

History, the Historian and Historical Society of Nigeria @ 60: The Journey so far and the road ahead

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Abstract

Available evidence has shown that History is recognized all over the world as a source of enlightenment and development. This is because as a collective memory of a people, history attempts to bring to the fore the salient and significant part of events that occurred in the past, which could be utilized in building a people's prosperous future. It is therefore not surprising that every human society, no matter the level of enlightenment and advancement, has placed optimum priority to the bequeathing of a "useable past" from generation to generation. This was the most probable reason behind the establishment of the Historical Society of Nigeria by a group of Historians some sixty years back and the insistency on the teaching of history in schools. However, this paper argues that years after the attainment of Independence, the story seems to be changing (negatively). Data obtained from primary and secondary sources were deployed to carry out the study with an analytical and narrative historical method. Findings indicate that the acclaimed role of history as the vanguard of the Nigerian society has been crippled by some forces, actors and factors, while the historian have been rendered almost irrelevant in the society. This, the paper intends to interrogate. The paper thus concludes that if the much needed is not done by both the individual historians and the Historical Society of Nigeria, the road ahead may be bumpy and rough for history.

Keywords: Nigeria, History, Development, Nation

Introduction

History is as old as the human society, and this is appreciated even more when seen in the light of the fact that all human beings are products of History. It is in line with this that it has been described as both the human past as well as the sum total of human experience (E.H.Carr, 1961, Y.B Usman, 1977, Y. Mangvwat, 1990, 1992) . The importance of history in any society is reflected in the fact that, every society no matter how primitive has a special place for it. It is therefore not surprising that History is recognized all over the world as a source of enlightenment and development. In this way as a collective memory of a people, it attempts to bring to the fore the salient and significant part of events that occurred in the past, which could be utilized in building their prosperous future (this is because it is not static). This have been summarized thus

The human past (history), by its very nature embodies a process, it embodies cumulative human experience that is both variegated and dynamic in nature. The human experience (history) as past and current reality consists in its fundamental essence, of a process (including forms, patterns and structure) of relationships between man and nature. This idea implies and involves movement (exchange). The man-man and man and nature relationship takes places in the framework and context of time (A, Mahadi, 2008).

A critical analysis of the above view shows that every human society is part of history and that an understanding of the dynamics of the human society can only be attained when situated in history.

History and the Historian: A Conceptual Clarification

The relationship between History and the Historian has been described as one that is inseparable and which is beyond the mere comprehension of man. This is because the historian is on a daily basis trying to understand a process which he is part of (i.e; he is part of the process he is studying (Carr, 1961). This is so complex that removing one from the process making it incomplete and useless. Y.B Usman, (1977), described the relationship thus:

The person with a perception of history who is studying history has been produced and moulded by history. And he is involved in looking at what has produced and moulding him. It is much more complex and fundamental thing than the study of rocks and plants, for example...There is no distance between the student of history and society and the subject of his study in the same way, as there is between the geologist and his rocks, or the biologist or medical scientist with bacteria. The Chemist who is studying a chemical reaction has a distance from it which the molecules in the reaction do not have, and can never have. The student of history is like a molecule studying a permanent reaction which is producing it

From the position above, the paper opines that the historian is that individual who engages himself in the critical and analytical understanding of the relationship between the past and the present. This position is considered meaningful when viewed in the light of the working and arguments. For example, the views of Collingwood (as cited in Carr, 1961), posited thus;

The philosophy of history (**as practice by the historian**) is concerned neither with 'the past by itself' nor with 'the historian's thought about it by itself', but with 'the two things in their mutual relations'. (This dictum reflects the two current meanings of the word 'history' - the inquiry conducted by the historian and the series of past events into which he inquires.) The past which a historian studies is not a dead past, but a past which in some sense is still living in the present.' But a past act is dead, i.e. meaningless to the historian, unless he can understand the thought that lay behind it (**emphasis is mine**)

