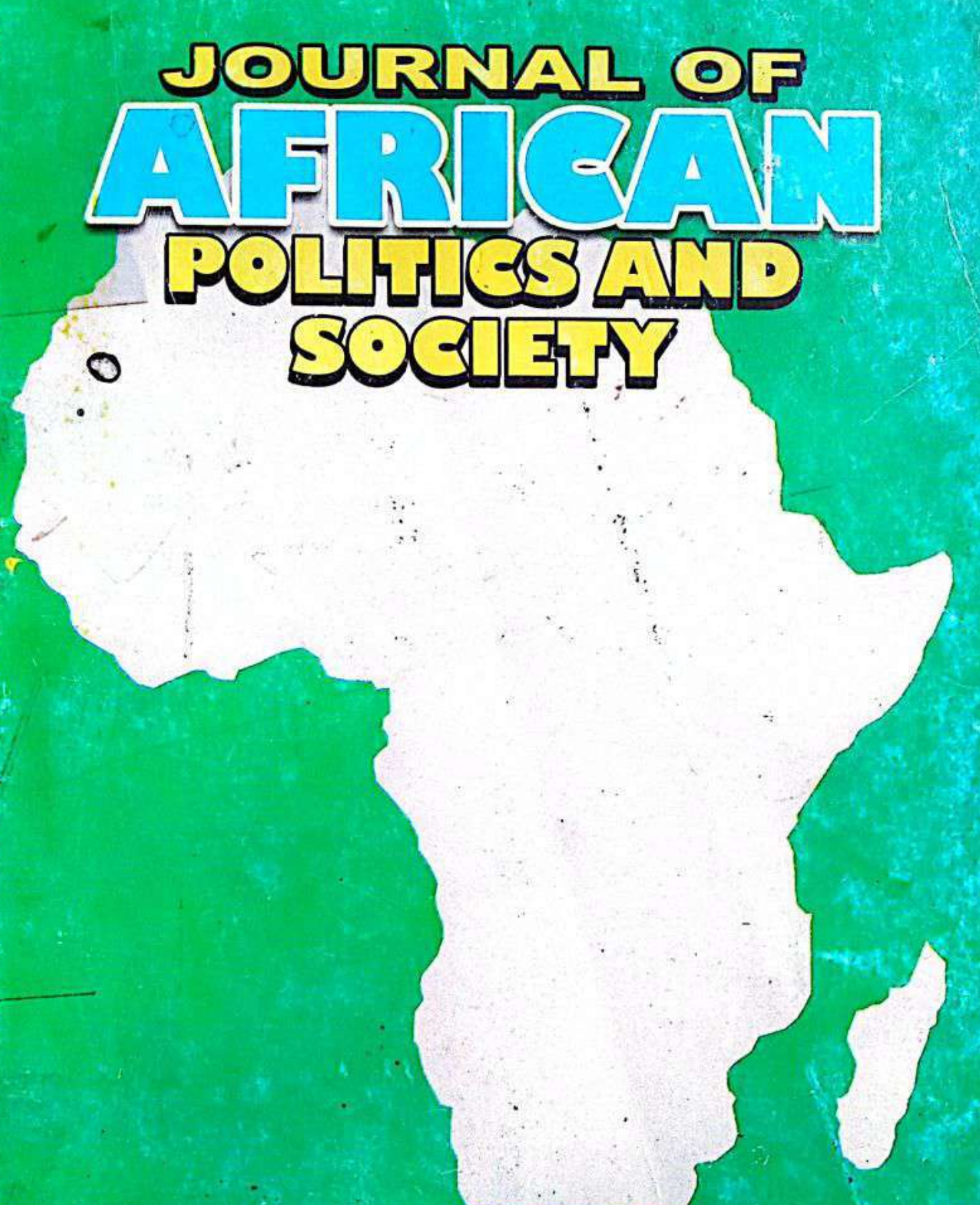


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OPPOSITION PARTY AND THE POLITICS OF OPPOSITION: THE COLLAPSE OF THE ILORIN EXPERIMENT IN DEMOCRATIZATION OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT, 1950-1960

Ismail O. Salihu*

Abstract

Political parties—whether as incumbents or opposition—are an important institution in any process of democratization and democratic politics. They could make or mar political processes as well as impact positively or negatively on the society. Since the introduction of party politics in Nigeria, struggle between incumbent and opposition parties has been a dominant and recurring phenomenon. The collapse of the First Republic, regarded as the country's first experiment in nation building, resulted mainly from the conflict between political parties (NPC\NCNC coalition) in power and the opposition (Action Group). A major feature of the conflict was the struggle to acquire or maintain power and all benefits associated with it. This explains the 'Pull Him\them Down' syndrome that characterized power relations between the two groups. In the defunct Northern Nigeria, Ilorin emirate was the first to experiment with a "test case" in democratically elected local government through reforms of the Native Authority system. Within a period of less than two years, the experiment collapsed due, among others, to the conflict between the party in power and the opposition party, each of which had a taste of power and lost it during the period between 1952 and 1960. The intense struggle for power pitched the traditional ruling aristocracy against the commoners' class of emergent wealthy businessmen and eventually not only led to the collapse of the first experiment in democratic local government but also the fall of the

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Commoners' Party and the defeat of the motion to transfer Ilorin to the Western Region.

Introduction

In a study on "Opposition Parties and Politics of Opposition in Africa: A Critical Analysis", Wondwosen defines opposition parties as "minority parties that do not wield executive power but act as check on government".ⁱ Such parties in established democracies, he explains, "are free to criticize the ruling party and government and are entrusted with offering policy alternatives". Since they stand the chance of replacing incumbent government, they are usually described as "government-in-waiting" or "alternative government" and "are expected to recognize and respect the authority of the elected government" and "to entertain the values of tolerance, cooperation and compromise".ⁱⁱ The experience of opposition parties and politics of opposition in Africa, as the study reveals, has shown otherwise. Across Africa, the politics of opposition, on the part of the incumbent parties, has been characterized, among others, by harassment, intimidation, imprisonment, arbitrary detention and victimization of civil servants suspected of supporting the opposition. On the other hand, opposition parties themselves are characterized by a number of weaknesses, including factionalism and fragmentation, intra-party power struggles, lack of long history and experience, ethnicity and tribalism and frequent employment of election boycotts.ⁱⁱⁱ Developments in Ilorin during the period covered by this paper abundantly exemplify elements of the politics of opposition on both sides of the divide. For during the period, the emergent opposition not only demonstrated that opposition parties could be effective and could indeed succeed in replacing an incumbent government but also that, once in power, the erstwhile opposition could be as oppressive, corrupt and tyrannical as their predecessors in power whom they had previously castigated for same or similar abuses. This paper examines some of the major issues in power relations between both political parties in power and the opposition and its implication for the collapse of the democratization process in Ilorin emirate in the period between 1950 and 1960.

Background to Party Politics and Politics of Opposition in Ilorin

Ilorin city, which is the focus of this paper, is the nucleus of Ilorin emirate established as a frontier emirate of the Sokoto Caliphate in the early 19th century. The city was the capital of the emirate and of the Ilorin Province during the colonial period. Today, it is the capital of Kwara State. Thus since the early 19th century, it has remained an administrative headquarters and a centre of power and politics. Though the traditional chiefs remained in firm control of politics until the advent of colonialism, pre-colonial history of Ilorin was characterized by incidents of power tussle mainly between the two wings of the traditional aristocracy—successive Emirs and their war chiefs (Balogun). Colonialism only brought change but not an end to the struggle, which continued and even assumed new dimensions with the introduction of new sources of power, new contestants and process of contestation. Thus, developments in colonial Ilorin reflected much of what took place in other parts of Northern Nigeria where the British Indirect Rule system was in full force. Unlike some other parts of colonial Northern Nigeria, however, political developments in Ilorin Emirate went far ahead of other emirates in terms of the reform of the Native Authority Council (NAC), which was aimed at transforming it into a modern institution of administration and serving as a model for other emirates.^{iv}

