

# **One Hundred Years of Nigerian Nationhood: Drifting from Amalgamation to Armageddon**

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**Abstract:** *The history of modern Nigeria is often tied to the 1914 Amalgamation episode, under which the Northern and Southern Protectorates were unified to create the Nigerian entity. However, events since 1914 have shown that the area has been drifting from a supposedly unified nation towards a state of anarchy, which the paper describes as Armageddon. Data obtained from primary and secondary sources were deployed to carry out the study with an analytical and narrative historical method. Findings indicate that this trend has been as a result of the episodes that occurred in the area up to the eve of amalgamation as well as the inability of the architects of the amalgamation process to build and cement what could be described as a truly united nation. The paper concludes therefore that if the country must avoid Armageddon, there is the need to take into consideration the arduous, stumbling and protracted practice of social adjustment as well as the need to truly address issues that take into consideration the people, their feeling and how they relate to the processes of inter/intra group relations instead of the magical theory and wand waving method of making nationhood.*

**Keywords:** *Nigeria, Amalgamation, Armageddon, History*

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## **1. INTRODUCTION**

Nigeria has an estimated population of 170 million. With this, the Federal Republic of Nigeria is the tenth most populous country in the world, and the most populous African nation on earth. Nigeria's territory of 923.7 thousand square kilometers amounts to less than 3% of the total territory of the African continent. But, it has within it, up to 25% of the continent's total population (Usman and Abba, 2005).

The study of Nigerian History in recent times has produced a number of themes for the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries. The best known of these themes are those which have to do with the enormous increase of European activity in the region during the period (particularly the last hundred years). This can only be appreciated more when scholars look back into the history of the region from the late 1850s when the people began to experience direct contact and activities of the Europeans. From the perspective of the West African sub region, the conquest and partition dominates the century, and the implication is that the significant force for change in this period was the activities of the Europeans to which the indigenous peoples reacted. The great practical pre-occupation of the present day with problems arising from European domination in West Africa, moreover, reinforces the importance attached to the historical development of European influence and political encroachment.

## **2. CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATION**

Generally the term Armageddon is used in the religious circle basically among Christians and Muslims. In the Christian circle the word "Armageddon" appears only once in the Greek New Testament, in the book of Revelation 16:16. Armageddon will be, according to the Book of Revelation, the site of gathering of armies for a battle during the end times, variously interpreted as either a literal or symbolic location. The term is also used in a generic sense to refer to any end of the world scenario. In the Islamic world with specific reference to the Ahmadiyya, Armageddon is viewed as a spiritual battle or struggle in the present age between the forces of good, i.e. righteousness, purity and virtue, and the forces of evil. The final struggle between the two comes as satanic influence is let loose with the emergence of Gog and Magog. Satan gathers all his powers, and uses all his methods to mislead people, introducing an age where iniquity, promiscuity, atheism, and materialism abound. However, in this paper, it is used to represent a dramatic and catastrophic conflict, especially one seen as likely to destroy the world or the human race.

Amalgamation is used in this paper to refer to series of activities which dates back to the period 1893 and ended in 1914. This is because from 1893, the Oil Rivers Protectorate was amalgamated with other territories nearby, which the British had subjugated, to form the Niger Coast Protectorate. This Niger Coast Protectorate, which, only in 1897, came to include the conquered Kingdom of Benin, for example, was, in 1900, amalgamated with a series of protectorates the British had imposed in the immediate hinterland of the Colony of Lagos, to form the Protectorate of Southern Nigeria, administered separately from the Colony of Lagos. Six years later, in 1906, the Colony of Lagos was amalgamated with this Protectorate of Southern Nigeria to form the Colony and Protectorate of Southern Nigeria, which far from being some cohesive colonial entity, was, largely, a sphere of influence, from which the British kept out other European colonial powers. The military expeditions for colonial occupation, here in fact, continued, right up to 1914, and beyond (Usman and Abba, 2005). Similarly, Ikime( 2013), expressed this notion thus;

*In the South, the British, who had been trading along the coastal parts since the days of the Atlantic slave trade, began to feel the need for some political authority to back up their trade. In 1849 John Beecraft was appointed British consul for the Bights of Benin and Biafra, to promote and protect British trade. As the scramble for Africa hotted up in 1880s, the British, having signed various types of treaties with the rulers of our coastal states, proclaimed the Protectorate of the Oil Rivers in 1885. The Niger Delta States each of which had been autonomous till this time, were brought under a single foreign authority which divided the area into "Divisions" and "Districts" without their consent. This involved varying degrees of amalgamation. In 1906 there came yet another amalgamation. The Colony and Protectorate of Lagos and what became known as the Protectorate of Southern Nigeria in 1901 were amalgamated into the "Colony and Protectorate of Southern Nigeria. As usual, the amalgamation was undertaken without consultation with the Nigerian peoples.*

