

Culture, Good Government and Democracy: A Political Communication Commentary on the Political Behaviour of the Yoruba Tribe in South-Western Nigeria

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ABSTRACT A lot of people were stunned in Nigeria, when the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) released results of the 2003 General Elections. People expressed dismay at the upset recorded by the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) in the South-West because since electioneering started in Nigeria in 1922, the people of the geo-political zone have been known as people with unquenchable allegiance to late Chief Obafemi Awolowo whose party and affiliates have been ruling in the zone since 1950s. The truth of the matter however is that the people of the region have a culture of being used to good government and when the ruling party of the fourth republic, AD failed to provide them good government, they denied them their votes at the polls. This is purely what democracy is all about. A blow-by-blow account of what led to the fall of AD in the South-West therefore is the objective of this paper. The methodology adopted in carrying out the study is content analysis.

INTRODUCTION

In every democratic society, government is not only expected to be responsible but responsive. The reason being that since the ancient times, political thinkers, especially those in the utilitarian school of thought, Jeremy Bentham and John Stuart Mill had succinctly made the point that a state is justified only on its account of ability to provide happiness for the greatest number of people.

According to the philosophers, the index for measuring good government are two explanatory variables, namely, 'pleasure' and 'pain'. To arrive at happiness for the greatest number of the people, they argued that there must be surplus of pleasure over pain. The sources of pleasure, according to them, are good laws and policies. It is therefore their expectation that government in any political community would use the task of legislation to engender the promotion of happiness in the society.

The question then is since the May 29, 1999 restoration of civil rule in the country, how has the civilian operators in the South-West geo-political zone fared? Did they improve the well being of their people or further impoverished them? Were they faithful in keeping their social contract with the people? These are issues trashed in this paper.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

i. Culture: One of the concepts, which have attracted commentaries from scholars in the Social Sciences, is culture. According to Popoola (2001), "culture is generally seen as people's way of life"¹. This will encompass the people's mode of dressing, eating, dancing, drinking, religion, beliefs etc hence; Akporherhe, (2002) similarly says "culture... has to do with the peoples organic way of life"². Quoting Tylor (1921), Oluode (1994) defines culture as "that complex whole, which includes knowledge, belief, art, moral, law, custom and other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of the society"³. However for the sake of the subject matter of this paper, we are equally interested in the aspect of the people's culture that is relevant to politics. In the words of Oyediran et al. (1990) "political culture is the pattern of individual attitudes and orientations toward politics among members of a political system"⁴.

Quoting Gabriel Almond and Sydney Verba, Oyediran further says political culture could also be "a particular pattern of orientations to political actions... It is also, a system of empirical beliefs, expressive symbols and values which define the situation in which political action takes place"⁵.

Therefore, the political culture of any nation-state will entail the political style, values, norms,

emotions and behavioural patterns of the citizenry toward politics.

Aside the fact that political culture helps in understanding how and why a political community operates, the concept further underscores how people act politically whether passively or actively. Hence, Omolayo and Arowolaju (1987) affirmed that: "The political culture of a people consists in the totality of the various forms of attitudes of the people towards political objects. That is, the regime and other forms of attitudes of the people towards political objects"⁶.

ii. Good Government: A major factor in the evolution of government has been attributed to the need for orderliness, peace and security of lives and property. Thomas Hobbes, an English philosopher who lived in the days of civil war (1642 – 51) argued in his *Leviathan*, published in 1651 that life of man in any unorganized society would be "solitary, poor, nasty, brutish and short"⁷ (see Appadorai, 1975). Another English philosopher, John Locke argues that government was instituted in civil societies on the understanding that it would protect rights and property. His words:

*"Obedience to the commands of a given government must be based on the fact that men join together in civil societies and established government for only one reason and that is to secure the personal rights to life, liberty and property..."*⁸ (See Popoola, 2001a).

