



**Yoruba
CULTURE
AND ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT**

BY

CHIEF BISI AKANDE

GOVERNOR, OSUN STATE (1999-2003)

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Being the speech delivered by **Chief Bisi Akande**, former Governor of Osun State of Nigeria, at the 11th Annual National Convention of Egbe Omo Yoruba in North America at Oakland, California, United States of America, taking place on August 8 to 10, 2003.

1. Introduction

I feel flattered and humbled to be invited as your special guest and distinguished speaker at this 11th Annual National Convention of Egbe Omo Yoruba in North America. I am very glad for this opportunity of being among you for this occasion because I cannot easily have any better occasion to express appreciation for your steadfast support for the progressive activities of those of us, Yoruba sons and daughters, who have always been rather unfortunate to be resident in Nigeria.

I recall your heroic support for the National Democratic Coalition (NADECO) during the Abacha suppressive

government, in Nigeria, between 1993 and 1998. May I also mention the support of your medical experts, under the leadership of Dr. Dele Dada, when they came to Nigeria to assist the government of Osun State, during my governorship, in year 2000, by giving two weeks of free surgery to the people of our rural communities. I am highly impressed by your collective determination to enthrone true democracy in Nigeria.

2. Convention Theme

You have asked me to speak on the theme of “Yoruba Culture and Economic Development, for our people, in Yoruba land and in the Diaspora”. I am aware that a people’s occupation determines their economic development, which subsequently influences their cultures. For this reason, the subject of this discourse must involve, in the case of the Yoruba people, the Theory of History and the Principles of Economics. I am neither an historian nor an economist; but I will endeavor to apply my **‘ignorance’** to provoke a review that would eventually stimulate a continuing debate, which may result in some rational discussions and conclusions.

3. What is Culture?

If we intend to talk convincingly about the culture of a people, it becomes necessary to seek to discuss their origin, identity, historical status, institutional authority, social networking, economic pursuits and community groupings.

In the beginning¹, the society of man was, perhaps, not too different from that of the lower animals.

The society of the colony of the ants, for instance, works, eats, reproduces, moves and fights together, for corporate defence, merely by instincts. In almost a similar manner, man's society, following the discovery of settled farming (agriculture), began through kinsmen of the first generation under one patriarch. The first man's culture, therefore, must have been the obedience to the norms and traditions of the native society; and such traditions of the native society must have been based on agricultural economy as a means of survival.

4. No Culture without the Economy

For survival and growth, man must eat. In the process, he is either a wanderer, a gatherer, a hunter, a pastoralist, or a farmer. He must also have shelter to pro-

1. In the Beginning by G. Elliot Smith: Thinkers Library.

tect him from the vagaries of the weather. The culture of housing began from the buttress of trees, caves, thatch camps, mud huts to concrete houses and today's skyscrapers.

Man also needs clothing and, perhaps, some ornamentation and luxuries. In other words, he must produce either solely or by being grouped into handicraft units or by being structured into a complex industrial conglomerate.

By interacting with other human beings, perhaps in the production processes, man has discovered certain thoughts, usages and activities which metamorphosed into people's ethics, religions and laws and which eventually became the superstructure upon which his methods of production, transportation and distribution of his produce are built. These ethics, religions and laws vary from society to society and from one era to another; and cumulate into the ways of life of man, family and people. These ways of life are called CULTURE.

Either from the theories of **Adams Smith** or from the dialectics of **Friedrich Engels**, together with the manifesto of **Karl Marx**, unless you produce something to satisfy some demands, there would be nothing to transport, dis-

tribute or exchange; and there would be no disputation as to who must be 'King' between the producers and the consumers. There would be neither bourgeoisie nor proletariats, neither capitalists nor socialists and, perhaps, there would be no CULTURE (i.e. social order). In other words, every society is founded on an economic structure. It is thus imperative to note, at this stage, that there can be no society without ethics, no priest without religion, no government without laws and no **culture** without an **economic structure**.

5. Divergence of Cultures

The culture of man is best measured and assessed by the quality and quantity of his food, housing, clothing, and, in addition, by his mode of life of leisure and the extent of his access to luxury.

In some primitive cultures, like in the present day Nigeria, neither corn nor cassava, which our climate of agriculture permits us to grow, are being harvested, stored, preserved, transformed and processed in the adequate quality and quantity required and needed by its population; and, therefore, nothing extra is available nor suitable for export. This is because science and technology have had no such adequate application as in more advanced culture. We can, therefore, understand why the

people of a primitive culture cannot reach the quality and quantum of food available to the advanced cultures. It is also clear to us why, for the same reason, the people live in serious hunger and in abject poverty.

By the same token, the architectural beauty and structural quality of the houses of a hunting community, or a peasant farm holding population, cannot compare in any way with those of an industrial society. No industrial community could also use the concept of law, order and government of a primitive settlement. The clothing arrangement of the hand-woven material patterns of the feudal society may not compare with the comfort and cheapness of the steam-mill fabrics, from the factories of the industrial capitalist.

6. The Pre - Historic Origin

According to Mr. Justice Adewale Thompson (using Mesoteric cosmology to justify the claims of Professor Bolaji Idowu and Chief Ajayi Fabunmi on page 47 of his **Black People of the World**), Obatala, the Deputy Olodunmare¹, was said to have created Yoruba land and its people.

Perhaps, after the Great Deluge (is it the same as the flood of Noah in the Bible, which swept away most of the

1. *The maker of the Universe in Yoruba Mythology*

pre-historic world into the bottom of the ocean?), Oduduwa was acclaimed to have become the incarnation of the celestial founder of the Yoruba race. Chief Fabunmi was quoted, again by Mr Justice Adewale Thompson, on pages 52 and 53 of the same book, to have postulated on the following three accounts:

- (i) That Oduduwa descended from heaven to Oramfe Hill on the road to Ilesa, with sixteen elders;
- (ii) That Oduduwa came from Mecca, Egypt or Upper Nile;
- (iii) That Oduduwa was one of the people who lived before the deluge.

7. The Age of History

Many historians gave copious accounts of waves of migration by the ancestors of the Yorubas from the Near East. There have been opinions about the ancestral position of Lamurudu (or Nimrod, the biblical great hunter son of Cush) whose kingdom began at the city of Babel (remember the Tower of Babel) at the present site of the village of Namrud, near Erbil – five hours drive from Badgad in Iraq.