The series of Amalgamation which ended in 1914, according to Dioka (1987), was a calculated attempt by the British as way of having an edge over other rival groups. Dioka (1987) summarized it thus;

*...Before now British and France had acquired a lot of paper Protectorates and treaty rights over areas they scarcely had any control. Thus the principle of effective occupation and the challenges posed by other powers began to erode these paper protectorates and informal empires. Germany a new entrant to the race for colonies, was particularly interested in the principle of effective occupation the result was the intensification of rivalries which ultimately ushered in the scramble*

### **2.1. Balkanization As A Prelude To Amalgamation: The True Story**

For a thorough understanding of the genesis of the drift towards Armageddon, there is the need to take a peep back into history of activities around the area from the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century ( i.e., from about 1850s) when the colonizing power began to meddle in the affairs of the people.

By December 1851, as a way of instilling fear in the people, Lagos was bombarded, and the colonial power continued to interfere in the chieftaincy problem between Kosoko and Akintoye, leading to the eventual colonization of the area in 1861 (Ikime, 1980, Asiegbu, 1984). By 1892, the heat was on Ijebu-Ode, which was invaded by the expedition under Colonel Scott and other officers from England, Gold Coast Colony and Sierra Leone. To ensure total defeat and submission, they were armed with the following;

*....2 Sergeants Majors, 4 Sergeants, 146 N.C.O's and men Hausa's, 99 N.C.O's and men, 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion, W.I. Regiment, Lagos Hausa Troops, Pay and Quartermaster W.R. Harding with 158 men rank and file, with 100 Ibadan irregulars(Asiegbu, 1984).*

With the capture of Ijebu-Ode, they faced the Niger Delta area, where they attacked and deposed Nana Olomu of Itsekiri, King Jaja of Opobo as well as Oba Ovonramwen of Benin. All these fought gallantly but were later overpowered either due to betrayal or superior arms. In the case of Benin, the expedition consisted of the following;

*... Two hundred and fifty protectorate troops, 150 Hausa recruits (to act as spies and guides), two "seven pounders", one Maxim and other ammunitions were supplied. ...Others were seven warships from various locations., 82 Navy Officers, and ratings, 123 officers and Men of the British Marine, 9 Medical personal and 29 medical unit attendants, and stewards...and a detachment of the West Indian Regiment to take charge of garrison duly in the protectorate alongside the Niger Coastal Protectorate administration*

*forces....At the Ologbo entry port,(they had five maxims, and two rocket tubes,... 780 rifles 14 guns in the possession of each officers, and man was a pistol, and 36 rounds of ammunition and one hundred and twenty seven thousand, four hundred and forty rounds of ammunition... and one thousand carriers whotransported their provisions and thirty scouts who led the way.( N.A.I, C.S.O,1/13, K.I.L.A.B.U Zaria,M/F 952/C,8677, Ryder, 1977, Bacon, 1897)*

The conquest continued up north with Ilorin, Kontagora and Bida being the first emirates to fall to Lugard's forces. In Ilorin, the closing years of the 19<sup>th</sup> century saw an increase in the power of the Baloguns pledging absolute loyalty (Adeleye, 1971). The force that was used against Ilorin consisted of the following;

*... 22 Europeans (including Goldie, Arnold, Wallace, Watts, Drs Cargill and Craster, 14 officers and two under-officers), 20 gunners, 488 carriers and a number of mallams and guides. The armament consisted of two seven-pounders with 48 common, 30 double common and 28 shrapnel shells for each gun, four Maxims with 18000 rounds of ammunition and a quantity of rockets. 15,000 rounds of reserve snider ammunition, rations for 12 days and forage for 10 days completed the supplies(Ikime, 1977)*

At the end of the invasion and sack, Ilorin losses were estimated at 200 cavalry and from 300 to 1200 infantry killed, with 1000 to 1200 mixed wounded. Kontagora was occupied in January 1901 and the Emir, Ibrahim fled with a large following. Possibly in order to carve out a new territory for himself, Ibrahim began to raid parts of Zaria emirate defying the caliphs call on him to stop such activities. The Emir of Zaria, Kwassau, wrote to Lugard whose headquarter had been moved to Zungeru, calling for military aid against Ibrahim. A British force was dispatched to Zaria and Ibrahim was captured and deported to Lokoja. Meanwhile Lugard appointed two Emirs in succession to the Kontagora throne – the Emir of Yauri and the Maiyaki. Both proved “unsuitable” and Ibrahim, the original Emir was re-instated in April 1903 after he had pledged absolute loyalty to the British (Ikime, 1977). In the case of the force sent against the Tiv under the leadership of Lt Colonel Lowry Cole, consisted of ten commissioned officers, 306 rank and file armed, in addition of rifles, with five maxim guns and one rocket tube, while the force against Aro under Lt Col. Montanaro consisted of 87 officers, 1,550 rank and file, and 2,100 carriers (Ikime, 1977).