Good government therefore can be defined as a functional political terminology, which presupposes absence of arbitrariness, human rights abuses, bastardization of the polity, parochialism and inordinate ambition. As a political concept, good government drives home the point that the essence of politicking is welfarism. That the primary goal of any party in power irrespective of the level of governance in the society remains the need to better the lot of the citizenry. Therefore, whosoever is saddled with the responsibility of steering the ship of state must strive to make an impact positively on the people. Justifying the relevance of Jeremy Bentham and John Stuart Mill's postulation on "the greatest happiness of the greatest number", Appadorai (1975a) says: "The formula of the greatest happiness of the greatest number still remains valuable in politics. It supplies a 'slogan', which gets imprinted in the popular mind and supplies a standard, a touchstone, with which one can judge state actions. The basic idea of

utilitarianism is simply this: All actions must be judged by their results, by their fruitfulness in pleasure, and this pleasure must find actual expression in the lives and in the experience of definite individuals"⁹.

7In the Nigerian context, the following checklist could be regarded as an index of good government. They are: freedom of speech, provision of good roads, affordable shelter, education for all, health for all, right to own property. Security of life and property, provision of uninterrupted power supply, provision of potable water, equal opportunity for all, transparency and social justice.

iii. Democracy: The final decade of the 20th century can be referred to as watershed in the life of humanity. The decade witnessed a dramatic surge toward democracy. Tyrannical and despotic governments are collapsing; people are embracing democracy, a system that allows them to decide their destiny.

Etymologically, democracy derives from two Greek words 'demos', meaning the people and 'kratia', meaning rule. (See Ogunsanwo, 2002). Arithmetically, when the two is joined together, the result is rule by the people. Hence, according to Abraham Lincoln, "democracy is government of the people, by the people and for the people"¹⁰.

For any polity to wear the toga of democracy, Omolayo and Arowolaju (1987) argued that such society must have satisfied certain conditions, which they classified as characteristic features of democracy. They include: popular sovereignty, equal opportunity for all, real choice between alternative programmes, regular elections, popular consultation, majority rule, consensus on fundamentals, representative-ness and well informed electorate.

THE YORUBA AND THE CULTURE OF GOOD GOVERNMENT AND DEMOCRACY

One of the three major ethnic groups in Nigeria is the Yoruba. They are geographically located in the South-Western part of the country, occupying the following states: Oyo, Ogun, Osun, Ekiti, Lagos and Kwara. Historical account has it that they equally spread to Edo state. Olurode (1994), quoting Johnson (1922) provides two historical accounts concerning the origin of the Yoruba.

The first version says the Yoruba owe their origin to Ile-Ife, pointing out that as a matter of

fact, all royal lineages of Yoruba towns trace their origin to Oduduwa.

It stated “the Yoruba sprung from Lamurudu, one of the kings of Mecca whose offspring were Oduduwa, the ancestor of the Yoruba, the king of Gogobiri and of the Kukawa. A civil war that broke out in Mecca caused Oduduwa to travel eastwards and after 90 days settled in Ile-Ife, where it was reported, he met Agboniregun, the founder of the Ifa Oracle¹¹.

The second version claimed that Oduduwa descended from heaven, using a chain with a bit of earth in a small shell and created the earth. Notwithstanding the controversy over the origin of the Yoruba, it is however indisputable that they originate through Oduduwa.

At the time when representative democracy began in Nigeria, courtesy of the 1922 Sir Hugh Clifford’s constitution, it began in Yoruba land i.e. Lagos. That was the beginning of a concerted effort at instituting democracy and good government in Nigeria. From the 1922 experiment, bigger forms of democracy evolved, leading to the first Federal election in 1954. Elections into the offices of Regional Premiers provided late Chief Obafemi Awolowo, the opportunity of becoming the leader of the Yoruba race. Prior to this phase in the life of the Yoruba, Oyediran (1979) reveals that “Awo emerged as champion of Yoruba nationalism first through the Egbe Omo Oduduwa (Society for the descendants of Oduduwa) and soon after as leader of the Action Group Political Party¹². During his tenure as Premier of the Western Region, Awo gave his people the taste of democracy and instituted the culture of good government. He was an unpretending Ghandist. He used glasses similar to that of late Mahatma Ghandi throughout his lifetime. He led other regions in the country in the provision of people-oriented programmes. He had the goal of pursuing welfarism in government. He worked assiduously towards creating egalitarian society. Part of his achievements in office includes: the development of a Universal Basic Education (UBE) Scheme in 1952. He was the first to conceive the scheme in Nigeria. The defunct Eastern and Northern Regional Governments launched theirs in 1954 and 1976 respectively (See Popoola, 2002) Awo’s government also established the first television station not only in Nigeria, but the entire continent of Africa (Uche, 1989) Other areas in which he made the impact of his government felt was in the areas of road construction, industrial

