

**SURVEY OF THE ECONOMY OF ILORIN EMIRATE:  
PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE  
By Alhaji L.A.K. Jimoh at the Ilorin Emirate  
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Ilorin is much talked about in history as a centre of Islamic scholarship and as the jihadist military power that conquered the Oyo Empire in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century. Not much is talked about Ilorin's glorious economic past even though there is a wealth of written attestations on the matter. Recounting few of the attestations will, therefore, suffice for this paper.

In 1830, for example, the famous British explorers, Richard and John Lander, who traced the course of the River Niger from Busa to the sea coast wrote as follows about Ilorin:

*"Besides **Raka** (i.e Raba) which is peopled wholly  
By **Falatah** (i.e Fulani) who have strengthened it  
amazingly and rendered it exceedingly populous,  
another town of prodigious size has lately sprung  
into being which already has surpassed **Katunga**  
(i.e Old Oyo) in wealth and population and extent.  
It was at first resorted to by **Falatas** (Fulani) who  
Named it **Alorie** ..... **Alorie** (Ilorin)  
has become by far the largest and most flourishing  
city in **Yarriba** (i.e Yoruba)"*  
*(Quoted from "The Niger Journal of Richard  
and John Lander" by Robin Hallet (Hrsg) New  
York – Washington, 1995, S. 941:*

Similarly, a German authority on the spread of Islam in Africa, Professor Stefan Reichmuth, in an article titled "**Islamic Learning and its Interaction with Western Education**" published in Brenner (ed): "**Muslim Identity and Social Change in Sub-Saharan Africa**" wrote about Ilorin thus:

*"Islamic Scholars and Islamic Learning played  
a crucial role in the emergence of a Muslim  
emirate in Ilorin....."*  
**"In this booming city, which until  
1870 was, after Kano, the largest town  
in the Caliphate and the major trading**

*and manufacturing centre south of the Niger”, the Islamic scholars (Yor. alufa) developed into a status group which cut across different layers of the society” (Emphasis mine).*

## **THE REMOTE PAST**

In those days, Ilorin was, indeed, **“the major trading and manufacturing centre south of the Niger”**. The Emirate had a buoyant economy and there was hardly any family compound in the city, that was not identified with a craft or profession or with one economic/commercial activity or the other. That is why, for example, we had and still have in Ilorin family compounds known as follows:

Ile Alagbede (Blacksmiths), Ile Onikere (Rafia Mat Weavers), Ile Asileke, Ile Olodo, Ile Oloko-Nla (Farmers), Ile Alata, Ile Ala’aro, Ile Ofinde (Brass casters), Ile Alagunmu, Ile Elewe-Omo, Ile Eleran, Ile Oniluru, Ile Elewu-Etu, Ile Kasandubu, Ile Alapata, Ile Alagbon (Basket weavers), Ile Olokun (Rope makers), Ile Onigba (Calabash sellers), Ile Oloolu (Dry cleaners), Ile Onigbajamo, Ile Alawo (Hide and skin sellers and leather craftsmen), Ile Onilu (drummers), Ile Ala’agbe (Acrobats), Ile Onitolotolo (Turkey Breeders), Ile Onikoko (Pottery Makers) etc.

Ilorin, as a major commercial and industrial city, in the pre-colonial era, had a peculiarly high concentration of markets, both inside the city and in the districts. Hence, it was reported in the 1921 Gazetteer of Ilorin Province that:

*“Ilorin city, the capital of the Emirate, is a large Yoruba city ..... The most striking feature to a stranger, visiting Ilorin for the first time, is the size of the markets, the names of the principal of which are as follows:*

**Emir’s Quarters:** Emir’s Market, Ita-Kuri

*(Ita-Kure) and Alapata;*

**Ajikobi:** Amada (Omoda), Ologe (Oloje);

**Gambari:** Gambari, Ajagboro (Ojagboro), Oloro (Olororo); Ajaodi (Oja Awodi), Bake (Pake), Jataro (now Kankatu) and Ondoko;

**Fulani:** Asunara (Asun-nara) and Gada

**Alanamu:** Aja (Oja) Alanamu; Pakata;

“The Emir’s Market is the largest and it is held every night from 6 pm to midnight”

Apart from the Emir’s Market, the market at Ojagboro, Kankatu, Omoda and Pakata were also held every night.

The Gambari market was an international market where slaves were traded and both local produce and imported European merchandise as well as goods from north Africa were marketed. Salt, potash ornaments utensils and textiles and locally woven cloths were major items for sale in the market.

There were many markets in the Districts, too. The major ones among them were at Alapa, Ballah, Otte, Aboto, Afon, Laduba, Elemere, Malete, Ipaiye, Megida, Yowere, Lanwa, Ejidongari, Okuta’ala, Bode-Sa’adu, Oke-Oyi, Iponrin etc. Items in the markets were mainly food stuff and cash crops like shear butter and locust bean.

Some of the markets in the Districts were cross-border markets patronized by traders from as far north as Bida and as far south as Osogbo and Ilesa. The market at Aboto was patronized by traders from the Ogbomoso/Ejigbo axis.

This was the impressive economic climate that prevailed in Ilorin Emirate in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century until the British colonized Ilorin in 1897. The colonial administration acted fast and took advantage of the congenial economic climate to invest in the development of the Emirate.

First, they promptly extended the railway from Lagos to Ilorin and onward to Jebba in 1908 to facilitate the transportation of goods and people at minimal cost. In that same year, they built the first Native Hospital in Ilorin to improve health-care and in 1914/1915 they established **Okesuna School** which later became **Ilorin Middle School**. Shortly after that, they established a craft school in the “Works Yard” at Pake. The craft school produced artisans and semi-skilled labour.

They also constructed intra-city, inter-city and inter-district roads. The first set of such roads which they completed by 1920 to link Ilorin with other parts of the Emirate and with other parts of the then Ilorin Province, even beyond, were:

*Ilorin – Budo Egba, Ilorin – Ottun, Ilorin – Ajase-Ipo -  
Offa; Ilorin – Odunfa – Igbeti – Kishi; Alapa – Bode-  
Sa’adu; Iponrin – Ya’aru and Ilorin – Share – Shonga  
roads.*

The availability of these infrastructural facilities and the Emirate’s strategic geographical location induced the major European trading companies operating in Nigeria,

at that time, to come and establish their business in the Emirate. They competed healthily for the market and built stores in Ilorin as well as trading posts in Lanwa and Jebba both of which were on the railway line.

The first set of European trading companies that established business in Ilorin by 1920 were the UAC, John Holt, PZ, GBO and SCOA. Each of the companies appointed indigenes of the Emirate as Agents.

