that is retarding rather than developing, unable to develop its infrastructure, that is afflicted with genocide and terrorism, and that is essentially a failed state.

Things are so frightening and unsafe that recently the USA cautioned its citizens against travelling to Nigeria at all. Clearly, Nigeria is not being run for the benefit of its people. Therefore, the indigenous ethnic nationalities of the Middle Belt and South (NINAS) came together and declared a Constitutional Force Majeure (CFM) over a Sovereignty Dispute thus:

A) When did we submit ourselves, our lands, and our assets into such a Union?

B) When did we make for ourselves the 1999 Constitution?

This is where the 1914 amalgamation, which formalized all of us as captive slaves of the British, and by extension, the Fulani has led us.

We must break the yoke and leave the moribund union to form our own nation!

Opeoluwa G. Akinola

Secretary General, ILANA OMO OODUA