Whatever may be the verdict of history, Oduduwa became accepted and recognized as the primordial ancestor of all Yoruba Obas. But are we all princes? If no, our origin, as

Yoruba people, might have been diverse and varied but, at present, we settle in our own homeland in the south-western part of River Niger with the Atlantic Ocean to the south.

8. Location and Their Neighbours

The rugged chain of mountains, extending from the Futa-Jalon Highlands to the Cameroon Mountains, include a wide range of high plateaux and other mountains in the Western part of Africa. In-between these crops of mountains flow rivers Niger and Benue merging at a confluence in Lokoja before entering into the swamps of their own delta via Ugheli, Warri, Degema and Yenagoa etc, emptying into the Atlantic Ocean via Forcados, Brass, and Port-Harcourt. Another network of water-ways (consisting rivers Sokoto, Mariga, Gurara, Taraba and Gongola) drain into rivers Niger and Benue in the Northern part of the confluence while, at the same time, rivers Hadejia and Komadugu Gana flow towards the North-Eastern part of the confluence to Lake Chad.

These water networks made it possible for the beginning of village, town and tribal settlements among the Hausa-Fulanis, the Kanuris, the Gwaris, the Margis, the Batas, the Longudas, the Angas, the Nupes, the Igalas, the Ebiras, the Idomas and other ethnic groups around and

towards the Northern part of the confluence of Rivers Niger and Benue.

The Southern part of the confluence is rich in moisture from constant rainfall. To the eastern part of the rivers are settled the Igbo and the Ekoi independent republican hamlets and villages, while to the South are the Ijaw, the Itsekiri, the Urhobo and the Efik and Ibiobio family-clans and village kingdoms. To the western part of River Niger are settled the various Yoruba and Edo Kingdoms.

9. The Culture of Primitivity

The culture of the Yoruba people can best be clarified, illuminated and interpreted within the context of the history, politics and economics of their place among their neighbours, through the periods of their colonization as well as the characters and structures of their leadership within their social institutions.

Most probably, the culture of the Yoruba people began with the system of subsistence agriculture when there were small individual family farm holdings of grains and tubers for food, in addition to cotton for clothing; when houses were built with timber and earth mud, and the roofs were made of thatched leaves. Mainly, women engaged in food preparation for the consumption of family members and for their neighbours at a price by barter.

This stimulated inter-family relationship. The resultant inter-family co-operation developed into daily (or nightly) markets and periodical markets (i.e. markets held every third, fifth, ninth or fifteenth day) in all the settlements within the village environments and neighbourhood kingdoms.

10. Trade and Security

Trading activities and cultural relationships like 'esusu' (banking), 'aaro' (co-operative farming) thus started and became regular and intense. Apart from gathering, farming, hunting, cattle rearing, and fishing, trading became another economic activity of the people. For the purpose of security against wild animals, route marauders, camp invaders and other forms of jungle enemies among forest wanderers, each family (and its family's family) within every clan had an organization of very strong and bold youths among the well-trying, loyal and brave hunters known as the 'Eeso', 'Ogo-Weere' or 'Ipaye'¹. They were always pooled together to act as escorts for trade caravans and as soldiers for the defence of each Yoruba kingdom.

11. Religion and Family Celebrations

Ifa represents a special branch of Yoruba religion and **Iifa divination** became their authentic means of communication with the divinities and their ancestors. The Ifa priests were, according to Wande Abimbola¹, the physicians, psychiatrists, historians and philosophers of the communities to which they belonged. The poetry, in Ifa literacy corpus, became the formulation for the history, mythology, folk medicine, songs, lyrics, mores and folklores during recreation and festivities.

Literacy was limited to the deciphering of the signatures of the Ifa corpus while knowledge of the sciences was rather rudimentary. The hazards of bad seasonal weather and of the general climate and pests were difficult to control; and always present were dangers of famine and ravages of pestilence.

From the analysis of the interpretations of all the above, it was apparent that naming of all babies, wedding and funerals were part of celebrations and communal ceremonies in addition to annual 'Thanks Givings' to the gods for rains and good harvests together with various modes of ancestral worships.

¹ *Ifa Divination Poetry* by Wande Abimbola: NOK Publishers Ltd.

Truthfulness and hard work then formed the basis of moral tradition of the Yoruba people generally.

12. Agannigan Wars

Suddenly, in 15th century A.D. came the invasion of the various hamlets and villages by slave hunters, which destabilized the people's culture already developing by trial and error over time. This war of slave trade, being **instigated by the Arabs¹ from across the Sahara and the Portuguese² via the Atlantic Ocean**, recruited the elites and the traditional leaders as the agents and marketers. Family and community splitting, political disintegration, misery and endless migration took over. The war lasted more than 300 years.

The limited economic development up to that time became almost totally ruined. The culture of the people was also disrupted.

13. Fulani Invasion

Just before the end of the slave trade, the Fulani Muslim Jihadists, under Uthman B. Fudi (Usumanu dan Fodio)³, in 1804, began the colonization of the Hausa kingdoms and those other kingdoms adjacent to the Hausa territories by conquest, by Islamic religion evangelization

1. *The Development of Islam in West Africa* by Mervyn Hiskett: Longman

2. *The Lagos Consulate* by Rober S. Smith: Macmillan

3. *The Groundword of Nigerian History*, Edited b Obaro Ikime: Heinmann

and by imperial administrative control through caliphal authority from Sokoto.

By 1812, the whole of the northern part of Rivers Niger and Benue, except Bornu and Tiv lands, had almost been conquered by the Fulani Muslim Empire¹. To placate the vanquished and to consolidate their rule, the Jihadists called the area Hausa/Fulani land and emphasized the reformation of Islamic religion in line with their own doctrines.

In the meantime, Oyo Empire, to the South West of River Niger, had begun to disintegrate since about 1790². While the South-Western territories were seceding, Fulani Muslim Jihadists began attack from the North in 1810. In the process, Afonja, a chief of the Alafin of Oyo, posted to the outpost of Ilorin, rebelled against Oyo Empire. In 1817, he secured the support of the Fulani Muslim Jihadists to establish himself as the ruler of Ilorin. The wars, that followed the rebellion, led to the destruction of old Oyo; and, from the total collapse of the Oyo Empire emerged the new war camps of Ibadan, Ijaiye, and Abeokuta.

In 1831, the Fulani Muslim Jihadists treacherously took over Ilorin³. Ibadan, thereafter, became the master of Yorubaland in wars and began battles against Ilorin.

1. *The Groundwork of Nigerian History*, Edited by Obaro Ikime: Heinemann

2. *Government In Old Oyo Empire* by Kolawole Balogun: Africans Publishers & Co.

