

ELECTIONEERING AND VIOLENT POLITICAL PROTESTS IN SOUTH- WESTERN NIGERIA, 1979- 1983

Duyile, William Abiodun, Ojo, Olayinka Olabimpe,

Ekiti State University, Faculty of Arts, Department of History and International Studies, Ado Ekiti, Ekiti State
Nigeria

Arts, Education Department, Bamidele Olumilua University of Education, Science and Technology, Ikere Ekiti,
Ekiti State, Nigeria.

ABSTRACT: This paper will examine the circumstances that surround the 1983 Election. The research will also study the sources, as well as the nature of politics in the South West Region of Nigeria. The research will identify the role played by Political Parties that led to the collapse of the Second Republic.

The study will depend on documentary data and oral data. The documentary data were sourced from books, newspaper and magazines. The oral data were transcribed for analysis. The documentary data were subjected to textual and contextual analysis.

The expected contribution to knowledge include: to analyse the role played by political parties covertly or overtly in the collapse of the second republic. The paper made an expository on the nature of politics in Yorubaland. .

I. Introduction

The inevitability of the collapse of the Second Republic were indeed glaring in the events that existed before 1983 marked a period of cascading fortunes for the country. Hope and anxiety defined the four years of the Second Republic. But soon petered out. Anxiety soon yielded way to tension, then to crises. Soon the land (southwest, Nigeria) was enmeshed in a mix of despair, thievery, and violence. Something would have to give. And it did(The Vanguard Newspaper, 1999).

The military because its assumed nonpartisanship had managed to achieve the set goals of entrusting the nation, especially the southwest of the country in the hands of politicians (within the context of their political parties). Although the soldiers achieved these set goals, they did it without them unfortunately sowing a seed of discord between the political parties. The factors of distrust, hatred, anger, jealousy, and tribalism all contributed to the crisis of 1983. As a result of these factors, the state of the nation within 1979 and 1983 have been one that was engulfed by tension, fear, intimidation of what may come. The Shagari and Awolowo saga 1979 and the Waziri versus Azikiwe clashes and also the Aminu Kano against the personalities that ran the National Party of Nigeria were all grudges that proffers fears among the people(Richard, 1987).

The grudges were indeed two folds intra party as in the case of the Unity Party of Nigeria and the inter party rivalries which could be attributed to all the contesting parties. The Unity Party of Nigeria, the party of Chief Awolowo held the southwest as its domain. A genesis of the discord can actually be traced as far back as the First Republic and the crisis that brought the military for the first time into our political leadership. Even after 11 years of military leadership (1966-79) politicians are still distrusting of themselves as in the First Republic. In September 21, 1978 General Obasanjo announced that political parties were now allowed.

Therefore, at least, unbanning the practice of politics. The first party that was announced was the party of Chief Awolowo and later other parties began to emerge. About 52 or thereabout had canvassed for support but only 19 of them completed their registration files. And only five were picked, setting up another chapter of Nigerian history. The five registered parties were as follows: Great Nigeria People Party (GNPP), National Party of Nigeria (NPN), Nigerian Peoples Party (NPP), Peoples Redemption Party (PRP) and Unity Party of Nigeria (UPN). Actually there would be only three parties: UPN, NPN and NPP. Even as the five parties emerged, the southwest surely had the five parties' representatives operating in its domain, but the activities of two (NPN and UPN) seems to dominate the others. The fears expressed at the time of the lifting of the ban on politics that such practices as "horse trading,

shifting alliances, sectional interests and petty loyalty” would sabotage the new Republics were certainly, real(Ige, 1992).

From the way political parties were formed it was like the parties were gradually becoming an evolution of the past (1st Republic). Among the Yorubas the shifting of alliances had changed a little bit from that of the 1st Republic. The Yorubas had shifted their alliances to the Unity Party of Nigeria and waiting at the wings were the National Party of Nigeria because of some prominent sons of the Yorubas who belong to this party and the Nigeria Peoples Party also for reasons that Yorubaland as a lot of Igbos and not for the old factor of Ziks popularity in the West.

It was clear that the formation of this new parties had inherently been tribally motivated. It is the contest of the two main rivals in the southwest that later led to friction erupting in the 1983 crisis. In simple words, it was the Unity Party of Nigeria and the National Party of Nigeria that held sway in the politics of Yorubaland before 1983(Ajani, 1999). Of interest also to these parties were the strategic position Western Nigeria was holding at the time. The fact that South Western Nigeria was host to the capital of Nigeria made it understandable for political parties to want a substantial share of the region.

The political logic of Yoruba politics has been one which is scheduled or insular in nature. And it is in this nature of politics that volatility have remained part of it. Yorubas adhere strictly to having their identity intact(Duyile, 2003). They are wary of foreign intruders and would rather even in friendship with outside regions play the domineering role. Even at this, Yorubas are a disunited lot that often clashes with one another. Tracing Yoruba history, you shall know that the people loves competition and the competition it had within its sub-ethnic group consciousness engendered distrust among the groups(Duyile, 2003).