In Ilorin city, political parties and the politics of opposition started in the early 1950s, following the introduction of elected representation and the formation of the local branch of Northern Peoples' Congress (NPC). However, prior to the introduction of party politics, the main centre of power politics in the emirate was the NAC, which had been an institution of indirect rule since 1900. Until 1936 when a crisis erupted, its membership had been made up of the traditional leaders of the emirate: the Emir, the Balogun and Magaji Are and Baba Isale—the latter two being admitted into the Council in 1913.^v The 1936 crisis^{vi}, however, ushered in a period of gradual but radical reform of the Native Authority (N. A.) system in Ilorin. The reform started with the restructuring of the political organization of the city as well as the political structure of the Emirate. More

members, including two educated persons, were admitted into the Emir's Council while an Ilorin Town Council (ITC—proposed in 1936 for the supervision of town affairs) came into being in 1939. It comprised mainly traditional chiefs and an educated person as members.^{vii} With its inauguration, the ITC gradually became a new centre of politics and power struggle in the city.^{viii}

Between 1945 and 1954, the ITC witnessed further re-organization leading to the nomination, in 1945, of fourteen (14) commoners (mostly small scale business entrepreneurs)^{ix} and the election in September 1952 of twenty-four (24) members (mostly wealthy entrepreneurs).^x In the 1952 reform, none of the traditional chiefs became a member because they did not contest election and the NAC did not use its reserved power of nomination to inject any non-elected traditional member into the new Council^{xi}. By 1952, the Northern Regional Government, together with the Colonial authorities, had started the implementation of a program of reform to democratize the Ilorin N. A. system: this was the first of its kind in the whole of Northern Nigeria and the aim was to extend such reforms to other emirates. Thus, the Central Native Authority (Emir's) Council had witnessed similar re-organization between 1947 and 1952, and this brought about the inclusion of representatives from the non-metropolitan areas of Ekiti, Igbomina and Offa.^{xii} Until the 1956 elections, the two councils (ITC and NAC) functioned purely as advisory bodies with no executive powers. The tenure of the ITC, inaugurated in October 1952, was to terminate in October 1955.^{xiii} Like other subordinate councils, it served as an electoral college for election of members into the Ilorin NAC in 1953. The ITC and Offa Town Council,^{xiv} respectively, returned six (6) and two (2) non-traditional members while other subordinate councils returned mostly "traditional" members into the new Ilorin NAC^{xv}. Nearly all the newly elected non-traditional council members belonged to the emergent commercial class of 'wealthy' entrepreneurs though they were not members of any chieftaincy family. The members elected from ITC included four (4) "traders", one (1) "lorry owner" and one (1) "contactor"^{xvi}.

The domination of the two councils by wealthy and privileged members of the society became a source of concern not only for the common people but the Colonial Resident because by the end of 1953 it had started to generate a considerable measure of discontent^{xvii} and an increasing demand for representation of the "commons" especially on the ITC. Among the groups of agitators were the Ibo Union^{xviii}, Ilorin branch and the Ilorin Talaka Parapo (Ilorin Commoners' Party" or literally "Ilorin poor people united", hereafter ITP). The ITP was the first opposition party in Ilorin. Its initial agitations focused on the exclusion of Ilorin traditional chiefs from the ITC as then constituted as well as those activities of the councilors that were considered to be against the wellbeing of the common people and contrary to democratic practice.

The Origin of the Ilorin Talaka Parapo (ITP) and Sources of its Early Opposition

The ITP was an offshoot of the Ilorin Parapo (Ilorin United), a group with commercial orientation formed in the early 1950s to run a bus transport service. Its members included a number of wealthy Ilorin businessmen involved in various commercial activities.^{xix} The business association split into two rival factions on the question of leadership when party politics and the NPC were introduced to its members. Sometime in 1954 the ITP emerged from the faction led by Maito. It was largely made up of uneducated people who were politically minded.^{xx} Although Maito and a number of his initial supporters were among the wealthy in Ilorin then, the adoption of the term "Talaka" suggests that ITP leaders and supporters believed that the party was essentially for the less-privileged members of the society and therefore "looked after the interests of the common people [unlike] the earlier parties whose leaders knew only themselves and their kin".^{xxi} By early 1955, therefore, the ITP had been formed as a socio-political movement; though not yet a formal political organization but obviously not uninformed about the local politics in Ilorin Town. By the time a power struggle began on the NAC between the NPC councilors and the traditional chiefs, the ITP was already an emerging unofficial opposition to the NPC councilors on

the ITC. The traditional chiefs led by the Balogun, therefore, appealed to the ITP for a possible solution to the predicament in which they found themselves at the NAC.

From the foregoing, the politics of opposition within the context of democratic dispensation began in Ilorin in 1954-55. This resulted from the situation in which wealthy individuals (members of the emergent middle class) that dominated the NAC were bent on reducing the powers and privileges of the traditional chiefs on the Council. The same group of individuals also dominated the ITC which had no traditional members and few powerless commoners. This development was a major source of concern for the traditional members of the NAC, especially the Balogun when, by late 1954, it became evident that further reform of the local government would bring about further erosion of their power and privileges. The new reform program involved the decentralization of the business and authority of the NAC through the establishment of sub-committees and delegation of more powers and authority outwards to such committees and downwards to subordinate councils in the emirate including the ITC. The process of devolving the authority and business of the Ilorin NAC to sub-committees started late 1954.

In the course of the meetings of the Council, a serious struggle for power started between the old, non-literate, non-elected traditional members, on the one hand, and the literate, elected and younger councilors on the other hand.^{xxii} This situation, by late 1954, made the Ilorin traditional elite to establish contact with the Vice Chairman of the ITP through one of its members—a son of the incumbent Balogun Alanamu—"to help release them from the rapacious councilors' hook".^{xxiii} Their intention, according to Onikoko, was to launch "an indirect but decisive [counter] attack on the New Councilors". The concerned councilors, some of whom the ITP also had scores to settle with, included Saadu Alanamu, who tripled as the N. A. Chief Scribe, Chairman of the local NPC and one of the non-elected members of the NAC. Others were Buari Edun (a money lender), Durosinlorun Isale Oja and Ibrahim Laaro (both transporters), Tafa Olodo (a trader) and Yahaya Adabata (a contractor).^{xxiv} Available evidence suggests that the Balogun's contact

with and appeal to the ITP was the root of its initial 'traditionalism' and this was why the chiefs' membership of the ITC topped the issues in contestation in its early opposition to the NPC-dominated ITC. It appears that the initial aim of the intrigue was either to pressurize the wealthy and educated councilors to change their attitude to the chiefs or alternatively to ensure that they (the businessmen-politicians) were not re-elected into the ITC in the Town Council elections slated for late 1955.

With the covert urging and backing of the Balogun, the ITP launched itself into political action with as a series of open air meetings held at the main premises of such major traditional chiefs as Balogun Alanamu, Balogun Ajikobi's, Magajin Gari's, Balogun Gambari's and Magaji Are's between 27th January and 6th February, 1955. These public meetings in Ilorin town (hitherto described as a novelty in the whole of Ilorin Province in 1954^{xxv}) attracted 'heavy crowd attendance', which the Colonial Resident noted "averaged a thousand persons".^{xxvi} At the first open air meeting, the ITP explained that its "plan [was] for a party that would liberate the Traditional Rulers and the beloved Emir Abdul-Kadir from the New Councilors and their collaborators outside the Council who constituted themselves as cogs in the wheel of progress".^{xxvii} Colonial reports affirm that at inception, "[t]he Parapo's political objectives have not yet been fully defined but it is already clear they aim at restoring the former power and authority of the Emir and Chiefs" and at reducing taxation.^{xxviii}

The success of the ITP in mobilizing a large section of the populace (the Talakawa) seems to have impressed traditional chiefs and further encouraged them in their struggle with the new councilors on the NAC following the acceleration of the local government reforms. In April 1955, for instance the chiefs "'revolted" against the whittling away of their powers and privileges by the younger and illiterate councilors".^{xxix} This followed a proposal that chairmen of sub-committees of the Council would be appointed only from among the literate members and the decision that the educated councilors would receive more allowances than the non-literate traditional leaders.^{xxx} Added to this was the situation in which the traditional chiefs were

excluded in the award of contracts for the Ilorin township water supply scheme, which were awarded only to the businessmen-politicians on the council. All these generated enough tension as to push the chiefs into revolt and apparently to establish further contacts with the ITP, including spurring them into more political actions. The 1956 Annual Report observed that “[a]t that time [April 1955] there is no doubt that some of the important traditional members of the Council temporarily cast their lot with the then conservatively-minded Ilorin Talaka Parapo”.^{xxxii}

On the 1st of May, 1955 the ITP became a formal political organization. Its next major action was to petition the Native Authority demanding for the dissolution of the ITC.^{xxxiii} The petition shows that the ITP now an opposition political party directed its major attacks against the ITC and not the Native Authority or the “oppressive” traditional ruling elite as given in some of the previous examinations of the origin and transformation of the movement. The petition, dated June 1, 1955, contains five allegations against the ITC councilors. Among others, the ITP accused the Town Councilors of “intentional gross misrepresentation” with regard to the membership of the traditional chiefs on the ITC. The party claimed that the people in Ilorin had, during enquiries concerning the local government reforms, “unanimously agreed and decided” to have all the Ilorin principal ward chiefs (the four Balogun, Magaji Are and Magajin Gari) as members of the ITC.^{xxxiii} As noted earlier, none of these chiefs was a member of the ITC after the 1952 elections.