In Bida, Emir Abubakar whom the Royal Niger Company deposed during the 1897 invasion, returned and retook his throne, ousting Goldie's puppet. After the proclamation, Bida was occupied in February 1901. The uncompromising Emir was again deposed and Muhammadu, Goldie's choice and proven British loyalist, was put on the throne (Johnson, 1967). Yola was invaded on September 2<sup>nd</sup> 1901, Bobo Ahmadu was formally installed on September 8 to replace the former Emir Zubeiru. When British troops reached Bauchi, Emir Umaru did not resist initially but seized opportunity of their absence from town to destroy the homes they had built. The town was consequently attacked and the fleeing Emir was captured by C.L. Temple in 1903 and deported to Ilorin. Gombe was invaded and captured in March 1903., while the Emir Jubril was captured and deported to Lokoja (Johnson, 1967).

In Zaria, the British seized the opportunity of the Emir invitation to build a garrison at the outskirts of the city. However, under the usual charges that the Emir was carrying out slave raids, the Emir of Zaria, Kwassau, was arrested and deported to Wushishi. AliyudanSidiAbdulkadir was installed in his place (Arnett, 1920). The next was Gwandu under Caliph Abd al-Rahma Gwandu, which Lugard's forces began to raid from their base at Illo, until it later submitted (Tukur, 1977). Under the excuse of pursuing the MagajinKeffi, Dan Yamusa, Aliyu and his representative implicated in the death of Captain Moloney, a British force under Colonel Morland attacked and occupied Kano in February 1903. The excuse was that if the Magaji was not brought to book the integrity of the white man would be jeopardized and this may lead to revolts in the occupied territories (Backwell, 1966). On March 6 Muhammadu Abbas, the Wambi, accompanied by some 7,500 Kano troops surrendered to Lugard and on April 3<sup>rd</sup> Abbas was formally installed as Emir (Gowers, 1920). The invaders under Morland and General Kemball advanced towards Sokoto on February 16<sup>th</sup> 1903. On reaching Shagari it was joined by Captain Merrick who had occupied Argungu in 1902. After a week resistance the city was occupied on March 15<sup>th</sup> 1903. The caliph Attahiru I fled eastwards (Backwell, 1966).

Even at the end of the conquest, there were uprisings of various types which continued even up to 1914 and beyond. In the northern part of the country, the most noted is the Satiru Revolt of February

1906. This started with the attempt of the British Authority to arrest MallamIsa, the head of Satiru village for declaring himself Mahdi (The Liberator). Two attempts by the British troop under the Acting Resident Officer, Mr. Hillary to arrest Isa failed; with the British troop losing 27 soldiers and three officers (Umar, 2006). This infuriated the British as they asked for reinforcement from Lagos, to which 250 troops were granted. Also within three weeks, Lugard was able to assembly a force of 573 rifles, 30 British officers, 70 policemen and some 3000 men (Umar, 2006). These were deployed to Satiru and by 10<sup>th</sup> March 1906, the area had been razed to the ground. Reporting on the outcome of the expedition, Maj. Burden, the Resident of Sokoto, noted that “the evidence of slaughter has made a tremendous impression and English prestige is now higher than before”; while Lugard on the other hand noted that the Satiru Revolt “demanded a signal and overwhelming victory for the restoration of our (British) prestige and prevention of any such rising in the future”(Umar, 2006).