Professor Jacob Ajayi’s off-quoted remark that the colonial period will be seen in retrospect to have been a little more than an episode in Yoruba history is especially pertinent here. It is impossible to study the lives of political violence/divisions among Yorubas since the 1950s (and also of our period of study) without becoming increasingly inquisitive of the period before or even before colonialization(Akinjogbin, 1980).

In a pattern of political alliances, the Oyo empire in approximately about 1830 collapsed and the intrigues and dynamism ensued after this period in Yorubaland-remained with us to this day. The various wars fought during the Yoruba civil wars became the queens of bad politicking among Yoruba sub ethnic groups-the Oyo (Ijebu confrontations after independence can be traced back to the Owu war of the 1820s; the rise of political prominence of Ibadan which began as a military encampment of elements of decimated Oyo empire(Akinjogbin, 1980); and the forced southward emigration of the Egba formerly subjected to Oyo to settle at Abeokuta and the resultant conflicts with their new neighbours such as the Egbado even continued to this day(Duyile, 2003).

These experiences have left its mark in the patchwork of allegiances and oppositions among the dispersed ancestral groups and kingdoms of the Yoruba. Mutually, a culmination of the above and the events of the First Republic have created in the minds of the sub-ethnic groups lines of friendship and warfare.

Anyone with vivid memories of the 1979 elections could not help noticing the change from the mood of optimism, and even joy, which had then characterized the approaching end of thirteen year of military rule, to one of uncertainty and fear as the 1983 elections approached. Elections and violence are woven together in the collective consciousness of Yorubas.

The considerable loss of life and property, particularly in the Western Region during the final general elections of the First Republic in 1965, was still deeply etched in the minds of the populace. Moreover, many of the surviving members of the political class of the First Republic and their political machines, are once again the political gods and goddess in 1978-83. The expectation that history was likely to repeat itself in any elections under a civilian party government was therefore a rational and even a self-fulfilling one for the citizens of the south west. InfeanyiAzuka, contends that it is difficult to identify any political party that does not run an army of thugs... Thuggery has become rapidly enthroned in Yoruba politics(Duyile, 2003).

Richard Sklar comments were vividly captured in Richard Joseph’s book after he observed thuggery during a political campaign(Richard, 1987). The anxiety that Claude Ake had spoken about in 1981 was gradually succeeded by a palpable fear and a sense of increasing intimidation by mid-1983. A large migration of people was captured by newspapers as regards anxiety, fear and intimidation the people were afraid of.

Chief ObafemiAwolowo often pointed out that his party was the most disciplined in Nigeria, and had not experienced the same division as the others(Ige, 1992). However, by the time of the 1983 elections the UPN (the strongest party in the south west) found itself deeply divided in specific localities. The cause of these rift was not ideological in nature, nor did it involve conflicting attitudes towards collaboration with the NPN. Instead, what tore apart some state branches of the UPN-minimally in the case of Ogun and Oyo, but disastrously in the case of Ondo-were battles over the party’s nominations, especially to run for offices of state governor and senator(Richard, 1987).

Such battles usually pitted long standing associates of Awolowo, such as Governor Michael Ajasin of Ondo, against younger aspirants, such as Ajasin former deputy Akin Omoboriowo (Richard, 1987). The UPN was further stymied in its ability to work co-operatively with the other opposition parties for two reasons: the Igbo-Yoruba conflicts which had entrenched what could be called an NPP UPN "incompatibility," and more personalist concerns regarding the presidential ambitions of Awolowo (Richard, 1987).

So, although the UPN was actively engaged in meetings of the "progressive governors," and although it participated in the negotiations which led to the creation of the Progressive Peoples Alliance (PPA) in March 1982, it did not enter into the subsequent arrangements to have a new party, the PPP, absorb the opposition parties and party factions (Ajani, 1999). Despite their shared wish to unseat NPN from power; what divided the NPN and the NPP could not, in other words, be prepared over in the promotional literature of a new party organization.

NPN the strongest party that surely would threaten the UPN in the western region were very strong in the South West states. The State of Ogun state harbours two large groups of Egba and Ijebu whose age-long rivalry continues to linger on till this day (Akinjogbin, 1980). The NPN parades an enviable political powerhouse that includes heavyweights as Chief Toyé Coker (its gubernatorial candidate for 78), Oba Lipede, the Alake of Egbaland and Oba Sikiru Adetona, the Awujale of Ijebuland. The NPN played a trump card of ethnic politics by trying to change the minds of Ogun State to understand that the two UPN bigwigs were Ijebu's (Awolowo and Bisi Onabanjo (gubernatorial candidate) (Duyile, 2003). In Oyo, same were evoked only in the case of this state the NCNC, and AG rivalry were being evoked. That of Ondo State was one that was a crisis waiting to happen. The Deputy had broken ranks with the Governor (Omoboriowo (DG) Governor Ajasin) and the people were anticipating a crisis more so as Omoboriowo had joint rank with NPC (Ige, 1992).