3. *The History of the Yorubas* by Rev. Samuel Johnson: CCS Limited

Ibadan defeated Ilorin in all battles and demonstrated sagacity in the consolidation of its hold on the conquered territories. It, however, planted tyranny among the vanquished.

14. Parapo Wars

This led to the formation of the 'Parapo' among Igbomina, Ekiti and Ijesha kingdoms that went into alliance with Ilorin against Ibadan in 1878. Ibadan still won¹. The parapo renewed the challenge, in 1879, and the war persisted till 1893 when the British colonialists had to separate the combatants at Offa, having colonized the rest of Yorubaland from Lagos.

If it was a war of 'Yoruba unification', neither Ibadan nor Ilorin succeeded in establishing the 'Pan Yoruba State'. **Truly, the wars were designed by the Fulani, using Ilorin, to colonize Yorubaland.**

The British ceded Ilorin (with parts of Oyo, Igbomina, Ekiti and Ibolu districts of Yorubaland) and its environs to Hausa/Fulani Emirate of the Sokoto caliphate in 1906². Since then, the **mutual suspicion among the Hausa-Fulani and the Yoruba** has accentuated the desire of both ethnic divides to out-do each other **in the struggle to rule and control the resources of Nigeria.**

1. *Groundwork of Nigerian History: Edited by Obaro Ikime: Heinemann*

2. *Groundwork of Nigerian History: Edited by Obaro Ikime: Heinemann*

15. British Expeditions

The scramble for Africa, by various European powers, began in 1880¹ and this made the Royal Niger Company both a trading and a governing concern for the British. In other words, both Lagos (1861) and the whole of the Northern States of the present Nigeria had been presumed colonized by 1886. While the Governor of Lagos, under the guise that he was clearing the trade route being blocked by the Yoruba wars, was adopting all means, including bribery, cajolery, intimidation and military aggression, to induce or coerce the Yoruba kings to sign treaties placing Yoruba territories in the West under British protection between 1886 and 1893, Lugard bombarded the North with military might from between 1897 and 1906².

16. Economic Exploitation

The colonization of the areas North and South of Rivers Niger and Benue by the British was almost complete by 1900.

The railway lines which began in 1895 from Lagos reached Ibadan in 1900, Osogbo 1905, Offa 1907, Ilorin 1908 and Kano 1912; and from Port Harcourt to Enugu coalfield between 1913 and 1915. These two latter cities began as a result of the discovery of coal at Enugu in 1908 and the

1. *West Africa, Under Colonial Rule* by M. Crowder

2. *The Development of Islam in West Africa* by Mervyn Hiskett: Longman

need for a railway outlet to the ocean through a more suitable route than Calabar. Thus the founding of Port Harcourt in 1913 and Enugu in 1915¹.

17. Ethnic Unification of Nigeria

Since the dissolution of the Ghana and Mali Empires, an ethnic state was unknown in Africa how much less multi-ethnic state. Oyo Empire merely aspired to form a Pan-Yoruba State.

Lord Lugard became the High Commissioner of the Protectorate of the North in 1900 while Sir W. McGregor was Governor of the South. Lugard left for the governorship of Hong-Kong from 1907 to 1912. He returned to combine the governorship of both the South and the North. He proclaimed the amalgamation and full colonization of the combined territories by the British in 1914. In the meantime, in 1898, in an article published by the 'Times' of London, Mrs. Flora Shaw, who later got married to Lord Lugard, had suggested a name for the new British colony so proclaimed. It was called "NIGERIA"².

It can thus be seen how the European powers, particularly the British in this case, had used the combined efforts of their explorers, traders, Christian Missionaries, Diplomatic Consulate, Administrators and military might

1. *The Groundwork of Nigerian History*, Edited by Obaro Ikime: Heinemann.

2. *Published Memoir of Chief J.S. Olowoyin, The Asiwaju of Offa.*

to out-manoeuvre the Hausa-Fulani Caliphate in its guile to use religious reformation to subjugate and colonize the native empires and kingdoms in this part of West Africa in the 19th century.

18. Imported Culture

At the return of peace about 1900, population was low in each of Yoruba communities except in places like Ibadan and perhaps Abeokuta, Ilesa, Ilorin and Aiyede-Ekiti where the fighting warriors were finally demobilized. Fear was still prevalent in the minds of the people as they were returning to their respective home towns after the wars.

Normalcy of administration became difficult to restore in view of the discordant rumours coming from "white man's tracks" (railway lines then being constructed) in certain areas and in view of the undecipherable instructions coming through interpreters from Ibadan and Lagos - which were then the new white man's administrative headquarters. The God of Abraham and Moses was already taking roots in Abeokuta, Lagos, Ibadan, Ilorin, Ijaiye, Ogbomoso and among several other communities of Yorubaland via Islam¹ and Christianity². Also, the returnee slaves, with anglicized names and culture, were already mixing with the natives as elites to adulterate their ways of life.

1. *The Development of Islam in West Africa* by Mervyn Hiskett: Longman

2. *Travels and Explorations In Yorubaland* by W.H. Clerk Edited by J.A. Atanda.

As part of transition in the process of cultural change, the Reformed Ogboni Fraternity (ROF) was formed and evangelized as a synthesis of Christianity and traditional religions¹

19. Divine Right of the King²

The tempo and sophistication of the economic climate of the people determines the environment, the thoughts and the social order (the culture) of their communities. Like most feudal communities, the Yoruba people began as separate independent **anachronistic** principalities each under cabals of despots. **The culture was totalitarian and autocratic with the divine right of the king**, some of which permitted no parliament, no trial by jury nor according to laws, and no tolerance for any idea that deviated from the notion of the divine right of the king.

20. The Culture of the Leaders

Put succinctly, the Yoruba culture was a mix of obedience to the norms, rules and commands of the native authority. Unfortunately, as we have explained earlier, the invasion of the slave traders for more than 300 years from the 15th and early 19th centuries and the 100 years of inter-tribal wars mixed with the British colonization

1. *Groundwork of Nigerian History*, Edited by Obaro Ikime: Heinemann

2. *The problems of Africa* by Chief Obafemi Awolowo: Macmillan

must have tremendously destabilized and confusingly adulterated the original feudal agricultural handicraft and caravan trading economy; and, in the same breath, falsified and negatively retarded the growth of the Yoruba traditional ways of life (culture).