In the southern part of the country was the Ekumeku Uprising, (associated with the Western Igboland), a movement which grew out of the necessity of the people to check the spread of alien government and culture into the area, which colonialism imposed on them. The activities of the Ekumeku cult continued till 1911, when it was finally brought to an end, after protracted gallant struggle. For this purpose, the British administration, apart from the use of troops, also employed maxim guns, shells, and rockets. With these they succeeded in destroying houses, farms, and livestock, as well as imposed heavy fines on the people. It was only after the final defeat of the Ekumeku in 1911, when major punitive expeditions had dwindled almost to insignificance, that the issue of finding a legal basis for what was still likely to be done or had already been done was taken up. As Acting Governor Boyle explained, a state of war must exist or must have been declared before military patrol against communities and villages could be justified. As a way of giving legal backing to the levelling, looting and sacking of villages, the Acting Governor Boyle, recommended the passing of legislation to cover the atrocious acts of the British officers, hence the enactment of Ordinance No.6 of 1912, which came into effect on 8 February 1912, and this legalized the imposition of fines on towns, villages and communities as well as regulating the procedure for the collection thereof (N.A.I, C.S.O, 1911). This according to the Attorney General Pennington was among other things, to any community whose conduct has been such as to require the employment of soldiers or police against them for the purpose of suppressing disturbances, enforcing lawful orders or payments of taxes leviable under the law of the colony and protectorate. It was also meant to apply to communities or villages where crimes were committed or criminals sheltered as well as areas, which disobeyed or refused to carry out the orders given by the provincial and District Commissioners. These were in 1899, 1901, 1906, and 1915, when various punitive measures were carried out against the people (N.A.I, C.S.O, 1911). On the whole, the Colonial authority proclaimed superior military force as the basis of British prestige and political supremacy (Umar, 2006).

The above is in summary the situation in the area up till the eve of what the colonialists referred to as Amalgamation. It is interesting to note that to the colonialist, for there to be amalgamation they had to balkanize the area through the divide and rule method of their conquest as well as imposition of puppets and turning each kingdom against one another. The paper also noted that in all the expeditions, the Hausa as spy and escorts, a situation which would have created hatred among the various people for the Hausas even after the amalgamation.

## **2.2. The Myth of Amalgamation**

In line with the above and considering the situation of unrest up to the eve of the Amalgamation, it has been argued that the conception and concept of Nigeria as created in 1914 could not have produced a solid foundation for national integration and development. This argument is based on the simplistic and uncoordinated way the colonialist midwifed the birth of modern Nigeria. It is in line with this that the paper identifies with the position of Smith, when he posited thus;

*No one is likely to dispute the suggestion that the most important set of political problems facing the African continent today is that relating to the formation of States. Further, so many ‘new states’ have been theoretically created overnight during the past two decades by the sudden passing of constitutional laws, or the signing of constitutional agreements, that the process of state formation would seem to be one of almost magical simplicity. Yet we also know that practice and theory in this matter are far divorced from each other, and that no amount of waving the wand of ‘independence’ can make a state if the human conditions in which the attempt is made to create it are not appropriate. And it is our bitter experience that human conditions do not change overnight, nor do*

*new allegiances suddenly develop without long and complicated processes of social adjustment (Smith A, 1971, 1987, Kwanashie G et al (ed), (1987).*

Towing the path of Smith, Usman and Abba argued that what took place in 1914 was far from true amalgamation considering the situation on ground and events that led to the surgery which resulted in the marriage. The position of these scholars is summarized thus;

*The concept of Nigeria is false, because the amalgamation of 1914 did not amalgamate two distinct entities, standing apart from one another and having some cohesion on their own. The Colony and Protectorate of Southern Nigeria was, in 1914, a variegated collection of distinct colonial entities, which except for Lagos, had just been conquered by the British and were, at that time, being brought under effective colonial military occupation. This entity, which is falsely presented as constituting the South, standing distinct and cohesive apart from the North, at the time of the 1914 amalgamation, was itself produced by a series of amalgamations going back to 1893. In that year the Oil Rivers Protectorate was amalgamated with other territories nearby, which the British had subjugated, to form the Niger Coast Protectorate.*

It is important to note that the paper is not in any way against the issue of amalgamation, however, the contention here is that when the 1914 Amalgamation Ordinance was proclaimed, there was no evidence to show that the people or the inhabitants of the territory called Northern and Southern protectorates were ever consulted to discuss and consent to live together as one country and under one constitution. It was therefore not surprising that from the onset people and inhabitants in various parts of the country continued to condemn the act. For instance proponents of the above have argued that the utterance in 1956 by Sir Ahmadu Bello after the Northerners defeated the motion for independence moved by Chief Anthony Enahoro and were jeered by their Southern colleagues, gives more credence to the believe that the union was faulty. Historical document hold that, at that meeting, Ahmadu Bello said

*...what kind of trouble have we let ourselves in for, by associating with these southern people. Lord Lugard and his amalgamation is not for us. We shall set up our own and cease to have anything more to do with the southern people (Onwudiwe, 2011).*

The position of Sir Ahmadu Bello as presented above is not different from the position maintained by Sir Tafawa Balewa in 1952 during his address to the Northern House of Assembly, in which he was quoted thus;