The 1983 election with NPN power of incumbency began a titanic battle who all get the prize of the south west. However, when there was no longer a theoretically nonpartisan military government standing behind the Electoral body, it meant violence will eventually rear its very ugly head in Yorubaland.

II. The Election of 1983

Politically induced violence has been a recurring decimal in South Western Nigeria, starting from as far back as the pre Independence era. As 1983 comes near, the fear of political violence loomed large among the people of the southwest. The elections of 1983 been the main culprit. At the root of the violence that have characterized the chequered history of Yorubaland have been perceived injustice, marginalization, oppression of a minority ethnic group (such as the minority among the majority like the Modakeke/ Ife palaver) by a majority group, electoral fraud, imposition of unpopular candidates on the electorate or the ill-treatment of popular, grassroots politicians by unpopular, dictatorial cabals.

An election is 'free and fair' or 'massively rigged' depending on the fortunes at the election of the candidates or party making the allegation (Amurfi, 1993). The collapse of the Second Republic cannot be simply attributed to any particular act of omission or commission on the part of the politicians who took control of the offices to which they had been elected or appointed after October 1, 1979; or the Nigerian soldiers who intervened on 31 December, 1983, cannot also be held responsible, merely by that act, for the collapse of the Second Republic (Duyile, Military History Lecture Note, 2005).

In Yorubaland, however, history had told us virtually all aspects of the electoral process become, at some moment or another, subject to disagreement. When the degree of trust sinks to a low level, as in 1983, the controversies accumulate faster than they can be resolved (Richard, 1987). The 1979 elections was concluded and was a success partially in the southwest (Duyile, Military History Lecture Note, 2005). The reason for the word partial to connote the election of 1979 was for, there were indeed proven and unproven allegations by various parties as regard the 1979 election. The accusations and counter accusations of rigging thrown by parties at each other makes the election of 79 inconclusive and party machineries were set in motion against each other to capture power in 1983.

In the best of circumstances, it is extremely difficult, even for political scientists, to define what constitutes a free and fair election. In a book titled "Elections without Choice", edited by Hermet Rose (Amurfi, 1993) and others, the authors make the assertion that free, fair and competitive elections associated with the western democracies, as opposed to "election without choice practiced by authoritarian regimes or one party democracies found virtually in most regions of the world is supposed to contain, inter alia, the following essential elements (Amurfi, 1993):

Competition between political parties or candidates contesting an election and freedom of voters to cast their votes. This freedom entails the voters' right:

a) to have his franchise recognized through registration;

- b) to vote without being segregated into categories dividing the electorate and revoking the idea of popular sovereignty;
- c) to cast his ballot free from external hindrance and in secret;
- d) to decide how to vote, even to spoil his ballot without external pressure; and
- e) to expect his ballot to be counted accurately even if it goes against the wishes of those in power (Amurfi, 1993).

In our context, the 83 elections did not meet the above conditions. The 1983 elections were not the only set of difficult hurdles that the Second Republic needed to get over, but a process which brought into sharp relief the fundamental problems of the new political system itself. Moreover, one of the major premises why violence erupted in 83 was the inability of the constitution and the society at that period to look into the fundamentals that had disrupted party formation and politicking since Nigeria's inception. The political culture in Yorubaland is captured by the following remark: Rigging elections has for a long time been as Yoruba as pounded yam or Amala (Duyile, *Electioneering and Violent Political Protests in South- Western Nigeria: The 1983 Experience*, 2003).

Electoral fraud leads to disruption and this invariably combines with other factors-leading to politically induced violence. Electoral frauds is not an evidence of a "commitment to democracy" but rather belongs to a general social practice deeply embedded in the culture of party politics in the Southwest.

Against a background, of fear, unresolved disputes, sticking to an identity; the Yorubas wanted a peaceful resolution to the 83 election but with the attitude of the NPN and UPN nothing short of political violence would have emerged. The reports of malfeasance which showed from constituencies throughout the southwest as the elections commenced-underage voters, the distribution of already thumb printed ballots, unauthorized possession of electoral materials, forged voting cards, impersonation etc could not be kept in any reasonable perspective, because each documented instance suggested how much of evil perpetration had been committed (Duyile, *Military History Lecture Note*, 2005).

Within FEDECO, which swelled within a matter of months into an organization of a million employees of superintendent an electoral machinery with, at its base, 160,000 booths, the reassuring voice of its Chairman, Ovie Whiskey, was sometimes out of harmony with the frank and revealing statements of its commissioners at the state level. One of these, Colonel Ayo Ariyo of *Bende State*, made it a point to warn the nation how unprepared FEDECO was?

The activities of the UPN and NPN created tension in the Southwest of Nigeria (Ajani, 1999). In 1983, there was only one relatively peaceful election and it is that of the Presidential election held on August 6. By the time of the gubernatorial elections on 13 August, the struggles in the streets, on the airwaves, and in the compounds where FEDECO headquarters are located, had begun to supplant the actual voting itself as arenas of competition for, or resistance to, political power (The Vanguard Newspaper, 1999).