The first set of indigenes of the Emirate who were appointed as Agents by the European trading companies were:

*Alhaji Mahmud Oniyangi (Patriarch of the Oniyangi Family),  
Alhaji Jimoh Olumo (Patriarch of the Olumo Family),  
Alhaji Mustapha Olodo of Omoda Area, Alhaji Sidiku  
Monna of Omoda Area and Alhaji Yahaya Ele'esu  
who later became the Galadima of Ilorin*

The flurry of economic activities generated by the European trading companies facilitated the emergence of more wealthy indigenes who traded in food stuff and general merchandize and engaged in road transportation business. The merchants included:

*Alhaji Agba (father of Alhaji Toyin Baruba), Alhaji Baba  
Alata (father of Saka Eletu), Alhaji Zubair Sagaya Oke  
Apomu (father of Alhaji Oba Sagaya), Alhaji Yahaya  
Kola'a Alikinla (father of Alhaji S.K. Dan Alhaji), Alhaji  
Kuranga Omo Yero Okelele, Alhaji Iliasu Onikau'un  
(father of Alhaji Yunusa Gada), Alhaji Sule Olo'ola (father  
of Alhaji Akanbi Olo'ola Omoda), Alhaji Sanusi Maigida  
Ile Onikanh'un Gada, Alhaji Salman Ile Ele'ebo Isale Oja,  
Alhaji Abdul Baki of Isale Aluko, Alhaji Momonuhu Popo  
Giwa (who was the first person to erect a storey building  
in Ilorin in 1909), Alfa Busari Agboji (father of Alhaji Hamzat  
Agbaji), Alhaji Sambo Ile Olowo Oke-Apomu, Alhaji Isa  
Olokunbi Ile Igbonna, Alhaji Jimoh Omo-Ekun of Ajikobi  
who erected a Storey building in 1915 and Alhaji Musa Sule  
Idi-Agbede who was the third person to erect a storey  
building in the town, near the Emir's Palace.*

Wealthy female merchants also emerged during that period. They included Alhaja Onikepe and her sister Binta, of Isale Kannike, Alhaja Muke of Akodudu, Alhaja Asunle Ala'asa (a Nupe woman) of Ojagboro, Alhaja Adika Iya Ajape of Gbari Area Gambari and Alhaja Iya Eko of Ile Eleran Ita'adu who was the first woman to erect a storey building in Ilorin.

It was during this period that Alhaji Mahmud Oniyangi, Alhaji Tafa Olodo and Alhaji Musa Apapalilai became the first indigenes of the Emirate (in fact, of the old Ilorin Province), besides the Emir of Ilorin, who became rich enough to buy “**pleasure Cars**”, as saloon motor-cars were aristocratically called in those days.

Another generation of wealthy indigenes of the Emirate emerged between 1925 and the 1950's. The generation included Abdulrahman Jidda, Waheed Oke-Okuta, Alhaji Buari Edun, Mutalubi Omoda, Alhaji Sule Maito, Alhaji Adebinape Oniyeye, Abdullahi Ita Kudimo, Alhaji Akande Ile Ele-ere Sakama, Badiru Idi-Ape, Alao Ile Idanmi, Megida Aluko, Alhaji Busari Sagaya (father of Engr. Lanre Sagaya), Alhaji Baba Alakoso, Alhaji Adebayo Omo Yahaya Alikinla, Alhaji Ibrahim La'aro Omo Musa Apapalilai and Alhaji Adio Ile Olowo Centre Igboro.

The generation also included wealthy indigenes like Sambo Oganija Alanamu, Alhaji Omo-Iya Afuku Alanamu, Alhaji Issa Omo Musa Apapalilai, Alhaji Oba Wankasi, Alhaji Maigidan-sanma Ojagboro, Alhaji Olowonje-oyin of Isale Gambari, Alhaji Kuranga Ajia Sakasaka and Alhaji Ahmadu Duronkudi Asunnara.

With its many markets and the presence of European trading companies Ilorin Emirate remained a major hub of commercial activities in north – central Nigeria in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Commerce boomed as traders from as far north as Bida and as far south as Ogbomoso, Ejigbo, Osogbo, Ibadan and Ijesaland flooded the Emirate on market days.

A peculiar economic feature of Ilorin in those days was the striking occupational polarity between Okemale and Aafin people. While the people of Okemale were predominantly cloth weavers, those of Aafin were mainly cattle dealers and traders in general merchandise, with a sprinkle of viziers and courtiers.

In those days, economic development in the Emirate was, however, not limited to commerce alone. In addition to the thriving local or native industries, the European administration also attempted modern industrialization.

In fact, the administration established a **Tiles Industry** which by 1924 had become so famous and successful that it was filmed and exhibited at the **British Empire Exhibition** in Wembley, England in that year.

In the same year, the Emirate scored another first by becoming the first and only Emirate in the entire Northern Provinces whose Native Administration (NA) installed and operated a big electric plant which illuminated the entire palace area, the Emir's market, the vast Native Authority Secretarial and the **Alkali Court** complex. This achievement was reported in the **Gazetteer of Ilorin Province** of 1929.

Later on, a private European investor established in Ilorin a confectionery which produced biscuits that were popularly branded: "**Kangu Adeta**". Another European investor established a pilot textile mill in Pakata area which caused the locality to be popularly referred to as **Oke Ebo Alaso**.

Unfortunately, the hope of rapid industrialization of the emirate which the establishment of these industries kindled was dashed by the out-break of the two world wars which caused global economic recession.

### **THE RECENT PAST**

In the recent past, which I choose to refer to as the "**Sardauna Era**" that began in 1957 when Northern Nigeria gained "**self-government**", the Emirate maintained its primacy in economic development, ranking only next to Kano and Kaduna in industrialization, in Northern Nigeria.

During that period, the Sardauna Administration facilitated the establishment, in Ilorin, of Philip Morris Tobacco Company, Tate and Lyle Sugar Company and a Match Manufacturing industry named "**Matchco**" as well as an international paper mill called "**Jebba Paper Mill**" in Jebba.

Public electricity and pipe-borne water supply were also provided by the administration. In addition, "Redifusion" (radio boxes) was provided and made available to the public for installation in private residents all over the city, thereby making Ilorin one of the first few cities in Northern Nigeria to have public radio facility. These three facilities were major economic catalysts that helped to further energize the economy of the Emirate.

The Sardauna administration also reconstructed and tarred the major roads in the city, particularly Emir's Road, Lagos Road (now Abdulaziz Atta road), Jebba Road (now Muritala Muhammed Road), Kaiama Road (now Alimi Road) and all the roads in the Government Reservation Area (GRA). The administration also constructed a new road which was initially called "**Oyo Bye-Pass**" but is now called Ibrahim Taiwo Road.