*The Southern people who are swamping into this region daily in such large numbers are really intruders; we don't want them and they are not welcome here in the North. Since 1914, the British Government has been trying to make Nigeria into one country. But the people are different in every way, including religion, custom, language and aspirations..... We in the North take it that Nigeria unity is only a British intention for the country they created. It is not for us (Onwudiwe, 2011).*

It was in reaction to the above statement and the event that happened when trouble broke out in Sabongari, Kano and southerners, mainly Ndigbo, were slaughtered, that Chief Obafemi Awolowo's was said to have made the famous statement which ran thus

*Nigeria is only a geographical expression to which life was given by the diabolical amalgamation of 1914, that amalgamation will ever remain the most painful injury a British Government inflicted on Southern Nigeria (Onwudiwe, 2011).*

### **2.3. The Divided Amalgamation and Nigeria Since 1914**

The fraudulent nature of the 1914 exercise is exposed in the fact that while the colonial government was embarking on the Amalgamation venture, the same administration was busy sowing seed of discord among the parts through the creation of imposed caste-system. This is revealed in correspondence relating to the Amalgamation of Northern and Southern Nigeria from Lugard; The Governor to The Secretary of State, received on 15<sup>th</sup> May, 1913. The Correspondence which was dated 9<sup>th</sup> May 1913, read thus;

*Sir,*

*In accordance with your instructions, I Have the honour to submit proposal for the amalgamation of the Governments of Northern and Southern Nigeria into a single*

*Administration, including (as I understand you to desire) some observations on the existing conditions, and an outline of the policy I suggest for the future.*

*These latter matters are, to a large extent necessary in explanation of the conclusion at which I have arrived, but they are dealt with briefly in this report, and form the subject of more detailed despatches\**

*There are several paragraphs which, I submit, it would be inadvisable to make public, should it be your intention to print the report.*

*I have, &c.,*

*F.D. LUGARD*

*Governor.(DNA, 2014)*

From the correspondence above it is clear that the amalgamation and the *sabongari* system coming almost the same time was a grand design at perfecting the idea of divide and rule system. For example, it has been established that by 1913, the colonial government had established the *Sabongari* settlement in Kano to serve their racial segregation policy. This had been experimented in other parts of the world as it was the third colonial settlement after Bompai, European residential and administrative settlement and Asian/Lebanese quarters in the Western part of the railway station. *Sabongari* settlement was created in order for the colonial government to directly administer within the British magisterial rule Yoruba, Igbo, Nupe, Hausa, Chadian and other migrants in Kano during colonial period. This was primarily to serve the divide and rule policy, which was anchored on white racial supremacy (Abdu, 2000). With time, the *Sabongari* quarter policy came into being, as a provision for southerners, who were living in the northern part of the country. The result was that while the colonialists were celebrating the amalgamation of Nigeria in 1914, the same system had succeeded in creating three different settlements of the people, viz, *Birnin*, walled city, housing the indigenous population, *Tudun Wada*, housing non-indigenous northerners, and *Sabongari* for southerners whom the colonialist referred to as “native foreigners” (Lugard, 1922).

With the success of the system in Kano, it became the practice in other part of the area. For example, the first *Sabongari* community in Sokoto area was reported in Gusau which was a centre of European commercial activity being a major cotton producing area; and for which reason the Gusau-KauraNamoda area was connected by rail to the South. In 1928 it was reported that “the influx of a large number of semi-educated natives from other parts of Nigeria and West Africa, with their different customs and outlook had created a problem not easily solved. The District Head was advised to settle them in a “special section” of the town (NAKSOKProf, 1929). Commenting on this, Paden presented the situation thus;

*Unlike Kano and other Northern cities, the “SabonGari” in Sokoto did not come into existence until the 1930. This period coincided with the “town-clearance” exercise embarked upon by the colonial regime as a counteraction against epidemics especially small pox and cerebro-spinal meningitis. As a result of this exercise many inhabitants of the old city were rendered homeless. The “SabonGari” in Sokoto, therefore, accommodated both the displaced inhabitants of the city and thenon indigenous immigrants. Inhabitants of the “SabonGari” were not subject to the jurisdiction of the “Native” courts but to the European Magistrate courts (NAKSOKProf, 1949, Main, 1981, Paden, 1973).*

In Sokoto town itself the Resident, G.J. Lethan was disgusted with the question of the immigration of the more sophisticated and English-speaking natives into the town. What irritated him most was that these immigrants were “building with the permission of the local authority in the native town and did not show the slightest inclination to form a SabonGari (NAKSOKProf, 1949)