The ITP's other allegations bothered on the welfare of the people and the practice of democracy. The party leveled allegation of corruption through political profiteering against ITC councilors. It claimed that while Government had approved the sale of water to the people at the rate of “two tins [of water] for half a penny”, the councilors not only contracted the sale of water to themselves but also decided to sell “at the rate of one tin for half a penny thus making 100% profit on the already over-burdened Talakas in the township”.^{xxxiv} It would be recalled that some ITC councilors were already known as “contractors”, “traders” and “money lenders”. Adisa-Onikoko notes that the non-extension of the contract to the

traditional members of the Council added more to their grievances of unfair treatment by the new councilors.^{xxxv} This 'Ilorin Water Sale' contract scandal was thus among the incidents that pushed the Balogun into intriguing with the ITP. It must also have informed ITP's effective mobilization of a total boycott of the Ilorin Urban Water Supply scheme in the period up to 1956 and its insistence that the supply of pipe-borne water to the people ought to be a free-of-charge local government social service to the community.^{xxxvi}

Other allegations included alleged unilateral decision of the ITC councilors to increase "N. A. Court Fees from 3/6d to £2.1.6d", the relocation of the Welfare Centre from the people's reach to a remote area and failure of the councilors to either consult with or render account of their stewardship to their constituencies.^{xxxvii} All these were considered to be perpetrated in order "to suit their whims and caprices without the slightest consideration for the interest of the Talakas" in the town.^{xxxviii} As far as the ITP unofficial opposition was concerned, this was contrary to the principle and practice of democracy. While still affirming their "unalloyed and unreserved loyalty to the Native Authority", the party demanded for the dissolution of the ITC as then constituted and requested for fresh elections into a new democratic Town Council.^{xxxix} In its reaction to the petition, the NAC did not dissolve the ITC as demanded but advised the ITP to wait for the next election to elect people of their choice. This seems to have laid a foundation for an eventual show down with the NPC. Further deterioration of relations between the local NPC and ITP followed this development and eventually led to the abrogation of an initial alliance with NPC headquarters at Kaduna in April 1956^{xl}. In August 1956, the ITP formed another alliance with the Action Group (AG) and its allies in other parts of Ilorin emirate like Egbe Igbomina Parapo (EIP) and Ekiti Federal Union (EFU). This alliance became a major source of the transformation of ITP from its initial conservatism and traditionalism to political radicalism.

The Commoners Party in Power, August 1956-August 1958

In the run-up to the Town Council elections, the ITP came into serious conflict not only with the incumbent NPC but also with

the traditional chiefs who had been partly instrumental to their political transformation. This conflict derived from its association with the AG and the Ilorin-West merger that the Western Regional party campaigned for. On the one hand, following its alliance with AG, which now supplied all that the party had lacked—literate members, organizers, fund, vehicles, lawyers, etc^{xli}—ITP's opposition to the incumbent party and criticism of the N. A. became more persistent and vigorous. On the other hand, it became more radical in its attitude to issues concerning the traditional chiefs, particularly the sub-ward heads thus replacing its initial 'traditionalism' with 'democratic radicalism'.^{xlii} For the party in power, ITP's association with the AG—one of its main opposition at the national level—and its new attitude to "tradition" provided an opportunity to brand the Commoners Party as being originally inspired by the AG. The latter was described as a party that was disrespectful to traditional rulers even in its own regional base where it had treated some chiefs harshly. This propaganda eventually attracted the Ilorin traditional chiefs to the side of the ruling NPC party.^{xliii} Hence, both the NPC and the chiefs became partners in progress against the ITP\AG opposition.

In spite of the intimidation and repression of the opposition by the incumbent party, 1956 was a year of remarkable success for the ITP. Ibrahim Laaro, an educated and wealthy Ilorin businessman, joined the party from the NPC. He became a source of enlightenment for the party and one of its most vocal and articulate members. He was instrumental in leading the ITP to reject the participation of the sub-ward chiefs (Magaji) in the Town Council elections.^{xliv} The ITP also won a slight majority (53%) at the first stage of the primary election into the Town Council held in June 1956. With this victory it became obvious that the AG-backed ITP was likely to win the final election into the ITC and thus determine those to be elected from that council into the NAC. It also meant that elected ITP members were likely to assume the control of the NAC. Given the strained relations between the ITP and the traditional chiefs, this development caused serious tension in the chiefs' camp and thus brought about the demand for the full implementation of the electoral instrument that

had provided for a 37% and 31%, respectively, injection of traditional members into the primary and secondary stages of the Town Council election. The implementation of the instrument would mean the inclusion of about fourteen Magaji (sub-ward heads who had been members in the early 1940s) and the six principal ward heads in the Town Council. This would further imply not only 'a marriage between the ITP and the chiefs' but also the closing up of the 'tenuous margin' of victory the ITP had won at the first stage of the primaries. Since this would prevent an ITP outright majority on the ITC, it was rejected by the radicalized ITP which insisted on the elimination of all traditional chiefs from the primary stage and all but the six principal ward chiefs from the secondary stage.^{xliv} The ITP threatened to boycott the remaining elections, if its demands were not conceded.

The hostility between the ITP and the traditional chiefs reached a stage that the Regional Government had to intervene in August 1956 but no solution agreeable to both parties was reached. While the ITP insisted on having only the six principal traditional chiefs as non-elected members on the ITC, the chiefs rejected a Town Council with an elected majority and only six, non-elected traditional chiefs as members. The ensuing stalemate and the non-cooperative attitude of the traditional chiefs to the continuing implementation of the democratization of local government made the Northern Regional Government to threaten the chiefs into submission in February 1957.^{xlvi} The Regional Government decided to take some measures, which included its intention "to ensure that the traditional chiefs and nominated members of the Ilorin NAC will only hold office on condition that they assist and promote the measures for local government reform which are now being undertaken".^{xlvi} An agreement was subsequently reached to have a new ITC of six nominated traditional chiefs and fifty-one elected members while the power to nominate the ITC chairman was vested in the Ilorin NAC.^{xlvi}

In its bid to win grassroots support to ensure victory at the remaining stages of the local elections, the ITP extended its activities to other parts of the metropolitan districts of the emirate then

controlled by the Ilorin traditional chiefs. Its campaign there centered on the condemnation of those customs and practices that had been sources of grievances and hatred against the Ilorin traditional elite such as Isakole (tribute payable to the traditional fief holders), Aroja (market dues) and the system of Babakekere ('little father-intermediaries between the fief holders and the peasants). Its campaign on these issues became so effective that the Regional Government had to issue directives prohibiting the payment and collection of such fess in the emirate.^{xlix} The ITP/AG also promised to end all oppression, reduce taxes, and offer protection against the extortionist practices of sanitary inspectors and other officials of the Ilorin N. A. and to provide such welfare packages as the AG government was giving its citizens in the west: free education, improved health care and efficient water system. The ITP were assisted in this by the widespread grassroots trade connections of wealthy businessmen-members of the party like Sulé Maito, its president, as well as the AG's resources, organizational skills and propaganda. On the other hand, the NPC, which for the first time, was forced to campaign openly due to the stiff opposition and competition of the ITP/AG, countered all the accusations of the ITP/AG. It described the Ilorin-West merger campaign of the ITP\AG alliance as an attempt to enslave the people, as the westerners were more educated and would therefore dominate the people of Ilorin.¹ It was of the view that both the people of Ilorin and their religion would be better off in the Northern Region than if they were transferred to the West Region.