Overt appeals to the populace to resist the NPN's fraudulent electoral conduct were made in increasing frequency especially by UPN militants in the western states. The UPN major newspapers made the following cautionary aim threatening remark: "No party should allow the NPN to monopolise violence to rig the elections. Men of brawn are met only in the NPN. Chief Bisi Akande, UPN candidate for deputy governor in Oyo, declared that if his party lost as a result of electoral rigging in the state, there were two lines of actions open to it: the court of law or the people's judgement (Richard, 1987).

In fact, both line of action was invoked by the UPN. Throughout the Southwest states thugs went about beating suspected NPN members. Some FEDECO headquarters were placed under virtual siege. In Oyo, Ondo, Ogun, UPN and NPN officials kept vigil, watching each other and the FEDECO representatives, to forestall what each believed would be an attempt by the others to command a doctoring of the voting results (Richard, 1987).

In Ondo state where the carnage reached levels of public mayhem similar to those in 1964-5, entire families of politicians were wiped out, and hundreds of houses were set on fire including the state headquarters of FEDECO. Even FEDECO staffs were threatened to announce the correct result or face the annihilation of themselves and their families. In Abeokuta, capital of Ogun State, the transmitter of the Federal Television Station was attacked and set on fire (Richard, 1987).

In those states such as Oyo, and Ondo, where the electoral contest had suddenly become intense after a landslide victory of the UPN the bloodletting and arson were greatest. As indicated, political violence has become a line of action to further pursue claims to power of political parties. In the case of the southwest it was the struggle for power between the NPN and UPN that have prominently led to the violence. Elections and violence are woven together in the collective consciousness of Yoruba people (Ige, 1992).

At 1.30 am on the morning of 11 August, 1983, a long five days after the first elections were held, Alhaji Shehu Shagari was declared, re-elected President of Nigeria by a vote of 12,037,648 to 7,885,434 (for his nearest rival Obafemi Awolowo)(Ajani, 1999).

Shagari's vote had doubled from his 1979 total, that of Awolowo had increased by approximately 40 per cent. Of equal importance is the fact that Shagari obtained a minimum of 25 per cent in 16 states of the Federation compared with 12 states in 1979 (which had then provoked the re-interpretation of his required vote spread?

The three states which remained outside Shagari's 25 per cent plus column were all in the West: Ogun, Ondo and Lagos. In Oyo, the scene of such bitter conflict in mid-August, Shagari and the NPN registered an increase from 12.75 per cent in 1979 to 37 per cent in 1983. Chief Awolowo refused to initiate legal action to challenge the NPN total votes. Politics played everywhere consumes energy because it is the gateway to wealth(Richard, 1987).

One major cause of the electoral disorder of 1983, was the effort by the NPN to move from being a ruling party whose strength exceeded that of other parties, to one which enjoyed a monopoly of power within the political system(Duyile, *Electioneering and Violent Political Protests in South- Western Nigeria: The 1983 Experience*, 2003). The desire of the NPN is to usurp power from the UPN in the South West, or to be more precise Yorubaland. The political machinery on ground was one that was very well oiled and the seclusive approach adopted by the political bigwigs that ruled Yoruba politics at the time created a crunchy, cracky, unfriendly attitude towards the NPN(Duyile, *Military History Lecture Note*, 2005).

In Oyo, the battle involved as much bloodletting as exchanging of vituperative words. Here the NPN achieved strategic victory number three, with the declaration of Omololu Olunloyo of the NPN as governor in place of Bola Ige of the UPN. In Oyo, an even wider gap of 84 percent (UPN) to 14percent (NPN) in 1979 had been replaced by a more decisive NPN "victory" of 58 percent to 39 percent in 1983. Such a reversal in the very heartland of Yoruba politics cannot be made without the mobilization of a wide range of institutions, resources and "informal" means by the victorious party(Richard, 1987).

Bola Ige went to court confident that the revelation of the many irregularities in the election would swing the governorship back to him, or, at least, result in the cancellation of the poll and the call of a new vote. Hundreds of thousands of voters in the key towns of Ilesha and Ibadan had not been able to exercise their voting rights on 13 April because of a variety of impediments. And then there was the case of Modakeke, in which the injunction obtained against the use of the fraudulent electoral register had been disregarded by FEDECO officials(Ige, 1992).

Bola Ige, a veteran of many legal battles in Nigeria, came to court armed with an array of documents showing how FEDECO's figures differed from those noted by party agents in many constituencies' Ige's appeal did not, however, succeed. The fact that these conflicting results had been registered on forms printed by Ige's agents, because of a shortage of forms in the constituencies in question, led to their rejection by the courts. This ruling was sustained on appeal(Richard, 1987).

Surely the irregularities glaringly displayed during the course of the 1983election began that chilling bloodletting violence in 1983, The fact that the events and actions of the NPN and UPN can be fingered as the immediate cause of the collapse of the Second Republic(Richard, 1987).