Furthermore, the Sardauna administration promoted the emergence of a crop of Ilorin indigenes as "**General Contractors**" through generous governmental patronage. It also encouraged indigenes of the Emirate to embark on private property development.

Consequently, indigenes of the Emirate became the dominant owners of landed property in prime commercial areas of the city, such as the old Jebba Road, Emir's Road, Niger Road and Lagos Road.

A lot of the indigenes of the emirate were also recruited into the Public Service of Northern Nigeria. A sizeable number of them was later transferred to the Federal Public Service in addition to Alhaji Sa'adu Alanamu who was at first appointed the Recruitment Secretary (that is head of the Civil Service Commission) and later the Agent-General of

Northern Nigeria in London. Alhaji Yahaya Madawaki, too, was appointed Minister of Health. Those who were so transferred to the Federal Public Service included Alhaji Amuda Gobir, Alhaji A.K Oba (Agbaji), Alhaji A.A Jimoh (Oloje), Alhaji Nagode Ita-Kure, Alhaji Ayinla Olomoda, Alhaji Aremu Monna, Dr. A.B. Suleiman, Alhaji Garba Gobir and a host of others. Some of these indigenes became Permanent Secretaries in Federal Public Service before they retired. Alhaji Issa Ahmed (Omo Eko) of Ile Abojumeji, Agaka who also retired as Permanent Secretary, however remained in the Northern Nigerian Public Service.

Many indigenes of the Emirate, some of whom became **Generals** before they too, retired, were also recruited into the armed forces as commissioned officers. Those recruited included Major-General Abdullahi Muhammed (Adangba), Major-General Lai Yusuf (Olojku), Major-General Tunde Idiagbon, Major-General Abdulkareem Adisa, Lt Col Hussein Abdulkadir, Air Commodore Sulaiman Ojibara and Rear Admiral Muhammed Lawal.

Alhaji Issa Ojibara who retired as Assistant Inspector General of Police was one of the indigenes of the emirate who were recruited into the Nigeria Police Force at that time.

Until the end of the Sardauna Era in 1966, the management and control of the economy of the Emirate was firmly in the hands of its indigenes and a solid foundation for further, rapid and sustainable development, based on systematic and focused manpower development, was laid.

In this regard, the legal and medical professions as well as the education sector were not left out. It was under the Sardauna administration's determined human capital development programme that Alhaji Saidu Kawu, Alhaji Babatunde Belgore, Alhaji Alfa Belgore, Alhaji Mustapha Akanbi, Alhaji Aliyu Salman, Alhaji Saka Yusuf, Alhaji Akanbi Oniyangi, Alhaji Abdulkadir Orire and many others were trained and specially groomed to eventually become eminent lawyers and jurists.

Justice Saidu Kawu ultimately became the pioneer Chief Judge of Kwara State and the first indigene of Kwara State to become a judge of the Supreme Court of Nigeria. Justice Alfa Belgore retired as the first indigene of Kwara State to become the Chief Justice of Nigeria. Justice Mustapha Akanbi became the first Kwara State indigene to be the President of the Court of Appeal and Justice Babatunde Belgore similarly retired as the first indigene of Kwara State to be the Chief Judge of the Federal High Court of Nigeria. Justice Saka Yusuf, too, retired as Chief Judge of Kwara State and Justice Abdulkadir Orire retired as the pioneer Grand Khadi of Kwara State.

At the bar, Alhaji (Dr.) Aliyu Alarape Salman became the first law graduate of Ahmadu Bello University and the second indigene of Ilorin Emirate to attain the prestigious rank of **Senior Advocate of Nigeria (SAN)**. In the same vain, Alhaja Raliat Elelu became the first female indigene to qualify as a Lawyer. She subsequently became the first female Chief Judge of Kwara State.

Similarly, the Sardauna Administration produced Sule Maliki and Sa'adu Aluko as pharmacists, Alhaji Akanbi Olorin and Alhaji Aremu Zubair, among others, as nurses and Dr. Amuda Aluko, Dr. Ishaq Hassan Adebayo and Dr. A.S. Oniyangi as medical doctors. A host of other indigenes of the emirate were also produced as professionals in the other medical and para-medical professions.

The Administration also groomed indigenes of the Emirate as educationists, among whom were Alhaji Hamidu Erubu, Alhaji Babatunde Gegele, Alhaji Abdulraheem Adebayo Molete, Professor Saka Nuhu, Professor Saliu Sulaiman, Alhaji Saka Sa'adu, Alhaji M.A. Mustapha, Alhaji A.O. Kamal and many others who distinguished themselves in their respective areas of specialization. Alhaji Babatunde Agaka and Alhaji Akanbi Ori-Okoko were trained as Printers while Alhaji Adelodun was groomed to become the first Chief Conservator of Forest of Kwara State.

With this solid foundation in human capital development, Ilorin Emirate was stoutly poised to cope with the eventual political and economic vicissitude of the nation.

## **THE PRESENT PERIOD**

### **The Bamigboye Era**

Then came the nation-wide creation of states in 1967 and the effective establishment of Kwara State, with Ilorin as the State capital which marked the beginning of the **recent past**. Consequently, there was an influx of people from all walks of life, particularly public servants who were deployed from the Northern Nigerian Public Service to the newly established Kwara State Public Service and entrepreneurs who returned to their home State. Kwara State at that time extended from New Busa (which is now in Niger State) to Idah (which is in Kogi State now).

The choice of Ilorin as capital of the new state raised the hopes of indigenes of the Emirate and stimulated dreams which Honourable Justice Mustapha Akanbi aptly recapitulated in his speech as Guest Speaker at the IDPU Annual Conference in 1994 thus:

*"When Kwara State was created in 1967 and Ilorin was made the capital, we had very high hopes. We dreamt dreams. We saw vision of a state capital that would be second to none, at least, in what used to be known as Northern Nigeria. We saw vision of a people who would be in the vanguard of a progressive, prosperous and flourishing center of commerce, industry, economic activities, architecture, scientific agriculture, philosophy and learning. We dreamt dreams of a society that will be a beacon of light and hope for the poor and the less privileged of society.*



*We dreamt dreams that our leaders will use their God-given talents and ingenuity to eradicate poverty, want and squalor in our midst. We dreamt that our society will throw up visionary leaders who will lead us to greater heights"*

It was under this atmosphere of hope and optimism that Brigadier General (then Major) David Bamigboye, a Kwaran, was appointed pioneer Military Governor of the new State, thereby ushering in the **Bamigboye era**.

The economy of the Emirate fared well during the Bamigboye era, because of the combined effect of population surge, investments by returnee businessmen and the patronage which the State Government gave to indigenes of the state, especially the "general contractors".