The attitudes of the British to non-Muslim immigrants in Sokoto reflected the general trend that persisted throughout Muslim cities in Northern Nigeria (NAKSOKProf, 1949). The indigenous people did not appear to have conceived any idea of separating non-indigenes from their midst, neither did they appear to have considered the building of a church in the old city as an abnormality. In fact some indigenes of Sokoto believed that the Sultan’s attitude towards immigrants stemmed from the Shehu’s teachings which did not encourage discrimination of any kind against non-indigenes (Hodgkins, 1960). It was the British policy of segregation which later crystallized to acquire the status of traditionality. In his analysis on the implication of this for national unity, Abdu Hussain (2000, 2001) wrote;

*The implication of this is the strengthening of the powers of the traditional rulers (Emirs) and the traditional institutions. This increased influence of the traditional rulers lead to a greater cohesion among the local population around the traditional bureaucracy and authority of the Chief, and therefore, a much greater inward orientation of the population toward the pre-colonial ways of life or what was left of it following colonial impact. This helped in strengthening the importance of local ties, norms, values and customs thereby contributing in strengthening the feeling of exclusiveness of the indigenous communities. Migrants therefore find it difficult to get integrated. As a result, this settlement and its off-shots have become crises spots since the colonial period.*

In this way the residential segregation of the Kanawa from southern Nigerian immigrants engendered hostility between members of the two groups. They both found it very difficult to tolerate, understand and positively adjust to each other. To the highly Islamized Kanawa, Sabongari was nothing but a settlement of infidels (*harnaor kafiriin* Hausa) and treated with great hatred and seen as interlopers (Albert, 1994). These situations were encouraged by colonial discriminatory, segregation and divide and rule policies. This is the result of the colonial discriminatory, segregation and divide and rule policies. This policy has been replicated in major cities in the country, where Hausas are confined to Sabo settlements. Thus, while the pre-colonial migrants have physically and culturally integrated and assimilated, modern migrants (migrants of the twentieth century) are finding it difficult if not impossible to get integrated.

### **2.4. Manifestations of Forced Amalgamation Since the Eve of Independence**

As earlier pointed out, the result of the fact that the people saw the amalgamation exercise as a fraud as well as the inability of the colonial government to lay down in clear terms the bases of the marriage, led to antagonism among the various groups. In the case of the northern part of the country, the establishment of separate settlement even under the amalgamation arrangement, led to situations in which these settlements and their off-shoots have become crises spots since the colonial period. This was the case in Kano in 1953 in which colonial manipulation of ethnic and regional sentiments to suppress the anti-colonial forces, led to a situation in which Igbos were attacked in Sabongari. This crisis was fuelled by disagreement among the political parties as a result of the motion moved on the floor of the Federal House of Representatives by a member of Action Group for Nigeria's independence in 1956 to which the NPC objected. The aftermath of the disagreement was the 15th May 1953 mass demonstration in Kano, against the tour of Action Group (AG) leaders to Northern Nigeria, Kano in particular. A total of twenty one (21) southerners were officially declared killed and seventy one others wounded. The southerners also killed fifteen Northerners and wounded 163 (Albert, 1994, Abdu, 2000, 2001).

Since Nigeria came into existence, as an independent, sovereign, nation-state, on 1st October 1960, it has continued to face challenges, almost every year, including the secessionist challenge, which plunged the country into years of Civil War and the aborted Orkar Coup of 22nd April 1990, in the course of which, an announcement was made of the dismemberment of the country by the excision of some states from it (Usman and Abba, 2005).

Immediately after the country gained independence, there were agitations in the three regions of the country among the minorities to be liberated from the dominant majority. In the North the minority interest was basically in the middle belt, represented largely by the United Middle Belt Congress (UMBC), which was dominant among the Tiv and among the people on the Jos Plateau, particularly the Berom. In the West the minorities such as the Edo, Itsekiri, Ijaw, Urhobo, and Igbos west of the Niger River, like the middle belt, were never fully integrated in the region and so had agitated for separation from Yoruba domination. In the same vein, the minorities in the Eastern Region called for the creation of a new region, the Calabar-Ogoja-Rivers, to move them from the dominant Igbo. In most cases, this took violent dimension mostly in the Middle Belt leading to the loss of lives and properties. Analysing the intensity of the situation in the Northern part of the country, Wuam (2007) and Sa'ad (2010) posited thus;

*... Intergroup relations in the North, particularly between the Hausa-Fulani of the far north and the groups in the middle belt remained dicey, up to the end of the First Republic. The disturbed situation in Benue culminated in protests in 1960 and 1964 - the Nande and Atemityo (breaking of heads). The crisis situation in Tivland continued down to the end of the democratic regime in mid-January 1966. The Tiv riots in those period confined non-Tiv government officials to Makurdi, the provincial capital,*