Apart from the immediate causes of perceived injustice, marginalization, greed, electoral fraud, imposition of unpopular candidates on the electorate...etc. there indeed are inherent factors that makes politics in Yorubaland very violent.

The fact that the political lords of Yorubaland are adamant insularist who prefer in any dealings with the outside regions (South East, North West, North East, North Central, and South South) to run the show rather than reason and maybe subordinately play politics with this outside region.

The inherent factor in Yoruba politics are the fact that politics in Yorubaland is insular in nature and the political demi-gods do not intend changing this seclurist approach to politics.

Whenever a Yoruba son goes out to reach out to politicians of other regions and takes a weaker position in the new arrangement with politician from other regions, then intends to lord its new found friends over the Yoruba people, an apparent rejection of such arrangement most often leads to violent clashes.

Yorubas detest treachery and celebrate whenever a traitor is captured. Yorubas guard their identity jealously and its these kind of arrangement made by some of their sons that always make politics in Yorubaland inherently volatile. We can easily cast our minds back at characters like Chief Akintola, Chief Omoboriowo, Chief Omololu Olunloyo.... etc and how their activities gave rise to violence(Richard, 1987).

The tension, fear and anger in Yorubaland had overflowed its cup thereby bursting into violence immediately election results were announced in 1983, every other facets of life collapsed in the South West created b

vacuum that was later filled by killings, maiming, stealing, raping, anger, frustrations ...etc. The inability of the electoral body to curb the inefficiency of the judiciary to resolve political issues created this vacuum.

The Nigerian judiciary was even less able to fill its original role. The courts could not operate in any salutary way when drawn into this process of vote adjusting, of having to decide which of conflicting, and unquestionable, sets of results were most "improbable". Which impromptu solution are most appropriate(Ajani, 1999).

On balance, the courts gave the NPN what it sought. In addition to Shagari's re-election. The NPN in the South West region was able to hold on to the near doubling of its governorship victories in Nigeria, capturing two UPN strongholds in the South West(Richard, 1987).

The dethronement of two UPN stalwarts from their governorship stools began violence that ate up the Second Republic. The fact that the people had lost confidence in the courts allowed for violence to be pursued. By September 1983, politics had nearly completed its decay into a state of war in the South West region. Judges cannot adjudicate wars; they can, if they choose, acknowledge the victors and vanquished(The Vanguard Newspaper, 1999).

The events of 1983, hopeful, but hopeless situation began so much violence that was reminiscent of 1966 - Ibadan and Akure were in flames almost immediately the elections were announced. The people had lost hope in the judiciary and were determined to make a change. Streets in the South West were littered with bodies, blood, and burnt properties(Duyile, Electioneering and Violent Political Protests in South- Western Nigeria: The 1983 Experience, 2003). In some cases witchcraft was introduced to fight each other. The NPN stalwarts were disappearing either by running away from the region or missing and not to be seen again.

The residence (South West region) increasingly panicked and desperately scattered away to where they could find safety. The violence had overwhelmed the federal government and on a daily basis countless numbers of people were losing their lives and properties. The continued incitement in the mass media by mostly the UPN stalwarts fuelled the streets with violence(Richard, 1987). The two major actors in Ibadan and Akure escaped... but some other NPN bigwigs were not so lucky. Thuggery and police brutality appeared to have become a regular feature of the era. The people as at this time wanted some form of respite as houses, properties, human life, etc were lost to political violence.

The insular politics played by Yorubas had like in 1966 proven to be impregnable to so called intruders. In the 1983 elections, one fascinating features of that era were the alliances. The Peoples Parties Alliances (PPA)was made up of UPN, NPP (following the breakdown of its initial accord with NPN), GNPP and PRP. All four parties ganged up to stop the NPN for the 1983 elections. The activities of political parties backfired on them. The South West region was heavily hit by political violence.⁶³

Thuggery and associated violence manifested in every aspect of our political journey in Nigeria. The South West of Nigeria is prone to such violence. Thugs have become private armies of political stalwarts creating pandemonium in Nigeria. Violence is regarded by many as a perceived response to oppression of the people or the greedy, wish of the incumbent wanting to remain in office forever(Duyile, Military History Lecture Note, 2005).

In different parts of our country especially the South West and South East political zone of Nigeria. All hell was let loose when perceived individuals were accused of trying to subvert the will of the people during the 1983election. The events in Ondo, Oyo, Lagos, Ogun, comes readily to what the author meant.

The outburst of violence in the South West of Nigeria was more to do with perceived mind set of South Westerners of collaboration of some citizens(South West indigenes) with the Northern oligarchy to rule the West. These perceived traitors of the South West were bent on not only denying Chief Awolowo the presidency of the country but also upsetting the apple card by snatching some of the states, then controlled by the defunct Unity Party of Nigeria(Ajani, 1999).