When the final elections were held into the ITC and the NAC in April 1957, the ITP\AG Alliance won the electoral contest for the control of both councils. Of the 51 seats on the ITC, the Alliance won 32 as opposed to NPC's 19 while it won 36 out of the 50 seats on the NAC while NPC won just 14. The two Councils were inaugurated in May 1957. This marked the culmination of the local government reform and of the first "test case" in a democratically elected local government Council in Northern Nigeria. The erstwhile opposition party assumed power while the former party in power became the opposition. The inauguration also marked the transfer of power and

authority, for the first time in Ilorin history, from the traditional political leaders of the NA to the elected councilors, the commoners. For the elected representatives from the non-metropolitan areas with whom the ITP was in alliance, this meant a fulfillment of the long-awaited opportunity to "hold fast to the handle of the sword"—the "Eeku Ida"^{li} and hence to settle old scores and avenge past grievances against the Emirate traditional authorities. This explains why immediately after the inauguration and until the dissolution of the NAC by the Regional Government, bitter struggles for power became a dominant feature of the deliberations and activities of both the ITC and NAC.

The ITP\AG Alliance was, therefore, entangled in three different struggles at the same time: these included the political struggle between the Alliance on one hand and NPC; a class struggle with the traditional leaders and title holders and an administrative conflict with the NA staff who were supporters of the NPC and traditional chiefs.^{lii} In all these contestations, the battle line was drawn between the forces of tradition ("the old order") represented by the NPC, traditional chiefs and their hangers-on in the N. A., and those of change ("the new order")^{liii} represented by ITP\AG Alliance members^{liv}. The contests, especially the first two mentioned also reflected elements of majority\minority relations in power struggle: the former being the elected party in power (ITP\AG Grand Alliance) and the opposition now made up of the NPC together with the traditional members. The central issue in the struggle was the ambitions and actions of the incumbents aimed at 'grabbing and gathering' all the power into their hands, that is, 'holding fast to the handle of the sword'—a situation, which the privileged classes considered "a reversal of their fortunes".^{lv} The struggles between the two camps were localized and largely confined to political circles and the Council meetings, although they occasionally attracted the attention of Northern Regional Government.

The struggle started on ITC, which meetings began in June 1957. All seems to have started well for the Town Council as the traditional members were included in each of the four committees set up at this time and there were no signs of intra-party conflict within

the incumbent party until August 1957 when the issue of chairman came up. The contest for the Council chairmanship started between two ITP members, the President, Sule Maito, preferred by the party, and Ibrahim Laaro who had hitherto acted as chairman since the first meeting of the Council. The struggle eventually split the party in power and gradually involved the traditional members of the Council. The issue created such tension within the ITP and in the council that in August and September 1957, ITP councilors walked out of two meetings of committees of the Town Council. At an extraordinary meeting of the council during which only the NPC members were present, the Magaji Are (a traditional member) was "elected" chairman though this was contrary to the instrument, which empowered the NAC to "appoint" the Chairman and the ITC to "elect" the Vice Chairman. Ibrahim Laaro and three other ITP members who were consequently expelled from the ITP decided to form a group of "independent" that eventually affiliated itself with the NPC.

The situation in the NAC was quite different. By the end of its May meetings, four of the sub-committees, to which the power of the Council would be devolved and through which its business would be conducted, had been appointed with the Ilorin traditional chiefs being members of only two.^{lvi} All other members of the committees were mainly from the Grand Alliance until July 1957. In addition, a motion was moved and "unanimously carried" that a sitting arrangement "in which the nominated members will [sit] separate from the elected members be used for further meetings".^{lvii} At the 2nd Ordinary Meeting of the N. A. Council some amendments in the composition of other committees were made apparently to favour the traditional members. However, the Alliance was not prepared to have the other chiefs in the General Purposes (GPC) and other Committees except as 'advisers without voting rights'.^{lviii} Eventually, a motion was moved and, as usual, "unanimously carried" for the appointment of four other committees in each of which a traditional member was included. However, Balogun Ajikobi's argument that all the ward heads in Ilorin Town ought to be members of the General Tax Advisory Committee was turned down on the ground that the Council was for

the whole Ilorin Division and not for Ilorin town. It was stressed that, since the ward heads were "responsible for tax collection in the town, the Ilorin Town Council should consider them on its own tax committee".^{lix} This implies that the sphere of influence of the chiefs was being confined to Ilorin town. This perhaps explains why the traditional chiefs had to ensure that they were not totally eliminated or sidelined in the activities of Ilorin Town Council.

The NPC, which was the official opposition party and their supporters among the staff of the N. A., initially had a worse experience at the hands of the party in power. The tendency of the ITPAG Alliance members to concentrate all powers in their own hands was reflected in the fact that both the elected NPC councilors and the N.A. officials (being "largely relatives and clients" of the traditional chiefs and pro-NPC) were not carried along. Apart from taking all major decisions in their private meetings before those of the committees, the party in power did not include the opposition (NPC) in the committees until the end of July and this was after much pressure from the Administration. It was at this time that a motion for the enlargement of the composition of the committees was moved and carried. However, the newly admitted members were to attend as "advisers" until the Council was able to change its decision on the Standing Orders.^{lx} The traditional members seem 'pleased' with this new attitude and therefore expressed appreciation of the "effort of the majority party to work in cooperation with the minority".^{lxi} Things, therefore, appeared to have begun to augur well for the NAC until the issue of the appointment of the ITC chairman came up for consideration in August, 1957.

The General Purposes Committee of the NAC, as would be expected, recommended Sule Maito for the post. This generated a protracted controversy at the N. A. Full Council meeting in September 1957. The debate was whether to invoke the ITC instrument that empowered the NAC to "appoint" the chairman or to accept the "election" by the Council of a traditional member, the Magaji Are, by the council. Ibrahim Laaro, who had hitherto lost the contest to Maito, 'advised' the NAC to "use its power wisely" by approving the "election" of Magaji Are who, according to him, the

"majority in the ITC" wanted. The argument in support of a traditional member as chairman received the support of other nominated members but the opposition of the Grand Alliance led to a protracted debate in the course of which NPC councilors, Laaro and all the traditional and nominated members, except three, walked out of the Council meeting. This provided an opportunity for the party in power to carry the day when the issue was put to vote: 27 voted in favour of Maito's appointment while one member abstained.^{lxii} It should be noted that the advice of the District Officer that the council meeting should be adjourned since there was no quorum of the membership was ignored by the incumbent party. Thus, the appointment of the ITP chairman as president of ITC was carried out without a quorum of the NAC.

From September 1957, therefore, Ibrahim Laaro joined forces with the NPC and the traditional members and thus assumed 'leadership' of the opposition to the party in power, both on the ITC and NAC.^{lxiii} As noted above, Laaro's entry into the ITP in 1956 was a major boost to the party. His exit in 1957 became a serious blow to the party and a loss the Papapo lived to regret. With Ibrahim Laaro on their side, the opposition party was not only strengthened but also became effective, especially on the N. A. Full Council whose discussions and decisions had until then been dominated by the Grand Alliance members. From then on, notes Mr. J.G. Davies, the opposition tended to be personally bitter, not always responsible and "in fact to go to Kaduna to complain against the N. A. [making] numerous allegations, few of which were of real substance".^{lxiv} This, perhaps, explains why the attitude of the ITP\AG councilors on the NAC to Laaro in particular was dominated by politics of vengeance and the 'Pull Him Down syndrome'.