development, commerce, agriculture etc.

Writing on “*Awo: The era of firsts in the South-West*”, Ogbontiba, (1994) says: “Agricultural settlements and Institutes were first established in the Western Region. It was in the Western Region that a minimum living wage was first introduced in Nigeria. The first ever-industrial estate and housing estate in Nigeria were established in the Western Region.

“The very famous Liberty stadium was the first and the best of its kind in Nigeria when it was built in 1959.

“The West under the premiership of Awo was the first region ever buoyant enough to grant the federal authority (Balewa’s government) a sum of N7m as loan. It was also in the West that a six-year primary course, instead of the then eight-year primary course was first introduced. Awo was the first to set up Pilgrims Welfare Board anywhere in Nigeria. It was as if no leader existed in other regions when Awo was scoring first in virtually everything¹³.

At the birth of the second republic in the country, in 1979, Awo who formed the defunct Unity Party of Nigeria (UPN) repeated some of the programmes through his governors who ruled the entire region including the old Bendel state now Edo and Delta. Therefore, through his performance in office, Awo became the political Idol of the Yoruba race and this explains why leaders of AD found it easy to secure the votes of the electorate in the zone by merely telling them it was Awo’s party.

ALLIANCE FOR DEMOCRACY (AD): A QUESTIONABLE SUCCESSOR OF UPN

At the dawn of the Fourth Republic, one of the registered political parties in the country then was Alliance for Democracy (AD). Notable followers of Awo registered the party. They told people of the South-West zone that it was a re-incarnation of the old UPN of Chief Awolowo. For the simple fact that all the major actors in the party were self-proclaimed Awoists, coupled with a manifesto, which was similar to that of the defunct UPN, the people believed them and massively voted for their candidates in all the transitory elections of 1999. Between 1999 and 2003, the entire southwest was a *defacto* one party zone. However, after four years in office, the elected governors of the party except one, that of Lagos, failed woefully in office, leading to the

quiet revolution which swept across the zone on April 12 and 19, as well as May 3rd, 2003 during which elections were held into National Assembly, Governorship and Presidency and State Assemblies.

The election was a revolution because it was the first time Awo's party or its affiliate will lose the control of the zone. Secondly, it was the first election in which the Yoruba voted for the mainstream political party in Nigeria. Ever since, analysts have been pondering over why the AD was disgraced out of office in the South-West.

WHY AD LOST ITS STRONGHOLD, YORUBA SOUTH-WESTERN NIGERIA

A perplexing and worrisome political culture in Nigeria is that of losers not accepting defeat. Since independence in 1960, Nigerian politicians hardly accept the result of any electoral contest in which they lost. That of 2003 elections was not an exception. While accepting that there has never been and there may never be a perfect election, the outcome of the 2003 elections in the South-West as shown in the table 1 could be described as reflecting the wishes of the people of the zone. Going by the high level sophistication of electorate in the zone, it would have been extremely difficult for any party to rig all the elections in the zone without violence.

The result showed that the PDP swept the polls in the entire South-West in all the elections except in Lagos State. The victory of the party was consistent right from April 12 when the elections began with the conduct of the National Assembly poll. The allegation that the poll was rigged by the AD was therefore a face-saving device.