The skies were brightened by the fires lit by mobs angered by what they saw as electoral frauds especially in the Old Ondo and Oyo states. In Oyo State Dr. Omololu Olunloyo was declared winner over the then incumbent, Chief Bola Ige and Chief Akin Omoboriowo who had been deputy to the then incumbent Governor of Ondo state, Chief Michael Ajasin, was declared winner of the gubernatorial polls(Duyile, Electioneering and Violent Political Protests in South- Western Nigeria: The 1983 Experience, 2003).

Whereas the fires in Oyo soon burnt themselves out, and Olunloyo assumed office, Ondo state was a different kettle entirely. Omoboriowo left with his tails behind his legs, refused to return to claim or actualize his mandates. So much was lost as a result of this political violence. Hatred, evil, corruption(Ajani, 1999), increased drastically creating a lingering pain among the people for a long time to come.

III. Some Pacifist Measures

Two main reasons can be adduced to be the reason why violence engulfed the streets of Oyo and Ondo - the slow and ineffective way the courts dealt with political matters and the partisan way security agencies went along with political violence. The government of Shehu Shagari and the Assembly had to think of something to curb the violence everywhere in the cities of the South West region⁶⁷, even though it was clear that the Federal government were overwhelmed by the activities of violence on ground. They knew something had to be done quickly so that power can remain in the hands of the NPN.

Drastically, government took action (at least from the FG level) against political violence, of course without the support of other parties, especially Yorubas who felt cheated at the perceived lordship of their Hausa counterparts. Yorubas love to adhere to their identity and this also includes political identity. The NPN although had in its fold prominent Yoruba sons was still seen by the masses of the South West region in the same way as the NPC (Northern people Congress) of the First Republic.

As far as the Yorubas were concerned the NPN was an evolution of the NPC and as such could not be trusted. Even as the UPN continues to linger in one crisis or another, the UPN was still very popular with the people but not as what it was in 1979. The UPN had charismatic leaders who had a popular following. Followership in Yorubaland was based basically on trust and nothing else. Even at this, Yoruba politics was also heavily sentimental; issues such as clan loyalty, remained a factor towards Yoruba politics.

It was factors mentioned above that made the job of security agents such as the police very difficult. It was clear that the police was on hostile ground. The type of approach the perpetrators of the violence use were guerilla(urban guerilla). Like urban guerilla movements, they strike and the disappear into the crowd. A crowd which collaborates with the perpetrators.

In the event of an envisaged violence that may rear its ugly head in 1983; there appeared in 1983 two studies of the 1979 election, each of which, by frankly revealing the variety of malpractices which had occurred, served as a grim for cast of what was in store for the country later that year.

The first study was written by a senior official responsible for the conduct of the 1979 elections, and the second was the work of two university academics (one of them a sometime journalist). Ahmadu Kurfi, drawing on FEDECO's own report on the elections, pointed out that in 1979 surplus ballot papers had been sold to the highest bidder, that polling agents had thumb-printed ballots for those who paid them, that ballot boxes stuffed with pre-marked ballots were substituted for the real ones on the way to counting centres, and that the deliberate invalidation of ballots by polling and counting officials had occurred(Kurfi, 1993).

Ogunsanwo and Adamu similarly demonstrated in copious detail how members of the huge temporary bureaucracy recruited by FEDECO to conduct the elections, as well as police and other security officials assigned to guard against electoral malpractices, and finally the officers, candidates and supporters of the contesting parties, engaged in extensive acts of collusion to manipulate various aspects of the electoral process(Anifowoshe, 1978).

The contention can be made, on the basis of the evidence accumulated by Ogunsanwo and Adamu, that Nigerian elections are principally a competition for control of the electoral machinery and, secondarily, a competition for individual votes. Any party which fails to win control of this machinery in a particular area, or to neutralize the influence of its opponents over the personnel operating the machinery, risks losing elections regardless of the actual support it enjoys among the electorate(Duyile, Military History Lecture Note, 2005).

Issues raised such as the above makes it difficult for elections to pass through without dissatisfaction from the public. So, violence does erupt starting from the body conducting the elections, to the electorates, and also the machinery (as the police) were allegedly loyal to the government in which case is the Federal Government(Duyile, Electioneering and Violent Political Protests in South- Western Nigeria: The 1983 Experience, 2003).

For it is the jurisdiction of the Federal Government to be in charge of the police. When the South West went up in flames, the police loyalty was to the Federal Government since public opinion in Yorubaland was to the UPN, the NPN led Federal Government controlled the police making it difficult for the police to be trusted. This however doesn't mean that the NPN does not have a substantial share of supporters in the South West of Nigeria.

Two reasons therefore can be adduced to reasons why the NPN led FG found it difficult to curb the violence in Yorubaland. The police were distrusted, and the courts were slow in adjudging cases of dispute. Unlike in1979 when the military appeared neutral, the NPN surely was partisan and regarded as an enemy by the large number of UPN supporters in the South West. The police armed with guns were however emphatic in trying to keep peace in the land(Duyile, Electioneering and Violent Political Protests in South- Western Nigeria: The 1983 Experience, 2003).