Apart from embarking on lots of building projects for staff quarters and office accommodation (particularly, the magnificent State Secretariat complex), the Bamigboye administration also established revenue-generating and labour-intensive projects such as the Agricultural Development Company, Kwara Investment Corporation, Kwara Hotel, Kwara State Water Corporation, Kwara Transport Corporation, Gateway Insurance Company and Midland (Departmental) Stores. All these establishments which had their respective Head Office in Ilorin created a lot of employment opportunities.

The administration in 1972 also established College of Education, Ilorin and Kwara State Polytechnic which was called Kwara State College of Technology at its inception. It also built the Asa Dam.

The award of most of the contracts for these projects to local contractors and suppliers and the regular payment of salary to employees of the State Government impacted positively on the economy and accelerated the pace of economic development.

Consequently, the well-to-do in the State prospered further and a new crop of them emerged. The new crop included Alhaji Idris Alaya, Alhaji Bayo Alaya, Alhaji Hamzat Agbaji, Alhaji La'aro Balogun, Alhaji Amuda Tode, Alhaji Na-Allah Onipako, Alhaji Raheem Ishao. Many others, too, emerged to join the remnant of the old brigade which included:

*Alhaji Toyin Baruba, Alhaji Mustapha Idi-Agbede,  
Alhaji Durosинlorun Isale Oja, Alhaji Busari Isale Oja,  
Alhaji Durosинlorun Isale Oja, Alhaji Sayi Oloje, Alhaji Adio  
Ile Olowo Centre Igboro, Alhaji Baba Oriokere Gegele,  
Alhaji Haruna Koro-Gurumo, Alhaji Issa Elelu, Alhaji Sule  
Maito of Ile Omolabi Alanamu, Alhaji Ajadi Iwo, Alhaji Raimi  
Ita-Egba, Alhaji Alabi Mciver, Alhaji Amuda Kannike,  
Alhaji Haruna Kannike, Alhaji Yahaya and Alhaji Raimi  
Oloriegbe of Alore, Alhaji S.K Dan Alhaji Alikinla, Alhaji*

*Olowo-okere Alore, Ahaji Baba Alaya, Alhaji Oba Shagaya,  
Alhaji Karimu and Alhaji Saka Olumo of Akodudu.*

Alhaja Esuo Olumo and Alhaja Abebi Akosile who was later conferred with the title of **Iyalaje of Ilorin** by the 9<sup>th</sup> Emir of Ilorin, Oba Sulu Gambari were outstanding female traders.

Furthermore, under the Bamigboye administration's rural electrification programme electricity supply was extended to Afon, Otte, Malete, Bode Sa'adu, Oke-Oyi Alapa and many other towns in the emirate. The supply which was later connected to the national grid transformed both the mode of living and means of production in the districts of the emirate.

Equipment were procured and buildings for the establishment of a Television Station for Kwara State were erected along Fate Road. The site and the equipment later formed the nucleus of NTA Ilorin established by the Federal Government.

The Kulende Housing Estate was also built by the Federal Government and contract for the building of the Ilorin International Airport and Michael Imodu Institute for Labour Studies were awarded during the Bamigboye era.

### **The Innih Era**

The Bamigboye administration ended abruptly in July, 1975 following a military coup d'état which over-threw the Gowon military administration at the federal level. The new Federal Military Government, with General Murtala Mohammed as head of state, replaced Bamigboye with Colonel Ibrahim Taiwo who was killed six month later in an abortive counter coup. Colonel Taiwo was succeeded by Colonel George Innih.

The Innih administration was energetic. It fast-tracked economic development of the Emirate, in fact, of Kwara State in general. It gave Ilorin a face-lift by constructing new township roads, (e.g Unity Road, Fate Road, New Yidi Road, Asa-Dam Road and the Western Reservation Road which links Garin-Alimi round-about with Adeta round-about through the round-about at the College of Arabic and Islamic Legal Studies). The administration also dualised the existing major roads, including Murtala Road (from Kulende to Ola-Olu Hospital round-about), Emir's Road, Abdulaziz Atta Road and Taiwo Road, in addition to the reconstruction of link roads in the native area of the city.

In addition, the administration, with Alhaji Saka Sa'adu as the State Commissioner for Lands and Housing, built Adewole Housing Estate, Baboko market, the market at Otte, Kwara State Stadium complex, the State Library and Staff Development Centre at both Kulende and Fate Road.

The Innih administration also transferred the **Ilorin Yidi Praying Ground** from the old site at Taiwo Road which had got entangled in a web of residential buildings and commercial houses to the present site.

Furthermore, the Administration built the Asa Dam Treatment plant and the two Water Reservoirs near the Mandate building at Olorunsogo area and at the back of the General Hospital. In addition, the Administration laid water pipes to improve reticulation of water from the dam.

It also vastly extended the GRA from the flower Garden area to Fate Road and eastward from the Ministry of Health at Fate to Agba'a Dam up to Bishop Smith School. The "new" GRA was properly laid out and all the roads in it were constructed and tarred. Both electricity and pipe-borne water were also provided before the plots were allocated to applicants.

With all these developments, the Emirate's economy boomed during the tenure of the Innih administration which ended in 1978 and was followed by an interregnum under Colonel Ifere whose administration ended in 1979 following the re-establishment of civilian rule.

### **The Adamu Atta Era**

The 1979 general election produced Alhaji Adamu Atta, a prince of the Atta dynasty of Ebira land, as the first civilian Governor of the then Kwara State which extended from New Busa in the north-west to Lokoja in the south-east.

The economy of Ilorin Emirate improved substantially during the four-year tenure of Governor Adamu Atta. Affluence was visible all over the state. Many people became "car owners" and there was a boom in estate development.

Before the Adamu Attah administration ended three months ahead of the Shagari era in 1983 it executed many projects. It built the **Phase Two** of both Kwara Hotel and the State Secretariat. It also established the United Foam Industry, Ilorin and up-graded the Kwara State College of Technology to a Polytechnic as a prelude to the conversion of the institution to a University. The Adamu Atta administration built the Sobi Specialist Hospital, Ilorin, the Hajj Camp, the offices of the Kwara State Pilgrims Welfare Board and many Secondary Schools all over the Emirate.

Apart from the Specialist Hospital which was done under a contractor-financing arrangement, contract for all the projects were awarded to local contractors who were based in the state. The administration's policy of awarding contracts mostly to "**home-based**" contractors ensured that the money expended on the projects was ploughed back into the economy of the state which revolved round the state capital substantially.

Adamu Atta's rule ended in September 1983 and was followed by Cornelius Adebayo's rule which lasted only three months.

The federal government which was under President Shagari awarded lots of contracts to indigenes of the Emirate and built the Federal Low-cost Housing Estate at Oloje (Ilorin) Ballah, Bode Sa'adu, Jebba and inside the main campus of the University of Ilorin.