*as the countryside were cut off for non-Tiv. In the course of the riot thousands of lives, both Tiv and non-Tiv, were lost in Tivland as it was unsafe for non-Tiv to travel by road into and through the territory. In the end the fighting was brought under control by the military and peace was restored among the Tiv. Although there were no serious riots in other parts of the middle belt, the situation of uncertainty and tension prevailed.*

In other regions, it was not as violent as that of the north and Middle Belt, this was because each group tried to tolerate each other as exemplified by the Ogoja, Efik and other minorities in the Niger Delta who grudgingly tolerated Igbo dominance, without serious aggression. The attempt by the Isaac Boro led group for the creation of a Rivers region for the Ijaw, came to an end with the arrest and detention of Isaac Adaka Boro, the initiator and leader of the movement (Sa'ad, 2010).

By 1966, the crisis had taken another dimension. This was the fallout of the January 15th, 1966 military coup d'état led by Major Chukwuemeka Kaduna Nzeogwu, as a result of which many prominent Northern politicians were killed. There was a demonstration in Kano on March 29th, 1966 against Ironsi's unification decree. Between 100 and 200 Igbo people were killed at *Sabongari*. This was followed by violence in July the same year. Since this period, there have been series of violent crisis in Kano. According to available records, at the end of the crises, millions of Igbo people returned to Igboland empty handed, completely dispossessed (Ukaogo, 2011). Since that period the relationship has remained dicey, with each suspicious of every move made by the other.

## **2.5. To Your Tent oh Nigerian!: Nigerian and the War Cry Since 1993**

The cry for the dismemberment of the country became more strident and louder after the annulment of June 12 1993 Presidential election on 23rd June, 1993. This event was particularly interpreted to mean the intention of Hausa-Fulani to hold on to power. In the aftermath of the annulment, an Interim National Government which was installed by General Babangida, was soon overthrown by General Abacha, who imposed a fierce dictatorship, accompanied by numerous political assassinations, with National Democratic Coalition (NADECO), being the major political target.

The above situation degenerated to one of insecurity, fear and distrust between the various ethnic and religious groups in the country, particularly with regards to the movement of people of different ethnic groups and regions living in different parts of the country. This marked the beginning of the emergence of ethnic militias, which invariably sprang up to protect the interest of their ethnic groups. In this way they began to present themselves as champions, representing extreme form of ethnic agitation for self determination, promoting and protecting the parochial interests of their ethnic groups. In a bid to achieve this, they most often assume militant posture (whose activities sometimes involve the use of violence) and gradually metamorphosed into militia groups each of which bear an ethnic identity and purport to act as the machinery through which the desires of its people are sought and realized (Adejumobi, 2002, Badmus, 2006). For example, while Odua's Peoples' Congress (OPC) was formed in August 1994 in the wake of the crises that greeted the cancellation of the 12 June 1993 presidential election, Arewa People's Congress (APC) was officially launched 13 December 1999 as a body of northern group (Guichaoua, 2009). Although, it has been argued that the formation of the APC, was to focus on making sure that Nigeria remained and was preserved as an indivisible country; however, research has shown that it came up as a check group almost at the same time the OPC was being militarised and the bloody riot which took place in both Sagamu and Ketu between the Yoruba and the Hausa/Fulani and later between the Egbesu Boys in the Niger Delta area of the country. It is thus obvious that the APC was formed and launched in reaction to the activities of the OPC. Other groups began to emerge, such as Bakassi Boys and Movement for the Actualisation of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB) formed in late 1999 in the southeastern part of the country. The latest is the Biafra Zionist Federation (BZF) in the Eastern Nigeria.

The impact of the above is that from that period till date, the country has been witnessing even more violent clashes involving these groups. In his analysis, Sa'ad Abubakar (2010) summarized the scenario thus;

*... Lagos states alone, there were various conflicts between various groups from 1999 to 2004. In July 1999, the OPC engaged Igbo traders at Alaba for taking over the market, then in July more than 120 lives were lost at Sagamu, Ogun state in a conflict between the OPC and Hausa. The latter conflict was immediately followed by a reprisal attack on Yoruba in Kano. Similarly, in October 1999 the OPC clashed with Ijaw youths in Ajegunle, where twenty eight died, when some Egbesu boys were*



*allegedly caught in armed robbery. The same conflict erupted again at Festac Town and at Amuwo-Odofin, which led to seven deaths. Another OPC Hausa conflict occurred in November 1999 at Ketu, Ojota and Mile 12 Market in which 114 lives were lost. Again in January 2000 at Bariga, Lagos the OPC engaged Hausa in a conflict where the casualties remain unknown and in October the OPC again engaged the Hausa in a conflict at Ajegunle where more than 100 lost their lives. Two week later, at Ajegunle, Agege, Obalende, Mile 2, Ojuelegba, Lagos Island, and Lagos, conflict erupted between the OPC and Hausa, and Hausa against Igbo. Other conflict involving the OPC with many unknown casualties were at Ilorin in 2001 and at Idi Araba in 2002.*