They informed the public of a curfew from 6 o'clock everyday (to stop the violence which happens in the night). Police were everywhere on the streets to enforce peace. Thuggery and lawlessness played a significant role in

Nigerian politics (most especially Yoruba politics) between 1979 and the military takeover in 1983. Political thuggery, especially, aggravated the crisis in Western Nigeria. The thugs who were hired by the politicians were referred to indifferent ways(The Guardian, 2002).

Those that supported the cause of the party were called 'body guards', 'party boys' and party stalwarts, whereas those hired by opponents were dubbed 'party thugs'. The rise of professional violent groups can be traced back to the Yoruba warfare of the nineteenth century when armed retainers or war boys were kept by some chiefs - thuggery and lawlessness attracted many people, particularly the unemployed and under employed. It became dangerous to move freely from one part of the region to another. Pedestrians were molested and motorists were waylaid(Duyile, Electioneering and Violent Political Protests in South- Western Nigeria: The 1983 Experience, 2003).Thuggery in Yorubaland has a long history in Yoruba politics and Yoruba's not sounding derogatory were at home with political violence they see violence as a way of stopping those they are not in agreement with.

All these put together created a difficult scenario for the police. The population of the police was little compared to the enormous task at hand. Fighting seems to happen from everywhere in the land (South West Nigeria). The thugs were like guerilla mercenaries who went about perpetrating their nefarious crimes to protest the victory of the NPN in Oyo and Ondo State.

Even with the police trying to keep peace, it was glaring that they were constantly losing grip of the whole situation and the courts were just too slow to curb the violence on the street. The utterances of the political bigwigs also aggravated the fighting on the streets.

Politicians ran out of their states to foreign lands and those who were not as lucky died in the hands of these political thugs. Supermarkets, houses, cars, were constantly burnt until the military took over. In Western Nigeria both the Government and opposition parties, in their bid to gain power, retained these professional thugs(Punch, 1999).

Also of great importance was the part played by students, farmers, artisans, and market women, most of whom based their support for the riot on particular local grievances and discontent against the NPN regime. All these mentioned names were supportive of the UPN. In fact the UPN Were basically a grass root party and they unlike the NPN which had an elitist following in the South West naturally felt frustrated by NPN incursions politically in the South West.

There is overwhelming evidence to show that the riots, looting, arson, and assaults were focused mainly upon party leaders and supporters – especially those who were regarded as the symbols of authority among the people. Another focus of attack was the Hausa-Fulani group residents in parts of the region. Hausa were constantly being waylaid in their vehicles, robbed, and assaulted

To contain the volatile situation in the West (the state governments and the federal government) took very strict security measures). For many weeks political meeting were banned by the police. A dusk to dawn curfew was imposed, while the possession and use of arms and ammunitions were declared illegal.

The police were sent on the streets to curb violence on the streets, In Oyo and Ondo were politically induced violence were at the worst the police did their best to stop the menace of this violence.

The newspapers through their editorials appealed to the public for peace. The courts were allegedly partisan and could only do little to help the police in dousing the tension.

Even as all efforts were put at hand to douse the violence engulfing Yorubaland, the people remained undaunted and continued in their agitation to revert things back to the status quo before the 1983 elections. It is at this juncture that violence refused to end in Western Nigeria that brought forth military intervention in Nigeria.

IV. The Comeback of the Military

The collapse of the Second Republic was in the year 1983, a period which brought forth military intervention. The South West was invariably under a siege before the 1983 elections. There was no military strength to enforce peace or is it because of the biases of the NPN government that peace couldn't be achieved. The more democratic systems of courts were completely misused and rigging was intensely increased during the 1983elections(Duyile, Electioneering and Violent Political Protests in South- Western Nigeria: The 1983 Experience, 2003).

Yoruba politics as have always been involving "two faces": "an interior face, concerned with the allocation of reward to those who are loyal to the Yoruba self-interest and exterior face, concerned with maximizing the profit of this internal gain in an overall view of the Nigerian polity(Ajani, 1999). There is also added to these a sub ethnic consciousness that may sometimes trigger clashes with the broader Yoruba interest.

It maybe a psychological, historical, sociological interest pursued by the subethnic group or clan. Violence is a strategy to acquire power at all cost. In Nigeria, and the relentless struggle to procure individual and group benefits via the temporary appropriation of public offices eventually reducing the electoral processes to a Hobbesian state of war(Punch, 1999)

The Nigerian soldiers who intervened on 31 December 1983, cannot beheld responsible merely by that act, for the collapse of the Second Republic, nor can the thousands of politicians and government officials detained and were tried when the military took over.

The collapse of politics can be adduced to the monster of political violence. Politician it would assume had learnt nothing from the past and politics still wear the inevitability of the collapse of the Second Republic were indeed glaring in the events that existed before 1983. The year 1983 marked and one of the most endowed countries in the world, arguably the most important.

Hope and anxiety defined the four years of the Second Republic. But hope soon petered out. Anxiety soon yielded the enormous violence that eventually brought the military back.⁷¹ So at the time a band of soldiers pounced on the Shagari administration removing them from power. Nigerians rejoiced once again. Giving the impression that their saviour had come.