However, civilian rule was terminated abruptly by the military, and the subsequent military administrations which lasted from 1984 to 1999 added only marginal values to the economy of Ilorin Emirate before civilian rule was restored nation-wide in 1999.

### **THE PRESENT PERIOD**

In that year (1999) an Ilorin indigene, Rear Admiral Mohammed Lawal (Rtd), who died on November 16, 2006, was elected civilian Governor of the state. Thus, he became the first indigene of Ilorin Emirate to become the Governor of Kwara State.

Optimism rose high that with an indigene of the Emirate as "executive" Governor of the State, Ilorin Emirate was on the launching pad for a great tomorrow that will be brighter, by far, than today.

But unfortunately, the optimism was quenched. For, within two years of the Lawal administration's tenure of four years, things fell apart on the political plain between the Governor and his political mentors. The resultant political rancor and acrimony led to wasteful diversion of resources, thuggery, loss of lives and wanton destruction of property in the emirate.

The repercussions of the political crisis stunted the economy of the Emirate despite the determined efforts of the Lawal Administration to diffuse wealth through widely-spread and generous award of contracts to home-based contractors.

The general elections of that year (2003) in which another indigene of the Emirate, Dr. Bukola Saraki, emerged and succeeded Admiral Lawal as the "executive" Governor of the State, rubbished (so to say) the popular saying that **opportunity knocks but once**. It showed, on the contrary, that for Ilorin Emirate opportunity could be a **recurring decimal**.

The emergence of Dr. Bukola Saraki as "executive" Governor of the state rekindled the hopes and aspiration of indigenes of the Emirate that **our time has come**.

The administration started on a bright note, displaying sparks of progressive intentions that had the potentiality of catapulting the economy of the State, in general, and of Ilorin Emirate, in particular, to greater heights. It introduced lofty ideas about agricultural development and actually embarked on some skill and entrepreneurial-development schemes, especially for the youth. But the schemes faltered.

The administration also built both the “mandate housing estate” and the “mandate market” at Olorunsogo along the Western Reservoir Road. It reconstructed and dualized the Asa Dam (Dr Amua Aluko) road from Garin Alimi roundabout to “Garage Offa” roundabout, from there to Ahmadu Bello Way and onward to the Government House roundabout.

The Bukola Administration also executed a number of multi-billion naira capital projects in Ilorin, the state capital. The projects include the transformation of the Government House complex and its environs, the establishment of a Football Academy and an Aviation School; the construction of a Terminal Building and the building of an International Cargo Shed in the Ilorin International Airport, a Metropolitan Square that is akin to the **Eagle Square in Abuja** and an over-head bridge at the Post Office roundabout.

However, laudable as these efforts and projects are, their impact on the economy of the Emirate is faint.

Unlike in the past when being a “general contractor” was a flourishing business, a lot of Ilorin indigenes who are general contractors became indigent and a lot of the women-folk who used to be vibrant business women and petty traders resorted to scrambling for jobs as street sweepers or engaging in “executive street-begging” or, in the desperation to survive, jostling for stipends at political functions.

Worse still, the class of wealthy indigenes which used to be an inspiring trade mark of the emirate community and a critical index and symbol of the buoyancy of the Emirate’s economy evaporated.

Concomitantly, the economy ebbed and the emirate no longer has the likes of the S.K dan Alhajis, the Olumos, the Oloriegbes, the Sagayas, the Busari Isale-ojas, the Durosinlorun Isale-ojas, the Amuda Kannikes, the Duronkudis, the Na-Allah Onipakos, the Sayi Olojes, the Kuranga Ajias, the Buari Eduns, the Yahaya Madawakis and a lot of others (of the recent past) as reputable merchants, traders in foodstuffs, transporters and general contractors.

Similarly, the Emirate no longer has the likes of Alhaji Oba Sagaya who built the soft drink factory that produced “**Double Cola**”; of Alhaji Akanbi Oniyangi who established “**Adal Industries**” that produced a variety of fruit juice, of Pharmacist Raji Faworaja who established a Pharmaceutical factory under the trade name: Raj-Rab or the wealthy Ilorin indigenes that established a textile factory called Prospect Textile Mills in 1973, an initiative that was designed to upgrade and modernize the Emirate’s traditional “**Aso Ofi**” industry. These were heroes who strove to use their wealth to uplift the economy of the Emirate through industrialization.

Also, in the past, there used to be a healthy rivalry among the wealthy indigenes to out-pace one another in the race to develop the Emirate and improve the lot of the people.

In those days, in any assembly of wealthy Kwarans, indigenes of Ilorin Emirate occupied the front row and dominated the “high table”.

Regrettably, today, the size of the truly wealthy indigenes has shrunk drastically and dramatically, leaving the Emirate with just a handful of well-to-do indigenes. Even then, on the basis of their known means of livelihood, only few of the “**JJC’s**” are saintly enough to publicly justify or admit the magnitude of their wealth.

This is how bad and disgusting things have become, after two indigenes of the Emirate have, in an unbroken succession, been in power as “executive” Governor of Kwara State for twelve consecutive years from 1999 to 2011.

The economic situation in the Emirate was not even as sorry as this when our eminent jurist, Justice Mustapha Akanbi, as Guest Speaker at the IDPU Annual Conference in 1994 lamented as follows:

*“Unfortunately, the opportunities that came our way were frittered away. Unnecessary rivalry, jealousy and pettiness got the better part of us. disagreements and wrangling either of personal or political nature got a better part of us”.*

The jurist followed up the lamentation with an appeal thus:

*“I call on all of us in government, I call on our leaders – leaders at the highest level – to speak out and speak not only for themselves but for us all”.*

Yes, all of us must speak out and His Royal Highness, the Emir of Ilorin, has taken the lead. Hence, the clarion call contained in his recent Eid-el Fitr and Eid-el Kabir messages that the Government should seriously address the problem of youth unemployment whereby thousands of university and college graduates, roam the streets for years after graduation without employment. The truth, which we must admit, is that youth unemployment is a time-bomb; the earlier it is defused the better for the society. Delay may not just be dangerous. It could be catastrophic.

We have gone this far to show how glorious the past was and how bad the present is, to ginger up our pursuit of greatness for the Emirate, knowing fully well that those who ruled well will be remembered for ever and those who ruled badly will never be forgotten. That is the lesson derivable from a popular dirge (**ra’ra**) in ancient Oyo (Oyo Ile) which went thus:

L’aiye **Olugbon** gbogbo aiye ro’ju  
L’aiye **Aresa** gbogbo ilu dun  
L’aiye **Alafin Abiodun** a ra etu,  
a ra aran, a ra sanyan baba aso

Sugbon L'aiye **Basorun Gaa**,  
Ha a! e gbo? Ggbogbo e le ko ko ko

## **THE FUTURE**

Then, what is the way forward?