In all these tribulations, the culture of the Yoruba traditional leadership and the elites has not been the same as the culture of the ordinary Yoruba men. Adam Smith, in his book, **'The Theory of Moral Sentiments'**, asserted that **'self interest and private passions of people' must be led in the direction which must be agreeable to the interest of the whole society** to enhance the smooth operation of what he called 'the invisible hand' in economic wheel of progress. In other words, 'self-interest and competition' must target **'social harmony'**.

Beginning from the time of the slave trade through the periods of the inter-tribal wars and the British colonization, **the culture of the Yoruba traditional leaders and the elites** (who acted as the agents of slave merchants in capturing their subjects as chattels, who sent their subjects to perish in the wars of territorial expansion and tribute extortion among their Yoruba kinsmen, who struggled to serve as chief tax collectors and cheap labour exploiters for the British colonial imperialists, and who mid-wifed the contrivance of the military-in-power) **can-**

not be said to be for the progress of the Yoruba society. In other words, the culture of the leaders and elites has not always been for the economic development of the ordinary people.

21. The Tragedy of Disunity

The tragedy resulting from all these was that, apart from the shared belief that each kingdom originated from Oduduwa, each community was completely independent of the other and, as the unit of political power, each kingdom saw itself first and fore-most as Owo, Ondo, Ekiti, Ikale, Ilaje, Ijesa, Ijebu, Egba, Awori, Egun, Oyo, Ife, Igbomina, Ibolu, Ilorin, Owu and not as the same, one with the other, as the Yoruba of Oyo and Ibadan. Even the name **Yoruba** is said to have had its origin, possibly as recent as 18th century, in the Hausa Language connotation for the description of the people of the old Oyo Empire¹.

22. Awolowo's Intervention

In line with his idea amply expressed in his "**Path to Nigerian Freedom**" (written in 1945 but published in 1947), Chief Awolowo initiated the formation of Egbe Omo Oduduwa in London in 1945. On June 5, 1948 Sir Adeyemo Alakija and Chief Obafemi Awolowo led a

1. The History of the Yoruba by Rev. Johnson: CCS Limited

number of leading Yoruba Obas and leaders to Ile-Ife to celebrate the inauguration of the Egbe¹ whose objectives were

- i. to promote, among others, the study of Yoruba language, culture and history; and
- ii. to unite the various clans and tribes in Yorubaland to generally create and actively foster the idea of a single nationalism throughout Yorubaland.

Also, the Egbe was to study fully the Yoruba political problems, to plan for the rapid development of its political institutions and to accelerate the emergence of a virile, modernized and efficient Yoruba state with its own individuality within the Nigerian Federation.

The Egbe also resolved to study the Yoruba economic resources, to ascertain its economic potentialities and advise as to the wisest utilization of its wealth so as to ensure abundance and prosperity for the Yoruba people².

Chief Awolowo later formed the Action Group – the political party that ruled the Western Region under his premiership for eight years. During that period, he endeavoured to promote the study of Yoruba language, culture and history, by introducing free primary education, awarding numerous scholarships to Yoruba youths at

1. *The Egbe Omo Oduduwa* by S.O. Arifalo: Steback Books

2. 'Awo' *The autobiography of Obafemi Awolowo*: Cambridge Univeristy Press.

secondary and tertiary institutions in Nigeria and abroad, and establishing radio and television services.

To consolidate their confidence and pride as a people within each of their communities, he constituted, into a local council, various clans with contiguous boundaries and similar cultural affinities. He democratized local government councils generally without disturbing the sovereignty of their traditional authorities. Free health services were introduced for the youths and his government built the Ibadan Liberty Stadium. His government founded the University of Ife (now Obafemi Awolowo University) and promoted agriculture through the establishment of a Marketing Board. The government opened many technical schools with a view to encouraging grassroots technology and the development of self-employment among trained artisans. Generally, the era of his administration brought unity and hope to the Yoruba people and promoted the economic, educational and social pride of the individual Yoruba man.

23. First Republic

The economic propensity of the Yoruba people was very promising during Nigeria's First Republic. Cocoa trade was good and cocoa farmers were living in abundance. Education became a major enterprise among the

populace; employment was full among the youths. Yoruba people were in the leadership among the University teachers and administrators, Federal Civil Servants, professionals generally (like lawyers, doctors, architects, engineers) and among the artisans like mechanics, masons and plumbers etc. The popular slogan was 'Life more Abundant' for Yoruba people.

24. State of Emergency

By the time of Nigerian Independence in 1960, the CULTURE of a Yoruba man was anchored on

- (a) *Good Education and Continuing Education,*
- (b) *Industry and Hardwork, and*
- (c) *Honesty and Patriotism to the Fatherland.*

Nigeria then had three largely autonomous regions, namely, Northern Region, Eastern Region, and Western Region (the homeland of the Yoruba people).

The Northern Peoples' Congress (NPC) was the party in power in the Northern Region, with Awolowo's Action Group (AG) in the opposition; the Eastern Region had the National Council of Nigerian Citizens (NCNC) as the party in power with the Action Group (AG) in the opposition. The Action Group (AG) controlled Western Region

while the NCNC was the opposition party.

At the Federal level, an NPC and NCNC coalition had Alhaji Sir Abubaka Tafawa Balewa (NPC) as the Prime Minister and Dr. Nnamdi Azikwe (NCNC) as Governor-General while Chief Obafemi Awolowo of the Action Group (AG) was the leader of opposition.

In May 1962, there was an open crisis in the AG which the then Federal Government exploited to declare a state of emergency in the Western Region. The Western Region House of Assembly and, indeed, the Government of the Region were suspended to pave way for the imposition of a caretaker government headed by Dr. M.A. Majekodunmi, an appointee of the NPC-NCNC Federal Government.

In the meantime, Chief Awolowo and many of his associates had been detained and eventually imprisoned for alleged treasonable felony since May 29, 1962¹.

25. Struggle for Power

Before the expiration of Dr. Majekodunmi's emergency administration, Chief S. L. Akintola, the Premier of Western Region, whose conflict with his party leader, Chief Awolowo, had led to the declaration of the state of emergency, quietly put together a new political party – Unity

1. The trial of Obafemi Awolowo by L.K. Jakande: John West Publication Limited

Peoples' Party (UPP). At the expiration of the emergency, Chief Akintola's UPP agreed to form a coalition with the NCNC opposition led by Chief Remi Fani-Kayode.

