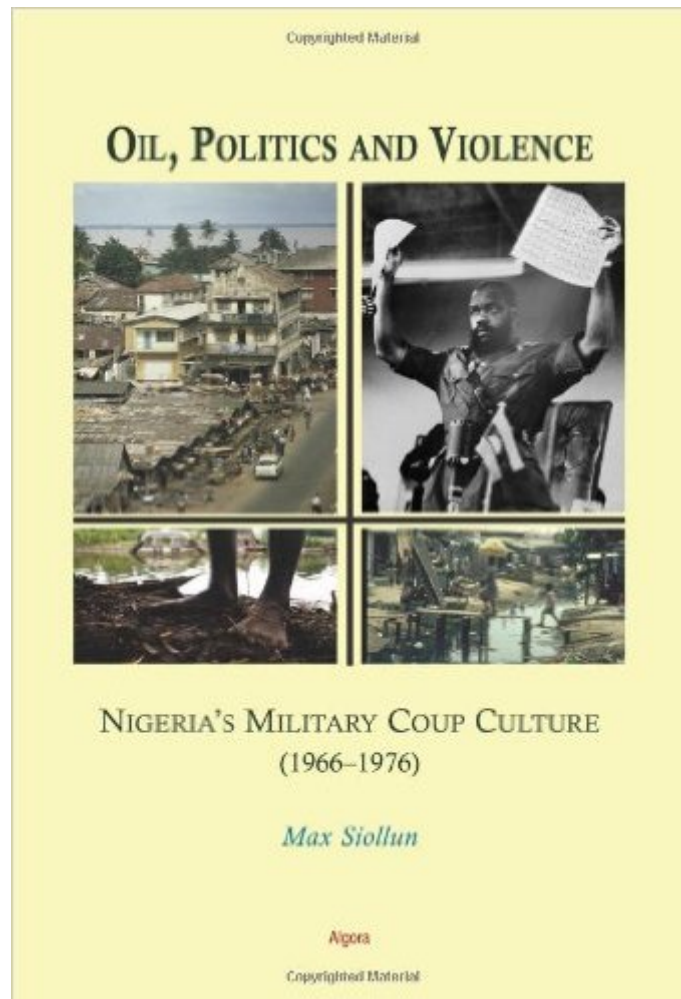


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Oil, Politics And Violence: Nigeria's Military Coup Culture 1966-1976



Synopsis

This is a ground breaking book by historian Max Siollun about the relationship between oil and military rule in Nigeria. Modern Nigeria cannot be understood without reference to its era of military rule. Military rule and oil wealth effected cataclysmic changes in Nigeria that nearly tore the country apart on several occasions. 40 years after the end of the Nigeria-Biafra civil war, Max Siollun answers the key questions that go to the root of the Nigerian nation: *Who were the key personalities and events that caused the Nigeria/Biafra civil war? *What is the root of the Niger Delta oil conflict and the "curse of oil"? *How has Nigeria managed to endure successive military coups, civil war, ethnic violence and still remain united? *The role of Babangida, Ojukwu, Abacha, Obasanjo, Yar'Adua and Buhari in previous military coup plots and Nigerian governments. The book's style is that of a fast paced dramatised narrative that will bring the characters and the story to life in a manner that will engage the casual, journalistic or academic reader. Those who have read the book have described it as the most detailed published analysis of the major events and controversies of Nigeria from independence until the 1976 assassination of its then Head of State General Murtala Muhammed. These include the traumatic January and July coups of 1966, the unprecedented magnanimity of the federal leader General Gowon after Nigeria's civil war, the post war stewardship of Gowon, and an hour by hour reconstruction of the events leading up to the 1976 Dimka coup in which Gowon's successor General Murtala Muhammed was killed. The book is the definitive reference point for Nigeria's political life between 1960 and 1976. It examines the controversies of that era with the encyclopaedic detail and penetrating analysis that is Max Siollun's trademark. No previous text has exhaustively analysed these events or this period in Nigeria's history. What lessons can be learned from the events and mistakes of this period? How can Nigeria avoid repeating those mistakes? Max Siollun answers these questions and many more.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

This book has for once laid to rest the many inconsistencies and to a large degree partial and disjointed accounts presented over the years by so called "eye witness" accounts of the various events over the period from 1966 to 1976. Devoid of any hints of propagandist material, Mr Siollun has given us an incisive and impartial account of the events of those years with copious cross references to authoritative and classified material which the author relied on through out the book. An added advantage is the fact that the "characters" current location and professional circumstances are dutifully and meticulously presented to the reader well into the present day. For instance, we were able to note that the erstwhile post failed 1976 coup Murtala successor General Obasanjo came back as a Civillian President much later on. Mr Siollun has the unique advantage of being born in Nigeria but not natively belonging to any of the main tribes in Nigeria hence could not be seen or accused of being "Hausa centric", "igbo centric" or "Yoruba centric" in what has been an objective and well researched book. The book itself is invariably a culmination of several decades of painstaking researched articles and materials written and published by the author over the years - already available in the public domain. What this book has done is to cleverly weave these together and provide the avid reader/follower of Nigerian History with a comprehensive harness of updated material hitherto unseen until now. I was born around mid 1967 in the UK but returned with my parents to Nigeria late the same year when the Civil War was already in "full swing". We lived at GRA Ikeja (a few hundred meters to the Military Cantonment in Ikeja).

Once in while there comes a book that makes us either sit up straight or reflect on our lives... past and present. It is even more appreciated and of importance when such a book is a serious one and about a subject matter, that even 4 decades after it engulfed Nigeria in arguably Africa's most vicious war pitching suspicious cousin against each other, it is still rife with so much controversy and emotional debate that one can seriously question if true National reconciliation has not remained deferred. Max Siollun, has produced such a wonder in *Oil Politics and Violence: Nigeria's Military Coup Culture (1966-1976)* Right out the gates the English born Nigerian but US based Professor, separates himself from the rest of the pack of historians that have feebly tackled early Nigerian Politics with his pronounced objectivity and absolutely impeccable research. In a detailed

chronological sequence of events he locks the door on many a propagated myth and exposes among others how for instance the Igbo's became political scapegoats not by choice but by default. He also amazingly shows how for the better part of 3 decades it was pretty much "old wine in new bottles" as the same vagabonds in power continued -just like some morbid spoke of a wheel- to keep in place Nigeria's wobbly and corrupt coup culture. Each of the 268 pages is saturated with such intricate fact that you often have to pinch yourself back into reality to realize again that all this stuff really did occur, and is not the draft of an up till now unknown Shakespearean tragedy. The man really names names and one has to virtually munch on a mint to suppress the subsequent but delicious bite.

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