The truth of the matter is that the AD lost in the zone due to a number of factors.

i. Absence of Dynamic, Principled and Selfless Leadership: The fall of AD at the polls during the 2003 general elections was not a surprise to any careful follower or observer of political events in Nigeria, since May 29, 1999 restoration of civil rule in the country. In a piece I wrote in my weekly column, *State of the Nation*, while editing the *Diet Weekend* newspaper edition of March 25, 2001 page 10 titled: "In search of Awo's Successor" which I reproduced below, the point was sufficiently made in the piece that a major problem of the AD is that of leadership and once the head is rotten, you can imagine what would happen to the rest of the body. Excerpts from the piece.

"In the heat of the Action Group (AG's) crisis of 1962, the crisis which was least expected by Nigerians in view of the way the party was structured and organized, which made it the best political party then in the country especially in the area of discipline and organization, a number of uncomplimentary remarks were made on the personality of the leader of the party, late Chief Obafemi Awolowo (SAN).

"This development forced many local as well as international scholars to begin serious probing of the problem. One of the international scholars who ventured into the project was professor Richard Sklar who said while quoting a distinguished colleague of Awolowo in his report that 'he is so transparently honest and so religious that men are bound to respect him. Although no man is indispensable but he would be difficult to replace. He leads without making people feel he is leading. When a majority decides against his opinion, he concedes but he tells them to make a note of his dissent and he has generally been proved right'.

"The above submission of Sklar has a lot of

Table 1: PDP and AD score sheet in the south-west

States	House of Reps		Senate		Governorship
	Parties & No. of seats captured	Total No. of fed. Const.	Parties & No. of seats captured	Total No. of Senate seats	Parties and total vote received at the Governorship elections
Ekiti	PDP 5, AD 1	6	PDP 2, AD 1	3	PDP 220, 907, AD 169, 191
Lagos	PDP 2, AD 18	20	PDP -, AD 3	3	PDP 700, 506, AD 911, 613
Ogun	PDP 9, AD -	9	PDP 3, AD -	3	PDP 449, 335, AD 231, 982
Ondo	PDP 8, AD 1	9	PDP 2, AD 1	3	PDP 611, 926, AD 204, 434
Osun	PDP 8, AD 1	9	PDP 3, AD -	3	PDP 493, 492, AD 237, 052
Oyo	PDP 8, AD 6	14	PDP 2, AD 1	3	PDP 635, 730, AD 395,668

Sources: PUNCH Newspapers Editions Of April 16, 2003 pgs 4 & 11 and April 21, 2003 pgs 1 & 2

heuristic value to this write up. Even though the Yoruba race today has a leader in the person of Senator. Abraham Adesanya, but then the utterances and actions of the NADECO chieftain since the return of democratic governance in the country is a big source of concern.

“At the time when Chief Adekunle Ajasin, the man who hosted the inaugural meeting which gave birth to the defunct AG in April 1951 in his Owo country home died, concern was expressed over who should succeed him. Senator Abraham Adesanya rose to the occasion as he did not only impress Nigerians and other people who believed in the cause being fought by NADECO then concerning the de-annulment of June 12, 1993 elections but also provided the rallying point for the continued relevance of the Yoruba pan-socio political group, *Afenifere*, whose meeting moved to Ijebu-Igbo, Senator Adesanya’s country home.

“The Peoples Consultative Forum (PCF) then which later metamorphosed to *Afenifere* was not only articulate but decisive in responding to issues of national importance as it affects the interest of the Yoruba nation.

“Senator Adesanya endeared himself so much with the marvelous ways with which he piloted the affairs of the group then.

“His uncompromising stance with the policies of the late General Sani Abacha led to his attempted assassination. As a result, his party swept the polls in the entire South-West because people perceived him as a principled politician like late Chief Awolowo.

“However, since the May 29, 1999 restoration of civil rule in the country, certain actions and utterances of Pa Adesanya have led to my conclusion that a successor had not been found to Awolowo.

“One peculiar thing about Pa Adesanya during the present democratic dispensation is that he has been consistently inconsistent. A little example will help to illustrate this assertion.

