

## BOOK REVIEW

Ayodeji Olukoju and Tokunbo A. Ayoola, eds. *Politics, Economy, and Society in Twentieth-Century Nigeria*. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2023. vii + 328 pp. \$120.00. Hardback. ISBN: 978-1-66692-996-6.

The contents of this book do not reflect, capture, or represent the title and essence of the book. From the contents, there is a critical misconception of what the twentieth century entails. The twentieth century refers to the years from 1901 to 2000. Therefore, the book should contain events that explain Nigeria's politics, economy, and society from 1901 to 2000. Rather, some chapters, such as Chapters Fourteen and Five, focuses on events outside the twentieth century. For example, Chapter Fourteen—titled “E-voting System and Democratization in Nigeria” by Olamide Samson Adelana—dwell on the E-voting system, the 1999 constitution and the 2010 Electoral Act. The contents of the chapter are ongoing issues in Nigeria's current Fourth Republic and, thus, contribute nothing to the understanding of twentieth-century Nigeria. Similarly, Chapter Five focuses on Arogbo-Ile in the seventeenth century, which is also beyond the book's scope. Some chapters, such as Chapter Twelve, discuss topics that do not adequately reflect the book's title.


The five parts of the book are limited as they do not address the title of the book. The first part examines the historiography and scholarship of Wale Oyemakinde; as important as this part is, it does not contribute significantly to the book. Discussing Wale Oyemakinde, and his works on the Nigerian Railway Labour historiography in relation to this book is problematic. This first part can be a book discussing the biography and works of Wale Oyemakinde as an African intellectual.

The second part is titled “Economy, Business and Trade.” Overall, the four chapters in this part also do not adequately address the crux of the book. An example is Chapter Four, which resembles a biographical study focusing on W.A. Dawodu's entrepreneurship in colonial Nigeria and its contents are more biographical. Another inappropriate chapter in this part is Chapter Three, written by Oladipo O. Olubomehin. Some of the sub-themes of this chapter are vague. The problem of the chapter lies in the fact that transportation and tourism were not important issues that typified politics, economy, and society in the twentieth century. Tourism in particular was high during the period under study in Nigeria. In sum, the second part has a good title but the chapters do not reflect the title.

The third part, which focuses on railways and development, includes good chapters but no section discussed the Nigerian Railways Cooperation (NRC). The NRC played an important role in Nigeria's development in the twentieth

century. As a matter of fact, Buchi Emecheta's *The Joys of Motherhood* illustrates the contributions of the NRC to the politics, economy, and society in twentieth-century Nigeria. No meaningful discussion of railways and development in Nigeria will be complete without discussing the NRC. Therefore, this part with two chapters is scanty and inadequate. As important as the fourth and fifth parts are, they do not address important issues that reflect politics, economy, and society in twentieth-century Nigeria. When discussing the politics, economy, and society in twentieth-century Nigeria, certain important events are expected to be addressed. Issues that characterized the Nigerian state during these periods should be of importance. The book is heavily hinged on the Nigerian railways based on the writings of Wale Oyemakinde, which is problematic.

In sum, most of the chapters in the book do not reflect its title. Parts One, Three, and Five contribute little to the book. Many characteristics that typified the politics, economy, and society in twentieth-century Nigeria are not captured in the book. An illustration is the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) in Nigeria. The SAP is one major feature that adequately addresses the politics, economy, and society in twentieth-century Nigeria but it was not captured in any of the chapters. Likewise, the oil boom in Nigeria under the Nigerian military, public enterprises in Nigeria, the dynamics of the agricultural sector, the Nigerian civil war, and the revenue allocation formula, among others. Hence, the contents of this book do not reflect the title. At best, the book should have been entitled, "The Celebration of Wale Oyemakinde's Scholarship," given his place as a pioneer scholar on the subject matter of railways in Nigeria.

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