V. Concluding Remarks

Chief Awolowo describes the Yorubas' as "highly progressive people but badly disunited group" from our earlier narrations, we can deduct that Yoruba politics was marred by this above descriptions of the people. Violence is implicit in both the organization of public life and the structure of power. In the analysis, we saw how violent conflicts and threats of violence were manifest and irreducible aspects of political activity emanating from the First Republic delving into Second Republic.

The evidences as indicated shows that politically disaffected individuals and groups employed force and threats of force as a means of redressing grievances, while, those on the other side of the coin who are in position of power used violence as a technique of rule in a harsh and blatant way, to be said in our previous chapters, violence eludes explanation by a simple, single cause.

The riots, uprising during our period of study showed that people who are disillusioned and alienated from their authority react in certain situations. The riots were a protest by the majority of the Yorubas to show their detest to how shoddy the election of 1983 were and the injustice also contributed to this evil of political violence. The open disregard for the people's wishes, as expressed through the ballot box, injustices perpetrated by the military, therefore created the immediate hostile climate for widespread riots and for attacks on the symbols of authority. As noted by post and vickers:

The rebellion arose immediately from the conflict among political parties over control of the system of rewards.

The Action Group crisis, which came into open in 1962, was mainly a struggle for power and control of the Western region between the various personalities and groups within and outside the Region. The same personalities clash also emanated its ugly head during 1983 election crisis that finally collapsed the Second Republic. If non-violent means of access to power (as through the ballot box) and redress of grievances are blocked, violence may become a substitute.

Although the Yorubas' do consider themselves as a peace loving and traditionally non violent people. The resort to violence during the period of 1983 was a last resort to their frustrations.

In the Western Region, an unhealthy rivalry created a volatile situation and explains why the Western region was always repeating past mistakes. Rival political parties, (as to be said between the NPN and UPN) exploited the tension between the parties in 1983 and used this opportunity to undermine the stability of the region during the 1983 crisis.

The result of deep rooted disunity among Yorubas' that can be traced as far back as the 19th century became a cockpit of Nigerian politics in which outside regions of Nigeria sort to manipulate to achieve their political goals.

The suspicion by the Yoruba leadership to any outside interference by those from other regions in Nigeria have always backfired because this suspicion always engenders a lot of conspiracy theories that aggravates violence in the region.

For example, it is a known fact that the Yorubas' have seen the people from the Northern Region as a backward, conservative lot that are different from themselves whom they consider arrogantly as a progressive, modernized, educated people who were constantly pulled back by the North.

However, the crisis in the South West can be assigned to various factors which may not be primarily due to the processes of modernization alone. The factors to be identified by this writer are as follows; the internal divisions and quarrels of the Yoruba; the consequent 'style of politics' – the insularity and distinctness of politics in Yorubaland - which had a profound effect upon the political behaviour of the Yorubas. All this factors can be adduced as reasons why political violence is a regular reoccurrence in that region.

The factors outlined and the violent events which they produced had far reaching consequences for political stability in Nigeria as a whole. Most observations sort by the writer, all have a canning believe that the events in the South West during and before the 1966 coup, the 1983 collapse of the Second Republic have a direct or indirect undertones coming from previous clashes in the South West.

References

- [1]. Ajani, J. (1999). *Politics in the South West*. Lagos: Vanguard Newspapers.
- [2]. Akinjogbin, A. &. (1980). Yorubaland up to 1800. In O. Ikime, *Groundwork of Nigerian History* (p. 124). Lagos: Heinemann Educational Books.
- [3]. Amurfi, K. (1993). *The Nigerian General Elections 1959 and 1979 and the Aftermath*. Accra: Macmillan Publishers.
- [4]. Anifowoshe, R. (1978). *Violence and Politics in Nigeria: The Tiv and Yoruba Experience*. New York: Nok Publishers International.
- [5]. Duyile, W. A. (2003, January 20). Electioneering and Violent Political Protests in South- Western Nigeria: The 1983 Experience. *Lagos State University, Masters Thesis*. Okokomaiko, Lagos, Nigeria: Thesis.
- [6]. Duyile, W. A. (2005). *Military History Lecture Note*. Sapele, Delta: Nigerian Navy College of Engineering.
- [7]. Ige, B. (1992). *Peoples, Politics and Politicians of Nigeria*. Ibadan, Nigeria: Heinemann Educational Books.
- [8]. Kurfi, A. (1993). *The Nigerian General Election, 1959 and 1979 and its Aftermath*. Lagos: Macmillan Publishers.
- [9]. Punch. (1999). *Politics*. Lagos: Punch Newspapers.
- [10]. Richard, A. (1987). *Democracy and Prebendal Politics in Nigeria. The Rise and Fall of the 2nd Republic*. Cambridge: Cambridge Publications.
- [11]. The Guardian. (2002). *Politics in the South West*. The Guardian.
- [12]. The Vanguard Newspaper. (1999). *Nigerian Politics*. Lagos: Vanguard Publications.