At the ITC, the expulsion of Ibrahim Laaro and three others from ITP altered the composition of the council as it reduced ITP's majority from 32 to 28 while the strength of the official opposition increased from 19 to 23. The six nominated traditional members eventually cast their lot with the NPC, and together with the four "Independents" further increased the numerical strength of the opposition from 23 to 29 as against ITP's 28. This development

reduced the incumbent party to a de facto minority. This was demonstrated when, during a meeting of the ITC, the six traditional chiefs voted with the NPC on three occasions out of which two resulted in the upturning of decisions earlier taken by the council. Highly embarrassed by this, the ITP members walked out of Council meeting. Thereafter, they contended that the traditional members had not been appointed according to the instrument of the ITC.^{lxv} When the General Purposes Committee of the NAC was asked to make the appointment, it claimed it was "too busy and wished to defer the matter", an attitude the Emir described as "suspicious".^{lxvi}

Based on the GPC's decision, the traditional members of the ITC were therefore served letters by the Council chairman to the effect that they were no longer "legal" members of the Council and "were not to attend the ITC meetings ..." with effect from the day's meeting.^{lxvii} Following tension created in Ilorin by this development, the Emir had to overrule the GPC and NAC by using his reserved powers under section 7 (5) of the N. A. Law to appoint the traditional members to the ITC. However, by the time they were admitted back to the ITC meeting, the ITP had succeeded in reversing the three decisions the council had earlier taken and hurriedly adjourned as soon as debate became heated.^{lxviii} These issues and developments in the Town Council brought about considerable deterioration of relations between the ITP\AG and NPC together with the traditional chiefs on the NAC.

In addition to public criticism, insults and disrespect to the traditional chiefs, including the Emir^{lxix}, relations between the parties in power and the opposition were characterized by politics of vengeance and the 'Pull Him Down' syndrome. Thus various punitive measures were taken against the traditional chiefs and the expelled ITP members. For instance, the venue of the N. A. Council meeting was relocated from the Emir's palace to the premises of a secondary school while traditional chiefs were directed to be collecting tax in the school rather than in their houses as had been the practice. Also a car that had been given out for the use of traditional members was suddenly listed among those to be sold out by the Finance Committee of the Council.^{lxx} A vote of no confidence was passed on Laaro and a

motion for his withdrawal from all committees (General Purposes, General Tax, Development and Establishment Committees), except one (Finance) to which he had been "appointed on party basis" was also moved. Laaro was equally removed from the Tenders Board while the monthly responsibility of checking the Native Treasury as well as the "signification to the seal", were respectively passed to J.G. Ekunrin and R.A. Akande.^{lxxi}

Furthermore, when between October 10 and November 18 1957, NPC and the expelled ITP members boycotted Town Council meetings for three times consecutively, the NAC General Purposes Committee to which the ITC chairman had reported the case, decided to adopt, retrospectively with effect from the date of the commencement of the Town Council, "the principle that a member who absents himself thrice consecutively from a meeting of local council without reason loses his seat in the Council".^{lxxii} In spite of the fact that the said principle was not included in the Instrument or Standing Orders of the ITC, a decision to amend the principle retrospectively was eventually carried.^{lxxiii} The party in power was apparently bent on asserting its power and on 'dealing' with the opposition including, Ibrahim Laaro who now led it. In his conclusion to the 1957 Annual Report, the Senior District Officer, had observed that there was not likely to be settlement if the apparently insatiable desire of the politicians "for personal power, to supplant the traditional leaders cannot be satisfactorily curbed either by Government or by popular opinion".^{lxxiv}

With the above developments, every motion moved, especially on the N. A. Full Council, irrespective of its laudability for the good of the society, was viewed along political lines and thus only helped to provide opportunity for contest for power and supremacy between the incumbents and the opposition. This further heightened tensions both on the councils and in the society at large. Apart from the incumbent party's disregard for tradition and disrespect to traditional rulers, the "the Ilorin-West Merger" was noted to have "caused many heart-burnings" because it had to do with a move "the traditional leaders of Ilorin had been countering for one hundred and twenty-five years".^{lxxv} As far as the opposition was concerned, the

motion for transfer was "a political move" and therefore they vehemently opposed it. However, the majority party in the Council narrowly had their way.^{lxxvi} For instance, when the motion for the merger was put to vote at the ITC in January 1958, the initial result was 28 in favor and 28 against. The Council chairman eventually cast his vote in favour of merger thus giving approval to the motion in spite of vehement opposition to it by traditional members and official opposition party.^{lxxvii}

In view of the catalogue of complaints and petitions received by the Northern Regional Government against the party in power from the opposition, the INAC was served a warning in February 1958 that the Council might be dissolved if situation remained unchanged. This was based on Regional Government's apparent conviction that the ITP\AG-led NA "had been guilty of intimidating its political opponents, of inefficiency and of corruption, and of generally pursuing political advantage rather than the welfare of the community".^{lxxviii} The Regional Government noted, among other things, that the Ilorin NAC under the ITP\AG alliance had "failed to place the interests of the community before the interests of the majority party with the result that the decisive influence in all major deliberations has been the promotion of party power to the detriment of the public welfare".^{lxxix} With the receipt in May 1958, of another petition from the traditional chiefs in Ilorin led by the Emir, the Northern Regional Government appointed a three-man Committee of Enquiry to investigate the allegations.^{lxxx}

The report of the Committee of Inquiry covered three broad categories of allegations: relations between the alliance-led NAC and District and Village Heads^{lxxxii}; relations between the Council and NA staff^{lxxxii} and lastly the conduct of the NAC and its committees. The latter included decisions taken, motions moved and especially relations between some Council members on one hand and the Emir, other traditional chiefs and Regional officers including the Resident on the other hand.^{lxxxiii} Based on available oral and written evidence,^{lxxxiv} the Committee absolved the NAC on some allegations concerning some of its policies and decisions like those on the need to improve the general standard of district and village heads and N. A.

staff including such matters as recruitment, appointment and promotions, postings, transfers, mass dismissals and disciplinary actions. It however faulted the way and methods, which the Council adopted to pursue such policies and which it believed were "largely motivated by politics".^{lxxxv} Thus, apart from a few cases on which it claimed there was "very little proof of serious maladministration", the Committee's report indicted the alliance-led Ilorin NAC on virtually all the allegations leveled against it under each category. It condemned the N. A. for "deliberate maladministration and extreme irresponsibility", 'gross partisanship' and "a sheer lack of self-restraint and good manners". It also criticized the N. A. for its failure "to take the advice of the Resident or one of his officers". It concluded that:

....despite the unhappy state in which it found Ilorin a year ago and despite the peace which has followed its election, the new N. A. does not come out with a credit balance. These points in its favour are more than outweighed by its continued indulgence in political profiteering in its actions concerning all staff matters and appointments and its continued failure to act in a wise, impartial and responsible manner in its public duties. Its actions since its warning in these very terms have in no whit improved and must therefore be pronounced in a very marked degree prejudicial to the interests of Ilorin Emirate and of the Region as a whole.^{lxxxvi}

As "a test case" that was to serve as a "model for the future" of local government in the Northern Region^{lxxxvii}, the result of the Ilorin experiment by the end of the first year indicated that the survival of traditional institutions and their authority and privileges was no longer guaranteed by the sustenance of the democratic reforms so far implemented. Added to this was the serious threat that Ilorin-West merger posed to the unity of the North at a time when similar minority agitations were going on in the region. Based on the report of the Committee of Enquiry, the Regional Government had to decide whether to sustain the traditional authority by suspending or

abandoning democratic reforms in Ilorin or to sustain the democratic experiment and permit the opposite result. The latter alternative would imply the extension of the accompanying negative effects to the remaining parts of the region, including a possible dismemberment of the Northern Region. For the success of the merger of Yoruba in Ilorin would have given impetus to similar demands by minorities groups in the region (including the Yoruba in Kabba Province and other groups in the Middle Belt) for the creation of separate states or regions.

The Regional Government, therefore, decided to terminate the democratic experiment by dissolving the elected Native Authority Council due to what it described as "a long list of misdeeds which cannot in anyway be excused" after disregarding several matters it considered "could be ascribed to political immaturity" though condemned by the Committee of Inquiry.^{lxxxviii} The Regional Government therefore observed inter alia that:

... Its [Ilorin] example has been a set-back to other Native Authorities which planned to follow in its wake. The abuses which the Ilorin Native Authority has practised are not abuses inherent in democracy but are due to the evils which are inherent in human nature. Corruption, abuse of office, discrimination, nepotism, favouritism may be found under any system of government.^{lxxxix}

In the place of the dissolved elected NAC, the government appointed a 20-man "Caretaker Council" mainly dominated by traditional leaders. This development enabled the traditional chiefs to reestablish themselves and to replant those sources of their influence and authority, which the ITP had sought to permanently uproot.^{xc} In line with the known strategies of opposition parties, ITP's boycott of Council meetings and elections in several areas only gave the traditional rulers additional opportunities to consolidate their return to power. Thus, in July 1958, the Caretakers dissolved the ITC following a boycott by ITP.^{xc} It thereafter increased the traditional representation on the Town Council from six to eighteen while the number of elected members was reduced from fifty-one to thirty-

four.^{xcii} By the time of the next local government and federal elections in 1959, NPC victories were ensured. Of the 34 seats on the ITC, the NPC and ITP won 21 and 13 seats respectively. At the Federal Elections, while three out of the four seats in the Emirate were regained by the NPC from the Grand Alliance, five of the six seats in Ilorin Province were won by the NPC while the ITP got one.^{xciii} The consolidation of the NPC and traditional chiefs was further enhanced by the ITP's boycott of the Town Council after an abortive attempt to contest the result of the elections.^{xciv} Thus, the vicious cycle of politics of opposition in Ilorin started afresh with the former opposition back as incumbent and vice versa.