With regard to the northern part of the country, the scholar continued thus;

*Other areas of violent crises include Plateau, Taraba, Adamawa, Bauchi, Nassarawa and Borno. In Plateau in the last ten years four major intergroup conflicts took place at Wase, Shendam and Jos resulting in unwanted deaths, dislocation of populations and loss of properties. Between 2002-2005 there has been circle of crises between the Tarok and Hausa-Fulani, an early 19<sup>th</sup> century immigrants who established an emirate and lorded it over the Tarok. Similarly, at YelwanShendam conflict between the Taroh Progressive Youth Association and Hausa-Fulani erupted in 2002 over chieftaincy, land resources and grazing rights leading to deaths and destructions of properties. A repeat of riots in Jos in 2009 and 2010 also spread killings and vandalism, which gave rise to many Hausa fugitives fleeing into neighbouring states. The situation has normalised even though clandestine fighting is still going on as evidenced by night attacks and killings of innocent persons in the environs of Jos. Also in Adamawa state an intergroup crisis between the Hausa and Bachama in Numan town occurred in 2004, which started over the killing of a Hausa water hawker. Riots in which many on both sides were killed spread in the town and it took some days before law and order was restored (Gambo, 2007, Olaniyi, 2007).*

Of recent, other groups have been springing up in various parts of the country, calling for its dismemberment. Unlike the earlier militant bodies that emerged immediately after the 1993 annulment, the new groups have engaged in more dastardly acts, leading to the death of thousands of people as well as loss of properties worth billions of naira. Of specific note are the activities of the Boko Haram terrorist group operating in the North Eastern part of Nigeria. As at February 2014, it was estimated that through their activities, the losses in Maiduguri alone was as follows;

*...in Izge village, nine soldiers were killed, 106 civilians and many more were abducted and taken as hostages when the gunmen attacked the community....in Gavva West and Gavva East, 21 people and 150 houses were burnt respectively, while in Zalidva village, Sabongari, 14 people killed and 30 houses were destroyed during the attack.” In NgosheSama village, 18 people were killed and 80 houses were razed, and 150 cattle taken away while in Ghraza village, three people were killed, 50 houses and property worth millions of naira destroyed. “In Ngoshe town, 46 people were killed, 30 houses were razed down, while seven people were killed in Hambaged and about 140 cattle were taken away.” In Chinene village, seven people were killed and also in Krawa town, 20 people were slaughtered and 20 shops razed. The Emir of Gwoza’s house at Jaje village was razed with property and food stuffs worth millions of naira destroyed along with several houses of worship. In Ndufa village, six deaths were recorded and 120 cattle taken away while in Pulka town, one person was killed and eight people were abducted (The Will, 2014).*

The same group is presently in possession of over two hundred and fifty school girls abducted in Chibok and have also declared some areas in the state and other neighboring states as under Islamic rule. The Boko Haram group is presently calling for the return to the days of Caliphate. In reaction, other groups have sprung up to challenge their authority, leading to further bloody clashes and violent reactions in other parts of the country.

### **3. CONCLUSION**

From the discourse so far, it is clear that although the area which today constitute the Federal Republic of Nigeria was amalgamated in 1914, however the expected dividends of such exercise has not been manifesting. This is because the foundation was built on the use of military force and fear, without regards to the feelings and consent of the people. It is thus clear that Nigerian state is a colonial creation; its structures, institutions and composition are super imposed by the colonial overlords. As a result, its activities are external in orientation and stand aloof the society. The state is inherently violent and repressive right from colonial time. It used the instrument of violence in

suppressing anti-colonial forces, to sustain its anti-peoples policies (Abdu, 2001). This is now replicated in the fact that from the amalgamation till date, Nigeria has been experiencing violent crises, political antagonism and religious intolerance. It is line with this that the paper argues that this is the result of the faulty foundation on which the amalgamation was built. This situation would have produced a much fruitful result if the colonial government had taken into consideration certain factors. In dealing with the people, they failed to realize that political institutions, like the other institutions of human culture are devised and developed because they offer solutions to the problems which arise for mankind out of the conditions in which he has to live (Kwanashie et al, 1987). Unfortunately what happened some one hundred years ago was more of the adventure of some *heroscivilisateur* with their magic wand coming with their superior culture to impose it on some hitherto ‘uncivilized people’.

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