First, we have to realize that our fate lies in our hands. Therefore, we must strive to have patriotic, selfless and visionary leaders whose mission will not be to abuse public office to amass wealth for themselves or to nourish other selfish interests but to use their good offices to better the lot of our people and develop the Emirate as the generation before ours did.

Secondly, the followership in the polity must abhor both **cash-and-carry** politics and subservience which make people to sell their birth-right for a plate of porridge.

Thirdly, our people must discard the prevailing **Sa'ara'a (Sadaka) mentality** which makes us rush for stipends thrown as baits to us. ("**Eyin omo kekeke e wa gba sa'ara'a**").

Fourthly, it must be impressed on our youths that they owe themselves and the Emirate a duty to place premium on achieving a better tomorrow for both themselves and the Emirate rather than surrender themselves for use as vermin for social disruption and destruction or for the perversion of electoral justice. ("**Omo o lo'mo la nran ni ise: de toru toru**"; "**Were dun wo, ko se' bi lo mo**").

Fifthly, at the government level, the five Local Governments in the Emirate have a crucial role to play in the development of the Emirate.

(i) They should pool resources to establish joint projects that would significantly absorb the Emirate's teeming population of unemployed youths. For example, they could establish a **Starch Industry** and provide incentives for our cassava farmers to provide the necessary raw material. However, in making their choice of projects they must weigh **opportunity cost** carefully and place high premium on **cost effectiveness**. The joint-projects should be a prelude to the establishment of an integrated economic development plan for the five Local Governments in the Emirate to form a mini- economic union (i.e, an Ilorin Emirate Economic Partnership - **IEEP**). To facilitate this new initiative, the current Joint Account arrangement between the State Government and the Local Governments should be abolished because it is antithetical to the success of the Local Governments.

(ii) They should reach out to indigenes of the Emirate who have influence in the corridors of power at various levels of government and in various

agencies of government with a view to getting them to use their good offices to attract developmental projects to the Emirate. This was the practice, in the past, that yielded the building of the Ilorin General Hospital in 1957 and the establishment of Michael Imodu Institute of Labour Studies, Federal Staff Development Centre, ARMTI, National Centre for Agricultural Mechanization (NCAM), Niger River Basin Authority Headquarters, Ilorin International Airport, and the National Stored Products Research Institute (NSPRI) in Ilorin to mention just few. Similarly, Ilorin Emirate owes its gratitude for the building of the **Ganma 33kv Transmission Station** to its patriotic indigenes in NEPA (now PHCN) who, as engineers, in 2001 initiated, prepared and (under the auspices of Jebba Branch of IEDPU and with the assistance of Alhaji Mudi Gold who was then the Kwara State Head of Service) submitted a technical paper through the National Headquarters of IEDPU, under the presidency of Alhaji Abdullahi Atanda, to General Abdullahi Mohammed (the then Chief of Staff to the Head of State) who, in turn, endorsed the paper and IDPU's request for the transmission station to the then Chief Executive of NEPA (Engineer Makoju) who acknowledged receipt and later informed the Chief of Staff of the award of contract for the project during the tenure of President Olusegun Obasanjo as the Head of State. Credit must also be given to Dr. Bukola Saraki who, as Governor of Kwara State, facilitated the timely energization and commissioning of the transmission station in 2009 by President Umaru Musa Yar'Adua, the then Head of State. So also must the ex-Governor be commended for the establishment of the Kwara State University (KWASU) at Malete in the Emirate. The economic multiplier effect of a University on its locality cannot be over-emphasised.

That being so, it is a challenge to the wealthy and privileged indigenes of the Emirate that the only private University in the Emirate is owned by a non-indigene of the Emirate.

It is also a serious challenge, that none of the two (or is it three?) private Universities in Kwara State is owned by an indigene of the Emirate unless we are under-rating the social, economic, educational and even political importance of a University.

Furthermore, if as far back as 1924 there was in Ilorin a **Tiles Industry** that won international recognition; if more than sixty years ago there was a Textile Mill in Ilorin that caused Pakata area to be referred to as **Oke Ebo Alaso**; if at about the same period there was a standard confectionery in Ilorin which produced biscuits that were popularly called **Kangu Adeta**; if in the 1980's/1990's Alhaji Oba Sagaya singularly established a bottling company which produced "**Double Cola**" that competed favourably with other popular brands of soft drinks like **Coca Cola** and **7Up**, for a while, what pride do the privileged and wealthy among us today have that there is no single industry of significance in Ilorin that is owned by an indigene or a group of indigenes of the Emirate?



Should we allow this sorry economic situation to overlap into the future? We, especially our politicians, should say: **"No"** to this question.

We must go down the memory lane to proudly derive inspiration and courage from the Emirate's achievements in:-

- (i) 1830 when it was **"by far, the largest and most flourishing city in Yoruba land"**;
- (ii) 1870, when after Kano, it was the **"major trading and manufacturing centre south of the Niger"**.
- (iii) 1924 when Ilorin Native Authority was the first and only N.A in Northern Nigeria to provide public electricity supply.
- (iv) 1943 when the Emirate Community became the first community in Northern Nigeria to establish and own a Community Primary School, that is the United School at Taiwo Road
- (v) 1947 when Alhaji A.G.F. Abdulrazaq became the first Northern Nigerian to qualify as a lawyer;
- (vi) 1979 when Ilorin Local Government under the Chairmanship of Alhaji Saidu Obalowu, became the first Local Government in Nigeria to establish and own a Secondary School, that is, Okelele Secondary School, Ilorin; and
- (vii) 1981 when, following the commissioning of the Mosque on June 20, Ilorin became the first emirate in Nigeria to build an ultra-modern Jumat Mosque that still remains the first and the best of its kind in Nigeria to date.

These achievements show clearly that Ilorin has always been a pace-setter even in terms of private entrepreneurship, public service and economic development, generally. The present generation, therefore, has a duty not only to maintain this record but also to strive to surpass it.

This is because Ilorin Emirate has what it takes namely, geographical advantage, social harmony and abundant human resources, to have a future that would be more glorious than the past.

There is no doubt that, if the Emirate had such a glorious past, it can have a more glorious economic future if our people develop the right political attitude, revive the legacy

of patriotism bequeathed to us by our forefathers and properly harness its abundant resources.

Sixthly, the Local Governments in the emirate should also invoke the powers and highly lucrative functions exclusively assigned to Local Government's under the Fourth Schedule of the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (as amended). The schedule is a replica of the Fourth Schedule of the 1979 Constitution and an inheritance from the Colonial era, which is designed to beef up the internally-generated revenue (IGR) of Local Governments and free them from perpetual dependence on allocations from the Federation Account.