“First, at the time when President Olusegun Obasanjo offered his daughter, Mrs. Modupe Adelaja, ministerial appointment, Pa Adesanya not only condemned the offer but put his credibility on the line saying “if truly she is my daughter, my blood which I strongly believed she is, she won’t accept the offer”. The truth of the matter is that today, Mrs. Adelaja is almost two years in the Obasanjo’s cabinet. (She has now completed four years, the entire life span constitutionally allowed for president Obasanjo’s

first term in office).

Secondly, Pa Adesanya did not handle the Toronto-cum-Chicago certificate scandal of Governor Bola Tinubu of Lagos State in the same manner he reacted and suggested the case of the former Speaker of the House of Representatives, Alhaji Salisu Ibrahim Buhari, whose case was almost similar to that of Tinubu should be handled. Other areas where Pa Adesanya failed to impress his admirers and supporters in the AD is his poor handling of the disagreement between some of the AD governors and their deputies.

“Analysts are of the view that much shouldn’t be expected in this wise from Pa Adesanya who has fallen apart with his deputy, Chief Bola Ige, due to his leadership style.

“The most unfortunate and unbelievable action of Pa Adesanya since the May 29, 1999 restoration of civil rule in the county was his recent decision to accompany former head of state, General Abdulsalami Abubakar to Chicago State University, United State, to attend a lecture series covertly instituted by authorities of the university at the instance of some Nigerians who amassed their wealth through questionable means.

“Pa Adesanya’s explanation when confronted by newsmen for reasons for his action was also disturbing and annoying. He said he agreed to accompany Abubakar because ‘he is a gentleman who kept his words to return Nigeria to democracy’. This is totally unacceptable. Has Pa Adesanya forgot various revelations from the Oputa panel that late Basorun Abiola was alleged to have been killed by the Americans?

“Will Pa Adesanya claim ignorance of the conspiratorial role played by Abubakar in Abiola’s death? After all, he (Abubakar) invited the Americans. Abubakar’s claim of innocence in Abiola’s death is weak. If truly he loved Abiola, why did he not effect his immediate release on his assumption of office? Instead of releasing Abiola who was facing persecution for winning an election, Abubakar preferred to release those tried and jailed for coup plotting, whether it was a phantom coup or not, his government refused to make a categorical statement in this wise.

“Therefore, why should Pa Adesanya accompany such a person to no other country but US that was implicated in the death of Abiola? Going by Senator Adesanya’s current attitude, there is no doubt that Nigerians will soon agree with my submission that the Yoruba race is still in

dire need of a leader of Awo's sterling qualities when chairmanship and governorship candidates of the AD will be decided in 2003".

It is now an established fact that AD lost in the South-West because of the automatic second term ticket it gave their governors instead of allowing the governor-ship candidates to emerge through the democratic process i.e. primary election.

ii. *Failure to Provide Good Government:* The greatest beauty of democracy is that the electorate are king makers. They possess the right to enthrone and dethrone any crop of leaders. According to Jean Jacques – Rousseau, "sovereignty belonged to the people". In democracy, the political sovereigns are the voters. The people of South–West behaved truly to type having been accustomed to good government under late Awolowo and rejected the AD due to poor performance in office.

Temitope Ajayi, in a piece titled "what the electorate voted for" argued that the AD governors lost because they were found wanting by their citizens. Quoting the Secretary-General of the Yoruba Council of Elders, retired Justice Adewale Thompson; he described the victory of the PDP in the South–West as: "The desire of the people to go to where there is money. Our governors lost because people want to go the party where there is money. PDP has money and it is the party that controls Nigeria"¹⁴.

However, a fundamental factor in the trashing of the AD in the South-West stems from the fact that the enlightened voters in the region perceived some of the AD governors as non-performer. And contrary to their assertion that they are Awoists, emerging facts after four years of the governors in office revealed that they are political opportunists. In the words of Dotun Oladipo: "None of the leaders after Awolowo could fill into the larger than life image Awolowo created for himself as the leader of the Yoruba. Between the periods Awolowo died and when Adesanya took over, the bond of the Yoruba race had been weakened to a great extent"¹⁵.

Awo lived for the masses but the so-called Awoists in AD including their defeated governors hated the people who elected them as they failed to better their lots.