Conclusion

The developments in Ilorin during the period of decolonization and the experiment in democratic local government exemplify a number of recurring trends in politics in Nigeria in particular and in developing countries in general. First, the Ilorin experiment in democratic local government shows that when party politics and/or political agitation is based on fundamental issues of human right, development and basic needs and aspirations of the common people, opposition movement or parties could indeed succeed in unseating an incumbent party. Secondly, the analysis of the Ilorin experiment aptly demonstrates Lord Acton's saying that 'Power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely'. It also demonstrates the tendency in politics of opposition of 'history repeating itself'; in other words, the opposition party repeats the same abuse of power of which it had accused party in power while in opposition as soon as it assumes power. Thus, more often than not, politics and governance are in most cases dominated by obsession with the acquisition and demonstration or 'communication of power' rather than service to the people or delivery of dividends of democracy to the electorates. Consequently, issues and policies that would have transformed the lives of ordinary citizens are either neglected or frustrated through protracted political and legislative rigmarole. In addition, the changing fortunes of both opposition and incumbent parties in Ilorin during the period covered imply that the

quest for power and indeed governance at whatever level should be devoid of politics of hatred, victimization and vengeance. Finally, the fall of the ITP\AG alliance and hence the collapse of the Ilorin experiment in democratic local government demonstrates the counter-productive nature of the mobilization of ethnicity in a rather multi-ethnic society.

References and Notes

- i. Wondwosen Teshome, "Opposition Parties and the Politics of Opposition in Africa: A Critical Analysis", *World Academy of Science, Engineering and Technology*, 55, 2009, pp 812-826.
- ii. Ibid
- iii. Ibid
- iv. For an examination of the developments leading to these reforms, see for instance, Whitaker C. S. *The Politics of Tradition, Change and Continuity in Northern Nigeria, 1946-1966* (New Jersey, 1970) Chapter 3: "Ilorin: Revolution and Counterrevolution", pp 121-174.
- v. Given the British commitment to boosting the power of the Emir against that of other chiefs, all overt opposition to the Emir's exercise of his powers was crushed. In 1902 and 1907, Balogun Alanamu and Ajikobi were deposed and exiled. In dealing with the Balogun's opposition, however, new contenders to power were indirectly created in 1913 when Magaji Are and Baba Isale were admitted into the traditional power structure of the emirate. See for instance, Danmole H. O. "Colonial Reforms in Ilorin Emirate, 1900-1919", *ODU*, July 1984, pp 84-107; Omoiya S. Y. "The Evolution and Change of Balogun Institution in Ilorin, 1827-1960", in Ajayi S. A. and Oguntomisin G. O. (eds.) *Readings in Nigerian History and Culture: Essays in Honour of Professor J. A. Atanda* (Ibadan, Hope Publications), pp 231-248.

- vi. In 1936, the Magaji Are and Baba Isale (in covert collaboration with Balogun Gambari) led a major crisis usually referred to as the "Baba Isale Coup" against the Emir. For an examination of the crisis, see Salihu Ismail, "The Baba Isale "Coup" and Aftermath: A Historical Analysis of an Intrigue in the Struggle for Supremacy in Colonial Ilorin", *FAIS Journal of the Humanities*, Vol. 5 No 2, July 2011, (Kano: Faculty of Arts and Islamic Studies (FAIS), Bayero University Kano), pp 49-72
- vii. See NAK ILORPROF 3737: Ilorin Town Re-Organization of, op.cit. Appendix B and Addendum II
- viii. For the developments that led to the formation and re-organization of the Ilorin Town Council, see Salihu Ismail, "The Contest for Ilorin: A Study of Political Struggles for Ascendancy and Supremacy in the 19th and 20th Centuries" (unpublished M. A. dissertation, Department of History, University of Ilorin, 2004), Chapter Four.
- ix. These included those identified as General Traders (4), Butchers (2), Petty Traders (1), Food stuff Sellers (1), Native Cloth Sellers (1), Lodging House Keepers (1), Shop Keepers (1), Motor Owners (1), Bird Sellers (1) and Sarkin Bojuwa and Sodore (1) See NAC\412\I: Ilorin Town Council, Constitution, Membership and Standing Rules, 1939-1959: Enclosure titled "Re-Organization of Ilorin Town Council" from the Emir's Office to the Office of the District Officer Ilc Ilorin, 29 June 1945.
- x. These included those identified as "contractors" (3), "lorry owners" (3), "cattle traders" (3), "traders" (3) "money lender" (1) and "shop keepers" (4) and represented about 70.8% (17 out of 24 elected) while the *Talakawa* ("weavers" (3), "letter writer" (1), "bicycle repairer" (1), "embroiderer" (1) and "Koranic Mallam" (1)) constituted a minority (7 out of 24) and representing 29.2%.
- xi. The N. A. Council was empowered to appoint the Council's President and to retain the power of nomination

to ensure that some traditional elements became members if not elected by their wards. NAK NAC|412|I Enclosure No. 3908|83 of September 26 1952; ADO 21|5|1952, par.2; Government Publication Kaduna: *Progress Report on Local Government in the Northern Region, Nigeria* 1952, par. 27.

- xii. For examinations of events leading to this development, see for instance: Ibiloye E. A., "Igbominaland Under Ilorin Imperialism, 1830-1949", (M. A. Dissertation, History Department, University of Ilorin, 1992), Adeyemi E. A. "Protest and Agitation in Igbomina, 1933-1952" (M.A. Dissert., University of Ilorin, 1984), Jimoh O. Julius "Struggle for Identity: Offa-Ilorin Relations, 1823-1960" (M.A. Dissertation, History Dept. University of Ilorin, 1988)
- xiii. See *Progress Report on Local Government*, op. cit.
- xiv. The Offa Town Council was directly elected by secret ballot in December, 1952. See Northern Region, Nigeria Provincial Annual Report 1952, Ilorin Province, paragraph 9
- xv. The Council was to be made up of 49 elected, 13 nominated and 8 co-opted members. The 'traditional' members elected included 10 District Heads, 24 Village Heads, 1 Court Scribe, 2 Court Members, 1 Road Inspector, 2 Unspecified while the others 9 non-traditional members included six from ITC, 2 from Offa Town Council and 1 from Obo-Eruku. NAK ILORPROF PLT|37: Ilorin Native Authority Council Election 1953, enclosure No. 27403|293.
- xvi. NAK ILORPROF NAC|412|I: Ilorin Town Council Constitution, Membership and Standing Orders, 1939-1959: Enclosure No. 3908/33 "Ilorin Town Council" from the District Officer, Ilorin Division to The Public Relations Officer, Public Relations Office, Northern Region, Kaduna and Enclosure titled "Elected Members for the Emir's Full Council", 1953. One of the elected traders was identified as