Among the lucrative functions are:

- establishment, maintenance and regulation of slaughter slabs, markets and public conveniences;
- naming of roads and streets and numbering of houses;
- assessment of privately owned houses or tenements for the purpose of levying such rates as may be prescribed by the House of Assembly of a State,
- Control and regulation of:
  - (i) out-door advertising and boarding;
  - (ii) shops and kiosks;
  - (iii) restaurants, bakeries and other places for sale of food to the public;
  - (iv) laundries and
  - (v) licencing, regulation and control of the Sale of liquor

These revenue-generating powers and the power to imposed community Tax were what the erstwhile Ilorin Native Authority invoked in the colonial days to become rich enough to be the first Native Administration in Northern Nigeria to generate and provide electricity to the public in 1924.

These were the powers which the defunct Port Harcourt Municipal Council invoked to become the most vibrant Local Council in the former Eastern Nigeria. They were also the powers which the erstwhile Lagos City Council invoked to become the richest Local Council in Nigeria and to be able to establish and run the highly popular Lagos City Transport Service up to the 1980's.

Markets, Motor Parks, out-door advertising and boarding are, therefore, the easiest and most reliable sources of IGR for Local Government's. However, engaging private developers to build markets is counter productive because the developers charge prohibitive rents that are beyond the reach of ordinary indigenes of the Emirate, especially the petty traders. The idea should therefore, be discarded.

What our people need, and which Local Government should build, are simple functional markets, not the so-called ultra modern markets (which private developers claim to be what they build) that add virtually no value to market profitability.

The Local Governments in Lagos (through Ereko, Jankara, Tom Jones, Ita-Faji markets); Kano (through Fege, Sabo, Kofa Nasarawa markets); Ibadan (through Gbagi, Dugbe, Bodija, Bere, Ojoo markets); Onitsha (through the Onitsha Central market); Abia (through Ariaria and Aba Central market) and Kaduna (through Kawo and Kaduna central markets) are realizing billions of naira annually through simply built markets.

Local Governments in Ilorin Emirate should emulate them and attach appropriate importance to the tapping of these gold mines, the realization of which made our forefathers to establish so many markets in the Emirate before the advent of colonial rule.

Even in the recent past, our fathers did not neglect this gold mine. That was why the Ilorin Town Council, under the chairmanship of Alhaji Saka Olumo, activated Pata Market in 1973 and decongested the "**Oja Oba**" which had become over-crowded then. It was for the same reason that the Ilorin Local Government, under the chairmanship of Alhaji Saidu Obalowu, built the Market and Motor Park at Saw Mill area, and built the **Baboko Shopping Complex** under the chairmanship of Alhaji Saidu Olayinka (Gegele).

It was also under the chairmanship of Alhaji Saidu Obalowu that the Ilorin Local Government initiated the installation of street-lights in Ilorin, covering Emir's Road, Alimi Road, Pakata Road and Okelele Road.

Furthermore, the Local Governments in the Emirate should also protect and take advantage of their powers under the Fourth Schedule of the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria which makes the **Establishment, maintenance and regulation of slaughter slabs and markets** the exclusive responsibility of Local Governments. This was the constitutional right and power of Local Governments which the IDPU explored in 1978, with the support of patriotic indigenes of the Emirate at the Federal Government level, to get the then Military Government of Kwara State to transfer ownership and management of Baboko Market and the Market at Otte to Ilorin Local Government and Asa Local Government respectively.

It is, therefore, the duty of Local Governments, not of State Governments to establish and manage markets. That is why the ownership and management of the markets and motor-parks recently built by the Ondo State Government were passed to the respective Local Governments concerned.

With regards to land matters, Local Governments in the Emirate must be conscious of the fact that land, which is the most basic factor, of economic development, is a non-renewable asset. **If it is sold off, it is gone for ever.**

The Local Governments must, therefore, manage land properly and judiciously and bear in mind that the Land Use Act vests in them control and management of land within their area, other than the patches specifically designated as urban areas by the Governor of a State. They must also be discrete in exercising their regulatory power to issue Customary Right of Occupancy.

So also must they use the regulatory power conferred on them by the Constitution to enhance the value of land, conserve it for future generations, protect our cultural sensibility and forestall the kind of land-related communal conflicts and security challenges that are ravaging some parts of the country today.

Furthermore, Local Governments in the emirate must appreciate and bear in mind that this regulatory power over non-urban land is vested in them exclusively and not in any other agency of Government. They must, therefore, not be timid to claim their constitutional right and guard this power jealously for the overall good of the people of the emirate.

To start with, all the Local Governments should draw up **master-plans** for all the major towns in the Emirate to ensure systematic land use and urban development. The master-plans should adequately provide for residential areas, industrial layouts, places of worship and recreation, schools, commercial centers, cemeteries e.t.c

Land being the most precious asset which the Emirate possesses must be preserved for future generations to inherit. This was what previous generations made a lot of sacrifice to achieve for us. For example,

(i) In 1894 the Emir of Ilorin, Oba Momo, shortly before he died, vigorously protested against the arbitrariness with which Captain Bower (representing the colonial administration in Lagos) and Captain (later Lord) Lugard representing the Royal Niger Company met at Odo-Ottin and fixed the boundary between the northern and southern parts of the country just south of Erin-Ile on the road to Osogbo and at Budo Egba (Otte) on the way to Ogbomoso thereby annexing to Southern Nigeria all the land belonging to Ilorin from Erin Ile and Ekan-meje to Ottun, Ishan, Ikole and Aiyede Ekiti in the South East, and from Budo Egba to Gambari (including Gbede) in the South-West. (See details in the 1921 Gazetteer of Ilorin province by K.V Elphinstone).

After Oba Momo's death his successor, Oba Sulaiman, intensified the protest and his refusal to recognize the boundary or accept the annexation caused the colonialist to invade and militarily subdue Ilorin in 1897. But the conquest and imposition of British colonial rule on Ilorin merely doused the tension. It did not stop the animosity.

(ii) In 1900, when the colonial administration sought to acquire land in Ilorin for the GRA and the railway station, the Bologuns led by Inakoju, the Balogun Alanamu, opposed the move, even though the administration offered to pay paltry compensation.

The vehemence of Balogun Alanamu's opposition angered the colonial administration and caused his deposition and banishment to Ogbomoso by the Colonial government in that year (1900). But the protest continued.

(iii) In 1906, the radicalism of Biala, the Balogun Ajikobi aggravated the Emirate's opposition against further acquisition of land by the colonial administration. For this reason, he, too, was deposed and banished to Gbede in 1907.