After the inauguration of Egbe Omo Olofin by Justice Adetokunbo Ademola on 29th February, 1964 with a view of sub-merging Egbe Omo Oduduwa (founded in 1945 and the precursor of Awolowo's Action Group), Akintola's UPP merged with Fani-Kayode's faction of the NCNC to form another political party known as Nigerian National Democratic Party (NNDP) (an off-shoot of the Egbe Omo Olofin). Chief Akintola remained Premier of Western Region while Chief Fani-Kayode was appointed Deputy Premier.

26. The Political Collapse

The population figures collated from the National Census of 1963 were announced in the early part of 1964. The figures were unacceptable to the NCNC, which rejected them outright. This development caused a crack in the NPC-NCNC Federal Government.

On 3rd June, 1964, and preparatory to the impending Federal Elections, the Action Group and the NCNC formed an alliance known as the United Progressive Grand Alliance (UPGA). The NNDP reacted to that by forming an

Alliance with the NPC, known as Nigerian National Alliance (NNA). Following the political crisis arising from the December 1964 Federal elections, there was tension all over the country.

On 11th October 1965, there was an election into the Western Region House of Assembly. The election was widely claimed to have been wantonly rigged. The Government which resulted from the disputed election appointed virtually all the members of the Government party in the House as Ministers.

The protest against the rigged election, which lasted ninety-three (93) days, was marked with widespread civil unrest, demonstrations and rioting popularly known as "WETI-E" (i.e. "BURN HIM"). The extent and duration of the violence led to a **coup d'état** on 15th January 1966 – the first in Nigeria.

27. Military Rule and the Civil War

There was a counter-coup d'état on July 29, 1966 because, as it was alleged, the then military Head of State, General J.T.U Aguyi-Ironsi, had set in motion the process of changing Nigeria's federal structure to a unitary system. Colonel Yakubu Gowon, then became Nigeria's next Military Head of State.

The confusion that followed led to the attempted secession of the former Eastern Region from Nigeria and a bloody civil war, which ended in 1970 after three years¹.

28. Leadership Culture of Selflessness

Chief Awolowo was released from prison to assist in rescuing Nigeria from disintegration. He served, for four years, as the Vice-President of the National Executive Council and Minister for Finance¹. In that capacity, he demonstrated to all Nigerians how leaders could exercise a culture of selflessness, probity and transparency in governance. He resigned from the Military Government in 1971 after having helped the country to fight and win the three-year civil war without borrowing any money and after ensuring that the country's economy had been made buoyant for the reconstruction which was to follow the war.

29. First Coming of Obasanjo

On 29th July, 1975, the military rulership of Yakubu Gowon was over-thrown and replaced by another military regime headed by General Murtala Mohammed who was killed on February 13, 1976. General Olusegun Obasanjo, another Yoruba man, who had not had prior opportunity of governing any part of Yoruba polity, took

1. *AWO on the Nigerian Civil War* by Obafemi Awolowo: John West Publication Ltd.

2. *Voice of Courage, the financing of the Nigerian Civil War and Its Implications for the future economy of the Nation*: Fagbamigbe Publishers, Akure.

over as the fourth Nigerian Military Head of State and ruled Nigeria for nearly four years – February 1976 to September 1979.

His political belief, according to his book **'Not my will'**, is in a Unitary Constitution for Nigeria under a one-party system of democracy.

30. Awolowo's Legacy Dismantled

In earnest, Obasanjo ensured that University of Ife (now Obafemi Awolowo University), belonging to the governments of the Yoruba people, was taken over by the Nigerian Federal Government. Also, the Liberty Stadium, Ibadan among others, was similarly taken over. The Western Nigerian Marketing Board, which was particularly promoting cocoa farmers, was abolished. Federal government took over all teacher training colleges and established secondary schools side by side with states' schools. He quickly began to award contracts for the building of primary school classroom-blocks under his central government's Universal Primary Education Programme (UPE). The Yoruba area, including Ilorin and Kabba, was quickly split into five states of Lagos, Ogun, Oyo, Ondo and Kwara; and each of them was further split into various local governments, which merged together many of the old local councils,

without much regard to congruent boundaries nor tribal affinities in many instances.

Obasanjo's government centralized the control of Radio and Television; and also centralized (by a decree) students' admissions to all the Nigerian universities. His Central Government dabbled extensively also into Agriculture and took over most state roads at random. All these began the emergence of neglect and decay of all economic and social infrastructures throughout Yorubaland.

31. Another Constitution

His government convocated a Constitution Drafting Committee and Constituent Assembly¹ which wrote the 1979 Constitution as a Federal Constitution. His administration amended and inserted many provisions to replace those recommended by the Constituent Assembly, to whittle down the 'Federation' orientation of the draft constitution and to allow for over-centralization.

He handed power back to civilian democracy in 1979, when, it was alleged, his regime used the 'twelve/two-thirds' ($12^2/3$) trick to manouver Shehu Shagari to power as President in preference to Obafemi Awolowo.

1. The Author was a member of the Constituent Assembly

32. UPN Intervention

The governments of Lagos, Ogun, Oyo, Ondo and Bendel States (i.e. states created out of the old Western Region) were controlled from 1979 to 1983 by Awolowo's Unity Party of Nigeria (UPN) under Alhaji L.K. Jakande, Chiefs Bisi Onabanjo, Bola Ige, Adekunle Ajasin and Professor Ambrose Alli respectively. They tried to use the UPN manifesto to sustain the Federal nature of Nigeria before the military took over the governments of Nigeria again in December 1983¹.

33. Military Contractors

The democratic experiment of the Second Republic collapsed because of the massive rigging of the 1983 elections. By July 1985, Major General Ibrahim Babangida overthrew Major-General Muhammadu Buhari to become the first self-styled Military President of Nigeria and he remained in power until July 1993. Generals Sani Abacha and Abdul Salami Abubakar took turns as military heads of Government from November 1993 to 1998 and 1998 to May 29, 1999 respectively, with the latter handing over power to an elected President after another trying spell of military dictatorship.

1. The Author was a member of the National Executive Committee of the UPN and also an important leader of UPN government.

In the meantime, the Western powers, through their agencies, World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF), exploited the naivety and credulity of the military rulership to teleguide and manipulate Nigeria's economy to suit their own economic interests.

All along, military rule had bred a sizeable number of **nouveau riche** from among the soldiers and their contractors from the spoils of the Biafran civil war and the mismanagement of the nation's oil money. These **nouveau riche** collaborated with the soldiers to sustain the continuance of the military in power for twenty-nine out of the forty-three years of Nigeria's political independence. During that period, the richest Nigerians were found among salary-earning public officers, while **factory owners and professionals were steadily pushed into penury**.