Commodore Olabode George, National Vice Chairman of the PDP in the South-West offered a similar explanation to that of Dotun Oladipo, Speaking in an interview published on pages 18

& 19 of the *Punch* newspaper edition of April 4th, he says: "I want to say it bodily that apart from say one or two of the South-West governors, all others are just masquerades who are not fit even to stand in the toilet of Chief Obafemi Awolowo"¹⁶

Awo's widow, Chief (Mrs.) H.I.D Awolowo was quoted by newspapers as saying the defeat of the AD by the rival PDP in the South-West was timely saying it was not true that the governorship elections were rigged in the South-West. The *Comet* newspaper edition of May 6, page 5 quoted the Yeyeoba of Ife as telling PDP South-West delegation who paid her a courtesy visit in Ikenne, Ogun State that "the electorate voted for candidates of their choices"¹⁷.

Chief (Mrs.) Awolowo had earlier in 2000 decried the administration of one of the AD governors, Chief Bisi Akande of Osun State and consequently advised him to desist from using her husband's name to deceive the down-trodden masses in his state. The *TNT* evening tabloid in its edition of February 3rd 2000 lead page quoted Chief (Mrs.) Awolowo as telling Chief Akande at a public function in Osogbo, the state capital thus: "I earnestly plead with you to drop further claim of being an Awoist. Your conduct in office is totally a negation of what my husband stood for. He never owed workers salaries throughout the period he was in government. He rather devoted his entire life to selfless service to humanity"¹⁸.

In the words of Bola Badmus, "the AD was seriously jolted and it was like the Nigerian voters were tired of the party and wanted to be done away with completely"¹⁹

On why the party lost Ondo to the PDP, former AD whip in the Senate, Sen. Gbenga Ogunniya said various communities in Ondo State believed the PDP led government would provide infrastructure that could aid development. Apart from the factor of President Obasanjo, the AD stalwart says: "Agagu has the initiative. He is better connected, by far more educated and more importantly, more diligent. The difference is clear; he added"²⁰

Concerning Lagos State, the only AD state that the PDP could not capture in the South-West, provision of good government was the reason. The *Nigerian Tribune* in its edition of April 12, 2003 page 3 quoted the education minister, Prof. Babalola Borishade as attributing the loss of Lagos State to AD to the outstanding performance of governor Bola Tinubu, adding that: "Tinubu had been very hard working in Lagos and

everybody attest to it that he is one of the action governors in the country. As a result of such performance, he had been able to hold on the state”²¹.

iii. Intra Party Crisis: Since the party was formed in 1999, there was no occasion when it was crisis free. The crisis ranged from the appointment of late Chief Bola Ige as Minister in the Obasanjo cabinet to that of leadership tussle between Mallam Yusuf Mammam and Alhaji Abdulkadir Ahmed. Others are the preponderance/overbearing influence of *Afenifere* on the party and the governorship/deputy governorship crisis in Lagos and Osun states. There was also the problem of wrong selection technique of deciding flag bearers of the party at the polls.

Inability of the leadership of *Afenifere* to manage the crisis generated by the mode of emergence of the candidates and their choice split the party beyond imagination as most of those that defeated the incumbent AD governors in the PDP were either former members of the AD or had the support of a large army of defeated members of AD.

iv. Parochialism and Selfishness: Apart from intra party squabble, most of the governors failed to deliver democratic dividends to their subjects due to parochialism and self centre attitudes. Quoting Dotun Oladipo once more: “Lam Adesina, the governor of Oyo State was asked on a live radio programme why his children had been exhibiting affluence all over the state when the masses were suffering. Adesina replied that his children had equally suffered in the past and should be allowed to enjoy themselves. The statement was not taken lightly”²²

His counterpart in Ekiti State, Otunba Niyi Adebayo was reported by the *Diet* weekend newspaper edition of Jan. 14, 2001 page 3 as having sold a two-storey building located at Victoria Island, Lagos, belonging to his father Maj. Gen. Adeyinka Adebayo (rtd) to Ekiti State government at a whopping sum of N380m (about \$49.4m).