- a "money lender" among the elected members of the ITC in 1952.
- xvii. Provincial Annual Report, Ilorin by Delves-Broughton, 1953, par. 5. The Resident observed that the membership of the NAC was "*largely confined to the wealthy or otherwise privileged [members of the society] and cannot be said to represent the tax-paying community as a whole*".
 - xviii. In a petition dated 21st July 1953 and titled "Petition to the Emir, Ilorin by IBO Union, Ilorin for Representation in Ilorin Town Council", the Ibo Union requested for Ibo representation on the ITC on the ground that the "Ibo constituted a large number of the tax-payers in the community". In its response, the NAC argued, among others, that representation on the ITC was "by ward and not [by] tribe". See NAK ILORPROF 3786: Petition from Ibo Union, Ilorin enclosed in NAC/412/I: Ilorin Town Council, Constitution, Membership and Standing Orders, 1939-1959, op. cit.
 - xix. For the identities of and commercial orientations of the members of the Ilorin Parapo, see Adisa-Onikoko, *A Short History of Ilorin Emirate*, Ilorin: Sat-Adis Press, 1992, pp 32-33 and Jimoh L. A. K., *Ilorin: Journey So Far*, Ilorin: Atoto Press, 1994, pp54-55.
 - xx. See Jimoh L.A.K., *Ilorin: The Journey So Far*, op. cit., p 265 and Adisa-Onikoko, *A Short History*, op. cit. pp 32-33. See also Provincial Annual Report, Ilorin 1955, par. 5 and Ann O' Hear, *Power relations in Nigeria; The Ilorin Slaves and Their Successors*, USA, University of Rochester Press, 1997, Chapter 7, p 281. The other splinter group was led by one Busari Isale Oja.
 - xxi. O'Hear, *Power Relations in Nigeria*, p. 145. "*Talaka*" or "*Talakawa*" is an Hausa word meaning the 'less privileged' or 'common folk'.
 - xxii. Provincial Annual Report, Ilorin Province, 1955, paragraph 3

- xxiii. Cf. Annual Report 1956, par.3; Adisa-Onikoko, *A Short History of Ilorin*, op. cit. p.37 who dates the development to late 1953; Omoiya, "Oppression as Unifying Factor", op. cit. For the aim of the Balogun-Parapo 'accord', see Adisa-Onikoko, *A Short History of Ilorin*, op. cit. pp 35 and 39.
- xxiv. See Adisa-Onikoko, *A Short History*. Cf. Annual Report, 1955, par. 5
- xxv. See Annual Report 1954, paragraphs 2, 31 and 32 Cf. Annual Report 1955, paragraphs 2 and 3. The latter report describes the "growth" of the ITP as "perhaps one of the more significant local political developments of the year" in addition to references to "several meetings of the movement during the year.
- xxvi. Annual Report 1955, op. cit. cf. Adisa-Onikoko op. cit. Bello "Politics of Protest", p.53.
- xxvii. Adisa-Onikoko, *A Short History*, p. 40. The author reports that the ITP's first meeting was held on January 15, 1954 while he dates the first open air meeting to January 27 1954 (page 39) as against January 1955 which the Annual Report seems to corroborate.
- xxviii. See Annual Reports 1955 (par.5) and 1956 (par.5). cf. Adisa-Onikoko, *A Short History*, p42 which gives four other objectives of the ITP apparently after the party had fairly or "fully" defined its objectives.
- xxix. Provincial Annual Report 1956, paragraphs 3 & 4 cf. Annual Report 1955 paragraphs 11 and 12.
- xxx. Provincial Annual Report 1956, paragraph 3. Cf. Whitaker C. S. *The Politics of Tradition*, p. 141. By this time, only one of traditional members of the Council was literate and this was Balogun Ajikobi.
- xxxi. Provincial Annual Report 1956, par. 3
- xxxii. See the Report of the Minority's Commission, op. cit. p.77 for a reference to this petition, which it refers to as "a letter to the Native Authority, dated June 1 of that year [1955]". For the petition, see NAK ILORPROF NAC|412|I

- Enclosure No. 3908/54. The petition titled "Demand for Ilorin Town Council Dissolution" was dated 1st June 1955.
- xxxiii. Ibid, ITP petition to the Resident, Ilorin Province, Paragraph 3 (a); see also Provincial Annual Report, Ilorin Province, by C. W. Michie, 1956, par. 5.
 - xxxiv. See ITP petition to the Resident, Ilorin Province, Paragraph 3 (b). See also Adisa-Onikoko, *A Short History*, op. cit. pp 36-37,
 - xxxv. Ibid, p. 37. The author identifies this situation as the event that made the Balogun to establish contacts with the Ilorin Talaka Parapo through a son of the Balogun named Olokoba Alanamu to ITP's Vice President, Adebimpe Oniyeye. He dates this development to 30th December 1953
 - xxxvi. See Provincial Annual Report, Ilorin Province, by C. W. Michie, 1956, par. 6.
 - xxxvii. ITP petition to the Resident, Ilorin Province, paragraphs 3 (c) and (d)
 - xxxviii. See the ITP petition to the Resident, Ilorin Province, paragraph 1
 - xxxix. Ibid, paragraphs 3(e) and 5 respectively.
 - xl. See John N. Paden, *Ahmadu Bello Sardauna of Sokoto*, op. cit. p. 326. On the earlier approval of the ITP's application for affiliation with NPC Kaduna, see Annual Report, Ilorin Province, by C. W. Michie, 1956, op. cit. par. 5; Sklar R. L. *Nigerian Political Parties: Power in an Emergent Nation* (New York, Lagos: NOK Publishers Ltd., 1963), citing a Press Release by NPC Kaduna Headquarters Ref. No. NPC N.H. 214/28 of 8 August 1955. In addition to the Press Release, Onikoko reproduces a letter purportedly from the office of the Premier; Northern Region dated November 9, 1955 and signed by the NPC's General President on the ITP-NPC Kaduna alliance. See Adisa-Onikoko, *A Short History*, pp 43-44.
 - xli. Annual report 1956 par. 5; Adisa-Onikoko, *A Short History*, op. cit. page 54

- xlii. Dudley B. J., *Parties and Politics in Northern Nigeria*, (London: Frank Cass, 1968), p. 99
- xlili. Sklar R. L., *Nigerian Political Parties*, op. cit pg. 352
- xliv. For his roles, see Adisa-Onikoko, op. cit. pp 49-50, 58-9; Jimoh L.A.K. op. cit p. 266 and Annual Report for 1957, Ilorin Division by Mr. J.G. Davies, pp 11-12 and minutes of the meetings of the Ilorin Native Authority Full Council, 1957-8.
- xlvi. ITP objection to the Magaji's participation was expressed in their popular saying "*oro Magaji aofe, aogba*", meaning 'the issue of Magajis we do not want, we do not agree'. Oral interview with Alhaji Ajao Aladie, Isale Aluko Ilorin; Alhaji Amuda Gbalasha, Oke Ebo Alaso, Ilorin and Alhaji Adisa-Onikoko, Adeta Ilorin. The latter makes a brief reference to this in his *A Short History of Ilorin* op. cit. page 63.
- xlvi. See memo with Ref. No. MLG 4282/524 sent to the Resident, Ilorin Province dated 13th February, 1957 by the Ministry of Local Government, Northern Region.
- xlvi. Ibid, paragraph 2 (a)
- xlvi. See NAK ILORPROF NAC|412|I EXTRACTS FROM J. NO. 6089 P—MLG. 4282/524, From The Ministry of Local Government, Kaduna to The Resident, Ilorin Province, Ilorin, dated 13th February, 1957: the extract is contained in paragraph 3(c) of the memo from the Ministry of Local Government, Northern Region to the Resident, Ilorin Province, 13th February, 1957.
- xlvi. Ibid, paragraphs 2 (c and d)
- 1. Aliyu S. Alabi, "The Fulani Factor in Ilorin History 1800-1960", (M.A. Dissertation, History Department, University of Ilorin, 2004) p. 78.
- li. The expression is taken from an adage, which describes the initial attitude of the people of non-metropolitan parts of the Emirate to the alleged oppressive Ilorin rule. Ibiloye reports that the failure of various "rebellious and subversive

activities” of the people had made them to resign themselves to the adage “*bi owo eni ko ba te eeku ida, akii bere iku to pa Baba eni*” meaning “unless you are holding fast to the handle of a sword, it is unwise asking for the cause of your father’s death”. “Eeku Ida” or “the handle of a sword” therefore meant political power needed to ‘avenge the death of one’s father’. See Ibiloye Ezekiel, “Igbominaland Under Ilorin Imperialism, 1830-1949”, (M. A. Dissertation, History Department, University of Ilorin, 1992), pg 153.

