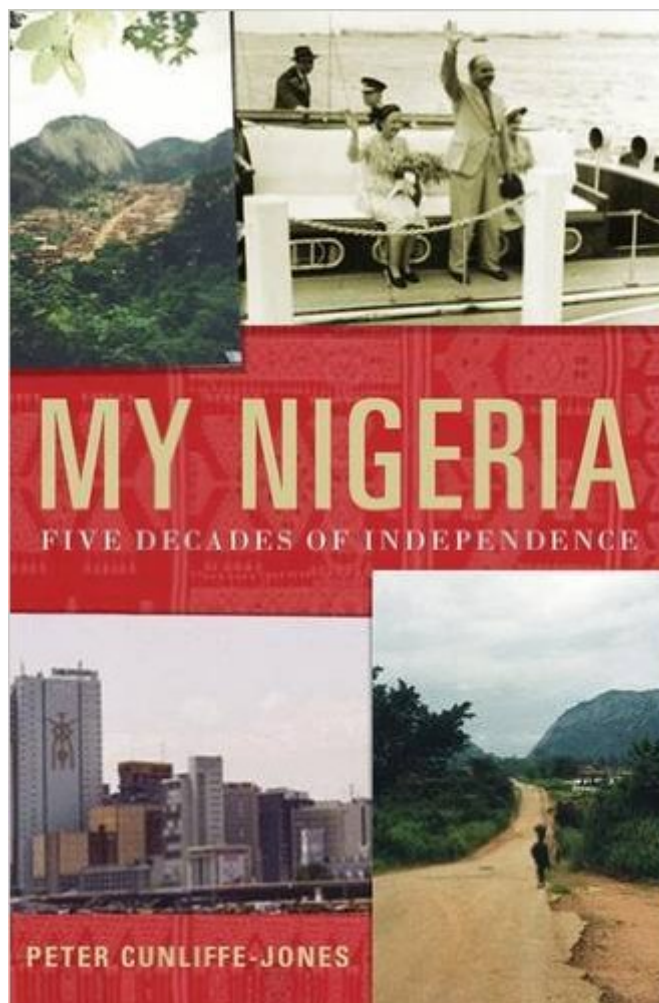


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My Nigeria: Five Decades Of Independence



Synopsis

His nineteenth-century cousin, paddled ashore by slaves, twisted the arms of tribal chiefs to sign away their territorial rights in the oil-rich Niger Delta. Sixty years later, his grandfather helped craft Nigeria's constitution and negotiate its independence, the first of its kind in Africa. Four decades later, Peter Cunliffe-Jones arrived as a journalist in the capital, Lagos, just as military rule ended, to face the country his family had a hand in shaping. Part family memoir, part history, *My Nigeria* is a piercing look at the colonial legacy of an emerging power in Africa. Marshalling his deep knowledge of the nation's economic, political, and historic forces, Cunliffe-Jones surveys its colonial past and explains why British rule led to collapse at independence. He also takes an unflinching look at the complicated country today, from email hoaxes and political corruption to the vast natural resources that make it one of the most powerful African nations; from life in Lagos's virtually unknown and exclusive neighborhoods to the violent conflicts between the numerous tribes that make up this populous African nation. As Nigeria celebrates five decades of independence, this is a timely and personal look at a captivating country that has yet to achieve its great potential.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Very readable account. This sympathetic book, *My Nigeria: Five Decades of Independence* is in sharp contrast in tone from the more-or-less equally revealing but ominous book on the Nigerian condition by Karl Maier a few years ago. The delivery of *My Nigeria* is a compassionate one from a competent literary hand. Where Maier's otherwise well-written work is judgmental in his title and theme with a uniformly tragic tone apparently deduced from the din of the hectically paced nation

before him, Peter Cunliffe-Jones's *My Nigeria* makes a correspondingly mordant case about the country, but on balance in a sympathetic but firm and insightful way. The author, a journalist with the news agency, Agence France Presse seems to adroitly weave two strands of narrative into the supple tapestry that is the Nigeria social fabric. This he does in crisp and yet flowery cadences that make the book hard to put down. His apparent first goal seems an innately personal journey, to give something back to the country, and the continent, that lost so much from the encounter with their erstwhile colonizing masters - a pillage in which he deftly shows his forebears as foot-soldiers to different degree. The second strand in the account is the downright journalistic grunt of his sheer hard work to document, report and graphically reveal the state of the previously promising fledgling nation (reflected in his own affectionate title: *My Nigeria*), and to narrate the cesspool corruption and incompetence have conspired to make it today. His journalist pedigree is evident in his handle of the history of the peoples.

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