v. Human Relations: The Osun state governor, Chief Bisi Akande also lacked one of the essentials of democracy, which is that of human relations. Akande had problems with the people of the state right from when he came into office. First, he sacked a sizeable number of the state’s workforce. His greatest undoing was his poor human relations. “For every complaint that was laid before the governor, the complainant had the

caustic tongue of the governor to deal with. In his early days in office, the governor told sacked civil servants, especially teachers that government job was no longer a Father Christmas show. True talk, but the way Akande put it set him against the teachers and a lot of other people of the state”²³. Oladipo added.

vi. Over Confidence: It is often said that it is not yet over until it is over. In politics, it is dangerous to underrate opponents. The AD underrated the PDP. They did not prepare very well for the elections except Tinubu, the governor of Lagos State. They took things for granted, believing that the name AD/*Afenifere* will fetch them their re-election. This was the case in Ogun and it explains why Osoba was very bitter over his defeat.

vii. The Role of Yoruba Royal Fathers and Pact Between The PDP And AD: Another strong factor which helped the PDP in the South-West was the subterranean moves by eminent royal fathers in the zone to help the President remove the toga of President without a constituency. It would be recalled that the President succeeded in 1999 without the votes of his kinsmen. However, with the hostility of the northwest geo-political zone to the president, coupled with the fact that Obasanjo’s re-election would help the Yoruba in soothing frayed nerves over the annulment of June 12, 1993 presidential elections, presumed to have been won by their son, late Basorun Abiola, the Yoruba Obas were reported by the *Diet* weekend newspaper edition of 18th February, 2001 page 4 as working hand-in-hand with PDP top shots to accomplish the task.

Another strong factor was the pact between the party and the AD in which the latter refused to field presidential candidate in order not to divide the Yoruba votes. Shedding more light on the pact, Commodore Bode George (rtd) told newsmen: “What we said was that apart from the presidential election, we would compete at every other level”²⁴.

viii. The Role of OPC: The dreaded Yoruba ethnic militia, the Oodua Peoples Congress (OPC) was not left behind in the campaign, which dislodged the AD out of power in the South-West. In a recorded strongly worded message to the people of the South-West geo-political zone, aired on radio, one of which was monitored on *Metro FM*, a federally owned radio station based in Lagos, President of the group, Dr. Frederick Fasehun said: “We disagree unequivocally with any individual or any group of individual taking measures

debilitating to Chief Olusegun Obasanjo's re-election. A major shift in the assumed and popular belief of the Yoruba should derive from the popular consensus of the Yoruba people. Chief Olusegun Obasanjo in the past four years has directed this nation on the path of honour, honesty, economic development, socio-cultural emancipation and democracy. Nigeria had been battered too much for anybody to heal all her ills in four years.

"The OPC commends Chief Obasanjo's efforts and hereby encourage him to continue along this path of commendable performance. We hereby admonish every Yoruba person in any part of Nigeria to avoid any arrogance, selfishness and self-aggrandizement in the name of partisan politicking to put Yoruba interest first and foremost and vote without equivocation for Chief Olusegun Obasanjo.

"We also advise those who are thinking otherwise to re-think and avoid leading the Yoruba race along the politically blind ally. Any stand against Chief Olusegun Obasanjo at this point in time is a stand against Oodua and an open invitation to Gen. Buhari to come and subjugate Nigeria again, a process in which the Yoruba shall be the biggest loser as usual. A word is enough for the wise.

"Yoruba youths have their future to consider and defend. Chief Obafemi Awolowo himself would not have taken a position against Chief Obasanjo at this point in time. Yoruba *e ronnu, Oodua a kowa mo see o* (Yoruba should re-think, Oodua will guide us aright)"²⁵.

CONCLUSION

This paper has succinctly made the point that for any political party to remain relevant politically, it must provide good government. The blow-by-blow accounts of reasons behind the fall of AD in Yorubaland were provided with the conclusion that the PDP failed to make in-road into Lagos, one of the six South-West states previously controlled by the AD due to the fact that the governor of the State, Sen. Bola Tinubu provided good government.

NOTES

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