History thus can be seen from and discuss at two levels by scholars i.e., History as the sum total of changes humanity has undergone since the emergence of human society (this has been described by Carr, as the relationship between Man and Man on the one hand, and Man and the Environment on the other (The Process of History). The study of these changes and experiences is also known as History. In this way, History as a study, which is an academic discipline, saddled with the responsibility of documenting (critically), the changes that has taken place in the human society (i.e., the constant interaction between the Historian and his facts). However, the word Historiography which now has its own history and which is at times described simply as the art (or science), of writing history, is used here to refer to different but closely related kinds of historical activities (Carr, 1961:30, Mangvwat, 1990, 1992).

In his analysis, Afigbo (1980), gave a summary of history thus;

.....the discovery and critical analysis of historical source; the reconstruction and description of the past on the basis of facts queried from the discovered sources;... the construction, on the basis of the ascertained facts of some general theories, which gives meaning and inner logic to the known past, or to most of it, as well as serves "to educate and ascertain society as a whole or even helps to influence aspects of contemporary public policy or action; and the reflection on the trends and patterns of historical writing.

An analysis of the definitions above will show that, while it is generally agreed that historians in this part of the world have tried in the first two aspects of the above definition, they cannot deny the fact that there is failure in the third and fourth definitions. This is based on the fact that the teaching and study of history has not been given the desired attention.

Historicizing History in Nigeria up to the eve of Decolonization

The study and teaching of history in Nigeria (as in other countries of African) as an independent and autonomous focus of scholarship has been argued to be a recent development.

This was because up to the eve of late colonial period, Western historians believed and argued that Nigeria (indeed the entire Africa, south of the Sahara), had no “civilization” and thus no history. They insisted that even if there were events of a historical nature, such a history was unknown and unknowable, since African societies, for the most part, were non literate and as such left no records that historians could study. Such was the main content of the uninformed and jaundiced statement by George Hegel, when that;

It is manifest that want of self control distinguishes the character of the Negroes. This condition is capable of no development or culture, and as we have seen them at this day, such have always been. For it is no historical part of the world; it has no movement or development to exhibit

A more systematic and fairly detailed account of such denial of history and progress was made by Dame Margery Perham, a doyen of colonial historiography. Comparing Asia with Africa, M. Perham (1951), wrote:

In Asia, there are great areas of cultural and religious unity and of common pride on the inheritance of ancient civilizations. These people have brought their historic culture through centuries of subjection to western influence with their deepest element still violate....the dealing with Tropical Africa and the West must be different. Here, in place of the larger unities of Asia was the multi cellular tissue of tribalism; instead of an ancient civilization, the largest areas of primitive poverty enduring into the modern age. Until the very recent penetration by Europe, the greater part of the continent was without the wheel, the plough and the transport animals; almost without stone houses, or clothes; except for skins, without writing and so without **HISTORY** (emphasis is mine)

In a similar manner, in the task of denying the existence of history in the area (as in other African countries), Professor Hugh Trevor Roper categorically declared that before the arrival of Europeans only darkness existed in Africa; and that darkness was not a subject of history (A Marwick, 1970). His position as well as those of other like Perham were basically to justify the conquest and colonization of the continent, a process which began with African historiography as dominated by European traders, travelers, as well as missionaries and other adventurers, whose accounts of Africa, was generally tendentious and Eurocentric. Thus European conquest and domination spawned a new era of colonial historiography that justified European imperialism and espoused the ideology of a savage Africa in need of European civilization and tutelage.