- lii. Ibid. page 3. See also Annual Report Ilorin Province, 1957 par. 1.
- liii. In fact the phrase “New Order” was the title of the address presented by the ITP\AG Alliance in their response to the Welcome Speech by the Emir of Ilorin at the first meeting of the NAC held on 8th May 1957.
- liv. See Annual Report 1957, Ilorin Division by Mr. J.G. Davies, part IV Conclusion.
- lv. Annual report Ilorin Division 1957, page 2.
- lvi. These were the General Purpose Committee in which were, in addition to the Emir and 15 other councilors, the Balogun Gambari and Magaji Are and secondly the Finance Committee, which had Balogun Fulani with other 11 councilors as members. They were excluded from the Establishment and Education Committee even though one of the chiefs (Balogun Ajikobi) was literate.
- lvii. See NAK SDOI |9 Ilorin Native Authority Full Council, Minutes of Meetings held from 8th – 10th 7, especially the 3rd day sitting, Items 5 and 6.
- lviii. The Magaji Are had requested that the other three Baloguns and Magajin Gari be included in the GPC and that Balogun Ajikobi and the Waziri be put in the Finance and Establishment Committees respectively.

- lix. See Ibid.: Minute No 27 of the 3rd day sitting of the 2nd Ordinary Meeting of the INAC held between 16th and 18th May 1957.
- lx. See the Annual Report 1957, Ilorin Division by Mr. J.G. Davies, op. cit. p.5 and Minute 46, 2nd day sitting of the INAC, July 1957. Mr. Davies however noted that the three NPC (opposition) members appointed into the Committees were the "weaker" ones. The councilors did not also delegate responsibilities to the N.A. staff until towards the end of the year when they realized "that they were trying to do too much". See the Annual Report, op. cit. p.6
- lxi. See Minute 46 of the INA Full Council meeting of July 1957, op. cit.
- lxii. Ibid
- lxiii. See Minute 58 of the INA Full Council Meeting of September 3rd-5th 1957.
- lxiv. See Annual Report for 1957, Ilorin Division by Mr. J.G. Davies, op. cit. p.4.
- lxv. See the Annual Report for 1957, Ilorin Division by Mr. J.G. Davies, p. 12.
- lxvi. Ibid. See also minute 323 of the I.N.A. General Purposes Committee of 11th December 1957.
- lxvii. Ibid. See also Minute 331 ("APPOINTMENT OF NOMINATED MEMBERS OF THE ILORIN TOWN COUNCIL") of the Extraordinary meeting of the I.N.A.C. General Purposes Committee of 19th December 1957 (P.C.J. NAC\395)
- lxviii. See Annual Report for 1957, Ilorin Division by Mr. J.G. Davies, op. cit.
- lxix. See Whitaker C.S. *Politics of Tradition*, op. cit. p.156; Annual Report 1957, Ilorin Division by Mr. Davies, page 13; Minute 331 of the Extraordinary meeting of the General Purposes Committee of 19th December 1957, op. cit. Alhaji Maito maintains that he was opposed to the Emir's decision but the "modus operandi" since, according to him "the

matter had not reached a climax to necessitate the Emir resorting to the method he used”.

- lxx. See Minute 79 of the INA Full Council Meeting of September 3rd-5th 1957.
- lxxi. See Minutes 74 and 79 of the INA Full Council Meeting of September 3rd-5th 1957
- lxxii. See NAK SDOI|9 Ilorin N.A. Full Council, Minutes of, Enclosure P.C.J. NAC\395 Minutes of I.N.A. General Purposes Committee Meeting of 19th November 1957, minute 279: ILORIN TOWN COUNCIL.
- lxxiii. This was after an advice and appeals by other members of the NAC including the Resident, Magaji Are and Balogun Ajikobi against a retrospective adoption of the principle, The Resident had emphasized that the Committee “must adduce good reasons to persuade one to approve” such amendment and had advised and argued that “it was rare that rules which carry penalty were retrospective” and “therefore a little unfair and unnecessary”. He also advised the Committee to be “conciliatory but not on bend knees”.
- lxxiv. Annual Report for 1957, Ilorin Division, by Mr. J.G. Davies, op. cit. See Part IV Conclusion.
- lxxv. See Provincial Annual Report 1956, Ilorin Province by C.W. Michie, Senior Resident, paragraph 4 and the Annual Report for 1957, Ilorin Division by Mr. J.G. Davies, p. 26. Since the establishment of the Ilorin Emirate in c.1823, the Fulani-led aristocracy had had to contest (in several fierce military engagements) for the control of Ilorin with the Old Oyo authorities and other Yoruba states particularly New Oyo Empire and Ibadan.
- lxxvi. For the councilors’ contestations on the issues, see NAK SDO I |9 Minutes of the INA Full Council Meetings, 1957-58: see minutes 25 and 50 of the of the 2nd Ordinary Meeting of the Council and Minute 88 of the 5th Ordinary Meeting of the INA Council of 5th November, 1957; NAK SDO I |9 Minutes 58 and 81 of the 8th and 9th meetings of

the INAC Local Government Committee respectively on January 6th and 28th February 1958. See also Great Britain, Colonial Office, *Report of the Commission Appointed to Enquire into the Fears of Minorities and the Means of Allaying them*, (Her Majesty's Stationery Office, London, 1958) p. 79.

lxxvii. See Minutes of the 15th Meeting of the Ilorin Town Council held on 20th January 1958.

lxxviii. See Statement of the Government of Northern Region on the Report of the Committee Appointed to Investigate Allegations About Ilorin Native Authority, paragraph 1.

lxxix. Ibid: Appendix A: Regional Government Warning

lxxx. The Committee was under the chairmanship of Mr. R. O. Mant, the Acting Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Social Welfare and Cooperatives. The other members were M. Musa (Alkali of Bida) and Alhaji Aminu Yakubu (a member of the Emir's Court; Kano).

lxxxi. See *Report of The Committee of Enquiry into the Conduct of Affairs by Ilorin N. A.*, paras. 16-22.

lxxxii. Ibid, paras. 23-29.

lxxxiii. Ibid, paras. 30-38.

lxxxiv. Given the boycott of the Committee of Enquiry by ITP\AG alliance members of the N. A., the report of the Committee was based on two major sources: (i) oral and written evidence presented by the opposition: NPC, Ilorin NA Workers Union, traditional chiefs and other members of the public and (ii) previous minutes of the NA Council and its committees as well as "series of answers prepared by the alliance on behalf of the N. A. in an earlier reply to some of the allegations now raised" as evidence. The Committee of Enquiry considered the minutes as "extremely adequate documentary evidence" being "of a remarkably high standard" and thus "likely to be a much surer testimony as to the matters of fact than any oral evidence given months

later in quite different circumstances". See *Report of the Committee of Enquiry*, *ibid*, paras 6-9.

lxxxv. *Ibid*, cf. paras 16-18, 24-28, 32 and 37.

lxxxvi. *Ibid*, par. 45

lxxxvii. C.W. Michie, the 'father' of the reform, had reiterated during the inauguration of the Council in May 1957 that it was the first and "a test case" and apparently warned the councilors to be careful. In his conclusion to the 1957 Annual Report for Ilorin Division, Mr. Davies equally observed that "... Ilorin is in the forefront of the North, and the democratization that is taking place here today can be expected to produce similar results in many other parts of the northern region in the future". See page 26.

lxxxviii. See Statement of the Government of Northern Region on the Report of the Committee Appointed to Investigate Allegations About Ilorin Native Authority, paragraph 3.

lxxxix. See Statement of the Government of Northern Region on the Report of the Committee Appointed to Investigate Allegations About Ilorin Native Authority, paragraph 9 of the Conclusion

xc. See Ann O'Hear, *Power Relations in Nigeria*, *op. cit.* p146 and Whitaker C.S. *The Politics of Tradition*, *op. cit.* p. 157

xc. See Annual Report for 1959, Ilorin Province by the Resident, J.B. Bell, paragraphs 7 and 8; Adisa-Onikoko A *Short History of Ilorin*, *op. cit.* p. 86; Whitaker C. S. *The Politics of Tradition*, p. 173.

xcii. See Sklar R.L. *Nigerian Political Parties*, *op. cit.* p. 354; Whitaker C. S. *The Politics of Tradition*, p. 164

xciii. Annual Report for 1959, Ilorin Province by J. B. Bell, paragraphs 12 and 25

xciv. See Annual Report for 1959, Ilorin Province, paragraph 9. The Resident noted that the boycott was still on by the end of 1959. On the result of the ITC election, Sklar R.L. *op. cit.* reports that the NPC won 22 while the ITP had 12 seats