34. The New Breed

Most Nigerians, who were born since 1960, have spent a greater proportion of their lives under military rule. It is, therefore, not unusual for such Nigerians to have taken after the class of wealthy retired soldiers and their contractor agents. The habit of seeking wealth without sweat, which this situation has bred, is perhaps the potent propelling force for the prevalence of armed

robbery, cultism, fraud, and political gangsterism in our country today. As a result, private business initiative is being strangled; while inflation and unemployment are beyond control. As a way of coping with the resultant malaise, everybody now looks up either to government for patronage or to the prayer-revival services of the various gospel ministries which now abound in their thousands in the cities and the villages throughout Nigeria.

35. Regimes of Bribery

In order to ensure its longevity, the military governments resorted to bribing religious and other leaders with money or government appointments. States and Local Governments were created by fiat without any discernible or objective criteria. Communities were grouped into such contraptions without consideration for their cultural, historical or political compatibility. The more the States and local governments so created by the Federal Military Government, the more intense was the people's demands for more of such creations. Consequently, the poorer each resultant State or Local Government becomes, the more the inter-community feuds and industrial disharmonies they will have to contend with. Proliferation of States and Local Governments has impoverished the States and, paradoxically, enhanced the Federal Government¹.

1. Hence the out-cry for Restructuring of the Polity

36. Culture of Nigeria

Since the incursion of the regime of corruption, the **Culture of the Yoruba** people has been violently assailed, mocked and adulterated; and, at the same time, it is being replaced with the **culture of Nigeria**.

What we are saying, in essence, is that **CULTURE** is a by-product of a people's economic activities. If the economic activities of a people are, therefore, embedded in cultism, gangsterism, frauds and falsifications, bribery and corruption, street gangs and beggary (as are presently being encouraged and promoted in Nigeria), what then will be the **cultural outgrowth** of such a value system? What parameters shall be used, in such a circumstance, to measure and assess the **economic development** of such people as we are now in a scenario in which the culture is driven by the economic value system?

37. Over – Centralization of Powers

While the Federal government has bleached the States of all sources of internally generated revenue, it throws, like crumbs, only 24% and 20% of the revenue in the Federation Account to 36 States and 774 Local Governments respectively as allocations from the Federation Accounts¹. To worsen matters, the formula used in

1. A Fresh Start in Osun State by Chief A.B. Akande - a paper presented by Chief Bisi Akande, the Governor of Osun State at the meeting of the Nigerian Association of Governors on June 28, 1999.

sharing the amount due to the States and the local governments favours sheer land size as opposed to the needs of man who ought to be the focus of development.

38. Communal Feuds

Between the soldiers and their contractor-agents and several public officers as collaborators, the bulk of the resources of this country have been frittered away for self and family enhancement and through position and office aggrandizement.

Hence the constant communal feuds over demands for more states and more local governments by the numerous other citizens who are looking for opportunities to become councilors, governors and commissioners, or to be a part of the bureaucracy's self-serving officers and self-awarding contractors. The traditional leaders, too, are not relenting in their bids to share power with civil democratic authority, and, if possible, to out-manoeuvre it. This explains why the traditional fathers and the wealthy Nigerians feel more comfortable with military than civilian governments.

39. Obasanjo's Second Coming

In Obasanjo's second coming, one thing is certain: his government has no clue to the problems of the Nation's economy. The Governor of the Central Bank, Chief Joseph Sanusi, has often been quoted (e.g. by the **Nigerian Tribune** of Monday, 5th November, 2001 and by **This Day** – Abuja edition of Wednesday, 19th February, 2003) as saying that “**the Nigerian economy was performing below expectation**”. Senator Jubril Martins-Kuye, Obasanjo's Minister of State for Finance for four years (1999 to 2003), in **The Guardian** of Sunday 1st June, 2003 was being rather ambivalent when he said “...one should certainly acknowledge that the economy hasn't worsened. I am not sure whether it has grown appreciably”.

Obasanjo, himself, when swearing-in his Ministers on Friday, 18th July, 2003 **admitted**, and the media widely publicized him, that his **Federal Government of Nigeria under-performed** during its first term of four years. No matter how nicely it is being presented to the public, by members of the government, **Nigeria's economic situation has been very bad**.

Throughout the past four years, the Federal Government annually had deficit budgets and still constantly over-spent the budgets to a compound-deficit none-the-less. The in-

ternal debt of the Federal Government of Nigeria, as a result (excluding those of the 36 States and 774 local governments), now stands at some N1.3trillion which has worsened the country's inflation rate from 5% in 1999 to 18% in year 2003.

The external debt stands at US\$30 billion. It has also devalued the Nigerian currency from N80 per US-dollar in 1999 to N140 per US-dollar today; while the bank interest rate rose from 21% in 1999 to 40% in year 2003; whereas, in the advanced economies of Europe and America, the bank interest rate is still below 5% while in Japan, it is less than 1%. In the culture of Islam practiced in the Arabian States, bank interest rate should be 0%.

The high incidence of crime in Nigeria today is enough parameter to explain that **poverty and hunger are on the increase** in Obasanjo's centrally controlled economy of the past four years.

40. NADECO and 'June 12'

The emergence of Obasanjo as President of Nigeria remains curious and perplexing to the Yoruba people.

Yoruba people had stoutly resisted for over two centuries, the Hausa/Fulani caliphate's several attempts to

conquer and colonise Yorubaland. Therefore, a lot of suspicion had been introduced into the relationships between the two nationalities. That may largely explain why, since the time of Nigeria's First and Second Republics (1960-65 and 1979-83), the Hausa/Fulani from the North had always gone into alliance with the Igbo people from the South-East, in order to marginalize the Yoruba in governing Nigeria and in controlling its resources. Yet, in keeping with their culture of honesty and hardwork, the Yoruba have remained consistent in advocating self-rule and resource-control, for each of the nationalities, within the polity of one and united Nigeria administered **under a federal constitution**.

We have seen earlier, in this discourse, that Obasanjo first came to power in 1976 as a replacement for Murtala Mohammed who was killed in an aborted coup d'etat, masterminded by soldiers from the Middle-Belt, shortly after the conquest of the Igbo people by the Nigeria Army in the civil war. Obasanjo used that opportunity to dismantle the economic and social apparatus which Awolowo had created earlier, in order to strengthen the unity and the resolve of the Yoruba people in their struggle, for self-rule and resource-control.