The Balogun was, however, re-called and re-instated in 1910 (shortly after the death of Balogun Inakoju in exile) but he did not relent his resentment of the colonial government's land and tax policy. This led to the **tax riot** of 1913.

Consequently, he was deposed again in that year (1913) and banished to Lafia where he died later. His bossom friend, the Imam Omoda was also abducted from the mosque at night for being vociferous about the matter but was returned later.

(iv) Again, in 1970, the elders of the Emirate, under the leadership of Alhaji Durosinlorun Isale-Oja effected a total boycott and closure of all markets in Ilorin for one day to demonstrate the Emirate's opposition to the attempt by the Bamigboye administration to wantonly acquire land in Ilorin under its Town Planning programme tagged "T.P.82".

Mr. Sunday Adewusi, Inspector-General of Police (Rtd) was the Commissioner of Police in Kwara State at that time, and

(v) Also in 1977, the IDPU (under the presidency of Alhaji Usman Mustapha) for and behalf of the Emirate published a full-page advertorial in the Nigerian Tribune issue of August 6, 1977 in protest against the attempt by the Military Governor of Kwara State to excessively designate parts of the areas of the State, particularly Ilorin the State capital, as "urban areas".

Our late father, Dr Olusola Saraki, the Waziri of Ilorin, was the promoter of the activities of IDPU at that time.

On each occasion of these protests by Ilorin Emirate against government's land policy, the Government concerned instituted Committees of Inquiry to determine the justification or otherwise of the protest. On every occasion, the Committee of Inquiry found the protests to be justifiable and the Government made amends commensurately. The 1921 and 1929 editions of the Gazetteer of Ilorin Province contain reports on some of the incidents which occurred during the colonial period and some of the committees of inquiry which were instituted by the colonial government.

The best known of the Reports are:

- (i) The C.S. Burnett Committee's Report of 1914
- (ii) The J.C Walker Committee's Report of 1918 and

- (iii) The C.W. Michie's Report of 1953 titled:  
 "The Report of the Administrative Review Committee on Land  
 Tenure and Administration in Ilorin Emirate"

Similarly, in 1971 the Kwara State Government under Governor Bamigboye also set up the Dr. E.E. Soladoye Panel to inquire into the grievances of the people of Ilorin Emirate against the State Government's Land Policy, particularly the land use plan which was tagged "T.P.82".

The Panel, in its report, summarized the remote and immediate causes of the Emirate's grievances as follows:

- "(a) Sudden awareness of Land value;  
 (b) Increased consciousness of the individual's legal rights.  
 (c) Government's acquisition of native lands without prior clearance from the customary owners and/or the Local Government Authority and sometimes in complete defiance of the customary owners or the Local Government Authority;  
 (d) Compulsory acquisition of land without any or with inadequate compensation;  
 (e) Unfortunate lack of understanding of the Land Tenure Law by some Government and Local Government officials;  
 (f) Wrongful acquisition of land by Government for private commercial enterprises;  
 (g) The Community's resentment of the obnoxious T.P. 82 by which Government intended to compulsorily acquire land surrounding Ilorin and render future generations of the community landless permanently, and  
 (h) The reasonable fear created by T.P. 82 and regrettable defiant actions of Government officials which aggravated the community's suspicion".

Consequent upon these findings, the Panel made the following recommendations:

- "(i) That on no account should Government issue Certificate of Occupancy to cover land outside the Government's own land (i.e. the GRA and the "G" items) without having received unambiguous clearance from the Local Government Authority plus a written consent of the particular land owner on the usual "Forum A";  
 (ii) That in view of recommendation(i) above, Government Certificate of Occupancy issued to the following quasi-government and private commercial enterprises should be revoked:

Kwara Co-operative Federation Concrete Elements Industry  
Limited V.I.O Testing Ground, Ilorin M.O.W Quarry along  
Ajasse Road, Ilorin, ECN (now N.E.P.A) 33KV/11KV Sub-  
Station at Offa.

- (iii) That in the alternative, adequate compensation should be paid to the customary land owners of these lands to legitimize the acquisition;
- (iv) That Government immensely contributed to the muddle about the starch industry and distinction between the promotion of trade and industry by creating an attractive investment climate and aiding or abetting private commercial enterprises in their exploitation of weak and innocent land owners;
- (v) That a Committee should be set up to revise (upward) the obsolete compensation rates for land, bearing in mind efforts which the Federal Government was making along similar lines;
- (vi) That implementation of the obnoxious T.P. 82 in its present or amended form should be suspended;
- (vii) That henceforth Government should confine itself to the acquisition of land "for public purpose" as defined in Section 2 of the Land Tenure Law; and
- (viii) That any acquisition of land by Government should be strictly in accordance with established procedure and on payment of adequate compensation as stipulated by Law".

The Kwara State Government announced its acceptance of all these recommendations in 1971 and assured the Ilorin Emirate that the State Government will not tamper with the Community's land again without the consent of the Customary owners of the land and that it will not enter into any land, even after obtaining such consent, unless and until adequate compensation as stipulated by Law has been paid.

Our father, Hon Justice Mustapha Akanbi who was a legal practitioner in Kano at that time led, free of charge, the team of lawyers who represented Ilorin at the proceedings of the panel.

Also in 1978 the Military Governor of Kwara State, Colonel George Innih, after due consideration of the presentation made to the State Government by the IDPU (as IEDPU was called then), issued **Legal Notice No. 2 of 1978 titled: "The Land Use (Designation of Urban Areas, Fees and Forms) Regulations, 1978"** which designated as "urban areas" specific and clearly delineated parts of the areas of Ilorin, the State Capital, and of the headquarters of each Local Government in the State. The clearly marked



maps of each of the areas so declared as urban areas were attached as annexes to the Legal Notice. Thus, there was no ambiguity in the Legal Notice or concealment of any details.

These references (and the pertinent records which should normally be available to the Government) are precedents which should guide the handling of the on-going representations made to the Kwara State Government by the IEDPU against some obnoxious aspects of the State Government's Land Policy and Administration as they injuriously affect Ilorin Emirate.

The extensive reference made to these precedents are meant to show how sensitive land matters have always been in Ilorin Emirate; how cautiously and objectively Governments after Governments have handled them and how involved everybody the - rulers and the ruled, the rich and the poor, the secular and the clerics, the old and the young – has always been.

Therefore, the on-going protestation by the IEDPU should not be misconceived as the machination of the opposition group to vilify a government.

Rather, both the State Government and our Local Governments as well as our customary land owners and the land speculators should curb their greed to save the people of Ilorin Emirate, especially future generations, from becoming tenants on their fatherland or settlers in other people's land.

Doing so will be most beneficial and in line with the wise counsel contained in a popular Ilorin ditty (**waka**) which enjoins us to look inward for our short-coming and make amends.