In 1993, Alhaji M.K.O. Abiola, another Yoruba kinsman of Obasanjo, convincingly won the election to become the

President of Nigeria. His running-mate was Alhaji Baba-Gana Kingibe, a Kanuri national from the North-East, thereby creating a scenario in which the Hausa/Fulani, for the first time since 1960, might not be in the position to govern Nigeria and directly control all its resources. Perhaps acting as an agent of the caliphate hegemony, the then Military President, General Ibrahim Babangida, from Minna (another outpost of the caliphate), used a military fiat to annul that election. The furious protests which followed the annulment led to the emergence of General Sani Abacha, of some ambivalent provenance: (he was said to have been of Kanuri blood from the North-East, but was born in Kano among the Hausa/Fulani).

Abacha subsequently arrested Abiola (a Yoruba man) and detained him indefinitely. His action provoked prolonged protests and roadblocks, mounted by the National Democratic Coalition (NADECO), which was championed by Chiefs Adekunle Ajasin, Anthony Enahoro, Abraham Adesanya, Bola Ige, etc – all of the Awolowo political persuasion. The protests became known as the “Battle of June 12”¹. The focus of the battle was to secure the release of Abiola and to restore his mandate to rule as President of Nigeria, in keeping with the wishes of the Nigerian people freely expressed by the results of the June 12, 1993 elections.

1. *Clapping With One Hand by Olawale Oshun: Josci Publishers*

On his part, Obasanjo supported the campaign for Abiola's release, but he was not convinced that his mandate, to be President, should be restored.

General Sanni Abacha reacted by hoisting a most brutal and violent suppressive and oppressive governance on Nigeria. In the process, many Yoruba leaders, including Alfred Rewane, Kudirat Abiola and Adekunle Ajasin, lost their lives. Numerous others, including Obasanjo, were imprisoned, while many others escaped into exile in Europe and America. Late General Shehu Yar'adua, an Hausa/Fulani man from Katsina, who was tried and jailed with Obasanjo also died in prison eventually.

Abraham Adesanya, who was violently attacked and shot at but escaped death, and Bola Ige, who was subsequently detained, remained at home to lead the NADECO onslaught for the 'Battle of June 12' until Abacha died mysteriously in June 1998.

General Babangida, the retired Military President from Minna, who annulled the 'June 12' election, quickly positioned himself as the 'kingmaker'. General Abdul-Salam Abubakar, also from Minna, immediately succeeded General Sanni Abacha, as the next Nigerian Head of State. NADECO continued to insist on the release of Abiola and the restoration of his mandate. Obasanjo was released

from prison. Abiola, soon after, died in prison, also, in suspicious circumstances.

41. The Drama of Fame

Nigeria became tense and was at the brink of disintegration. To placate the Yoruba people, the Presidency of Nigeria was zoned, by the political class, to Yorubaland. With the support of Babangida and the Northern caliphate, Obasanjo used the political structures of the late Shehu Yar'adua to become the elected President of Nigeria in 1999.

Having curiously come from the prison in 1999, to step on the blood of both Sanni Abacha and MKO Abiola, to become the President of Nigeria (just like he stepped on the blood of Murtala Mohammed to become the Military Head of State in 1976), Obasanjo might have mis-interpreted the message of fate. From his writings and utterances, he seems to have convinced himself that he had effortlessly achieved what Obafemi Awolowo (who is popularly regarded by the Yoruba race as the re-incarnation of Oduduwa) could not realize in his life-time political struggles. This turn of attitude appears most perplexing to the Yoruba people.

1. Vice President Atiku Abubakar confirmed to the Author that it was General Abdul-Salam Abubakar who introduced Obasanjo to PDM (the political structure of late Shehu Yar'adua) through General Aliu Guso. Chief Sunday Awoniyi and Alhaj Abubakar Rimi (both prominent Northern leaders who are no members of PDM) related to the Author similar stories to corroborate Atiku's claim.

Perhaps, Obasanjo needs to be assisted to understand that "Presidency" was not Awolowo's goal in politics. Rather, Presidency was merely one of the means for him to accelerate the realization of his goal, namely: **Yoruba's cultural and political autonomy within a united Nigerian Federation** (among other goals). By seeing the Presidency as his own goal, has Obasanjo, as a Yoruba-man, not become a problem to the Yoruba people?

At present, there are no good roads to link any part of Yoruba States with the Edo people; neither are there good roads to link Yorubaland with the East and the South-South; nor any good road to link any of the Yoruba communities either with Lagos or with the capital city at Abuja or with the Northern part of Nigeria generally. At the same time, there is no regular supply of Electricity, water and communication system. The Universities and other levels of educational institutions are in shambles. For now, no defineable health policy for the people. As a matter of urgency, Yorubaland needs state police for more effective protection to lives and property and for peace, more serviceable and longer railway lines and uninterrupted electricity supply.

Hence, A common question which people now ask is: **what will the Yoruba people gain from Obasanjo's Presidency?**

42. Conflicting Definitions of Democracy.

Many people do not understand that democracy is the rule of the **Majority**, rather than the rule by **unanimity**. Awolowo believed in multi-party democratic federalism. The opposite to this school of thought is the participation of the **Yoruba in Nigeria's mainstream one-party** unitary system of government, which may be possible only in a family-setting but not in a multi-national state like Nigeria.

This distinction explains the absurdity in the argument of those who insist that Yoruba people must join the mainstream of Nigeria's politics in order to benefit maximally in the Federal Government's largesse. But do those people realize that when everybody joins the so-called mainstream politics a one-party system results? Do they appreciate that, under a one-party system, people's opinions are muzzled, their rights are curtailed, dictatorship flourishes, official corruption and abuse of office become the rule rather than the exception?

Ordinarily, at present, over-centralization of powers and authorities breed maximum inefficiency and corruption, so much that Nigeria is being branded one of the poorest countries and, perhaps, the most corrupt country in the

whole world. What, then, will happen if, in addition, the country adopts a unitary constitution in a one-party state? What is clear to those of us who belong to the school of **true democratic federation** is that Nigeria will experience no economic development under the present confused state of affairs. But would Nigeria not gradually lapse into a feudal kind of culture with the **divine right of the king**? Definitely, a unitary system of government for a multi-national and multi-cultural state like Nigeria will produce a **Supreme President with Maximum Powers**.

This is why the Yoruba people at home are pursuing the enthronement of **true federalism** in Nigeria. It is a crusade in which the **Yoruba people in the diaspora** are invited to actively participate, in order for us to build a united, prosperous federal Republic of Nigeria where every nationality can develop its own resources maximally for the benefit of all Nigeria.

43. Shameful Predicament

The pitch of the whole matter is that the Yoruba Nation has been sold out too cheaply by its class of elites and traditional leaders: first, to the slave buyers; then, to the tribal war-lords, to the British colonial masters; later, to the leaders of military coup d'états and, subsequently,

to political power-seekers, and, through them, to the international exploiters among the traders, the money-lenders of the London and Paris clubs, of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and of the World Bank. As a result of our persistent struggles for a better deal, the Yoruba people at home have now become weak, poor, hungry and helpless. Is it a question of "from grace to grass"?

The same class of elites and traditional leaders are now '**restructuring**' our people, according to them, into Nigeria's **main stream politics** of 'corruption and grab', with no regards to our distinct traditions, culture, political institutions and economy which are being lost to suppression, oppression and marginalisation over the years. The Yoruba people, at home and in the diaspora, must therefore come together to mount new and effective road-blocks for the 'gangsters' and the 'fraudsters' among us, including those already railroaded to power (be it at the local government, state or at the Federal level), with a view to preventing them from wasting our opportunity and resources for political stability and economic development.

44. The Yoruba in the Diaspora

Inspite of all the present problems confronting the Yoruba people, at least, we still have intact our homeland and active population.

The Jewish Rabbi, among the Arabs in Palestine, were not as strong on the ground 100 years ago as the Yorubas in Nigeria today, because they (the Jews) had no homeland. Yet, the Jews in the diaspora started Zionism which gave birth to the State of Israel in the Middle East in 1948.

It is therefore my hope that it should not be too difficult for the Yorubas in the diaspora to assist the Yorubas in the homeland on how to regain **Yoruba's cultural and political autonomy within the Federal Republic of Nigeria**, such that that autonomy would concede to the Federal Government the powers over citizenship, defence, currency and foreign affairs; while the Yoruba nation would retain and exercise the powers over economic infrastructures, like energy and electricity, communication, transportation (including railways and air transportation), state security and police, all forms of education and health services and agriculture. Until this is achieved, the economy will remain un-coordinated and destabilized, while, of course, the Yoruba culture shall continue to be negatively undermined, if not wiped out.

I begin to feel that a considerable deposit in your minds about Nigeria may be packaged as follows:

"In a right political setting, the brains, the exposures and the right connections

of the Yorubas in the diaspora are sufficient to give the Yoruba in Nigeria dependable energy, good railways, good road networks, clean potable water, mechanized agriculture, and full gainful employment for the millions of our educated, restless unemployed youths which, in return, may have salutary effects on everybody's economic well-being."

45. Awolowo's Credo

The national question must be settled at a conference of all Nigerian nationalities. It is now becoming most evident that the next decade will be doomed to a season of confusion in Nigeria unless:

- a. The operation of true and genuine Federalism becomes imperative as a basis for the continuing existence of the corporate entity known as Nigeria;
- b. The practice of democracy expressed through the ballot and based on clean, free and fair elections in which there would be no inflation of voters in the electoral register and no indiscriminate thumb-printing of ballot papers and other electoral frauds is enacted and ensured;

- c. The well-being of the people becomes the sole purpose and *raison d'être* of government and the glory of any government becomes the well-being of the people;
- d. Supremacy of the Rule of Law is absolutely accepted;
- e. A Party Manifesto becomes an inviolable covenant between the party and the people;
- f. Whether in the immediate or the ultimate, **power** is allowed to belong to the people;
- g. Man becomes the Unit, the prime mover and the sole purpose of development;
- h. The universality of Man, whether black, brown, yellow or white, is accepted;
- i. Self-discipline, self-denial and loyalty to common causes are practiced by the leaders;
- j. Revenue Allocation is principally based on the principle of derivation;
- k. Every man, who is a natural shareholder by birth of his group and nation, is therefore entitled to certain inalienable rights which will make it possible for him to have a sound mind in a sound body – “*Men sana in corpore sano*”

These inalienable rights include:

- (i) right to free education;
- (ii) right to free healthcare;
- (iii) right to good food and good housing;
- (iv) right to full and gainful employment;
- (v) right to all the things that are required to facilitate an all-round development of his mind, soul and body;
- (vi) the full enforcement of the fundamental human rights as set out in Chapter 4 of the 1979 Constitution and as repeated in the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

45. Conclusion

Ladies and Gentlemen, I thank you very much for your patient attention.

May God bless you all with blazes of triumph in all your positive expectations about the Yorubaland and its people.

Chief Bisi Akande

Oakland, California, USA.

August, 2003.



PROFILE OF THE AUTHOR

Chief Bisi Akande, born from a long lineage of Warriors and Administrators, hails from Ila Orangun.

An Associate Member of the Institute of Chartered Secretaries, Chief Akande has also been honoured with a fellow of the Institute of Cost and Management Accountants. Chief Akande holds the honorary doctorate degree of the LADOKE AKINTOLA UNIVERSITY, OGBOMOSHO in Business Administration. He also won 'OODUA EXCELLENCE AWARD 2003' of the Egbe Omo Yoruba of North America.

He served British Petroleum, a Nigerian Petrol Marketing Company, between 1963 and 1979 before he became Secretary to the Oyo State Government under Chief Bola Ige.

He began his political career as a councillor in Ila Local Government from 1971 to 1979. During the period, he represented Ila and Odo-Otin Local Government at the 1977 Constituent Assembly which wrote the 1979 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. He later became the Deputy Governor, having been unanimously elected by the Oyo State House of Assembly, in 1982. Together with Chief Bola Ige, he was detained, in various prisons by the military, for three years - 1984 to 1986.

On the return to civilian administration in 1999, Chief Bisi Akande won the election to become the Executive Governor of Osun State for the four years from May 29, 1999 to May 28, 2003.

Chief Bisi Akande holds many chieftaincy titles amongst which are **Asiwaju of Ila-Orangun, Agbaakin of Oke-Ila, Balogun of Aramoko, Basorun of Ilobu, Apesin of Ilase and Jagunmolu Oodua of Ijebu-Ife** etc.

Chief Bisi Akande is a co-author of **Ila-Orangun: the Principal City of Igbomina Land**. His other works include **A Fresh Start in Osun State, Moving Osun State to Prosperity, The Inner Mind: The Spirit that Moves Osun State Forward, and Restructuring: Nigeria's Approach to true Federalism**.