The Eurocentric school maintained the above position despite the fact that available evidence showed that Africans had their way of documenting events which are considered historical, which formed the take off base for African scholars during the decolonization period. In this way, the writing of African History by African academics can be traced back to the period when most African countries were struggling to regain independence from colonial rule. The first

set of African historians during this period busied themselves with seeking to demonstrate that the continent had a very rich historical past of which they can be proud of. Thus, the era of decolonization and the immediate post-independence years saw the emergence of group of scholars who vigorously rejected this Eurocentric and anti-African historical epistemology that privileged civilization and written sources as the only rational bases for historical scholarship, which also denied the possibility of civilization and history to small-scale and non literate societies dominant in Africa. The emerging scholars using an array of sources, successful showed that Africa not only had a history but that its history and the writing of it date back to ancient antiquity. They pointed to the existence of works by ancient and classical writers, who wrote about Africa, even though their writings were considered “unsystematic”. They also argued in favour of Islamic and Arabic writings on the area, which constituted first- or secondhand accounts of African states and societies, which was vital in understanding the dynamics of development in the area over time and have continued to prove valuable for scholars of African history. In his analysis, O. Ikime, (1977), put it thus

This concern invariably involved a certain denunciation of the kind of history which had been written about Africa by European scholars, travelers and the like. The Kind of History which emerged from this generation was one which sought , more often by implication rather than direct statement, to inculcate in the African who read or was taught it a certain pride in his race, in terms of how the African ordered – his social and political life, in terms of the economic activities which supported the socio-political edifice, and in terms of the creative and adaptive genius of the African. Within the context in which they wrote and taught, that generation of historians was fulfilling an essential political psychological and intellectual function. For it is a well accepted tenet of historical scholarship, that the historian can only work within the context of the expectations of his society at any given time.

It is in line with the above that the paper safely argues that period and process of decolonization and independence came the era of nationalist and liberalist historiography which rejected the notion of a barbaric and static Africa “without history.” This was championed by what is today known in Nigerian history as the Ibadan School of History, which re-invented African history and African Historiography, with the intention of shaming the racist notion that Humanity’s oldest continent was a place without a past. This singular but notable act made University of Ibadan to become the Mecca for scholars of African History all over the world as it sought to restore autonomy and initiative to the Africans, as well as authenticity and respectability to the historicity of the African past. In this way, the school and other emerging scholars rejected the privileging of written sources; it also argued for and adopted the disciplined, rigorous, and corroborative use of a variety of sources and multidisciplinary methods from archaeology, ethnography, anthropology, linguistics, and art history to oral traditions. K.O. Dike (1965), graphically captured the situation thus:

The decided change towards a new African historiography came with the movement towards independence. African nationalists rejected the European appraisal of their

past. They demanded a new orientation and improved educational facilities to effect this reappraisal. With the establishment of new universities in Africa, it was inevitable that the teaching of history and the training of African historians would receive a new impetus.

This team of academics as led by K.O. Dike and Abdullahi Smith continued to encourage historical scholarship and research. The immediate evidence of this apart from the development of the Ibadan School of History was the emergence of various Historical Research Schemes such as the Benin Historical Research Scheme, the Yoruba Historical Research Scheme, the Northern Historical Research Scheme, the Eastern Historical Research Scheme, the Kenneth Dike Aro History Project, Lagos Project, Rivers State History Project, and the University Centre of Hausa Studies, Kano (A. Smith, 1969, J.F. Ade-Ajayi, 2008, G. Kwanashie et al, 1987)

Historical Society of Nigeria and Nigerian History

In the Nigerian area, the struggle to establish the richness of African history led to the establishment of the Historical Society of Nigeria in 1955. This made it the oldest registered professional academic association in Nigeria and the first of its type of organization to exist in Nigeria. Its main focus is the promotion of Nigerian and African history globally. It does so through research, publications, conferences, seminars and training. Prominent among its publications are the Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria and the Tarikh series. The HSN also has to its credit several book publications on various aspects of Nigerian and African history. Furthermore, the society has acted as midwife to several other affiliated organizations that share similar aims and objectives. Apart from the relatively new Bonny Historical Society, there is the vibrant Students Historical Society of Nigeria, which exists in many tertiary institutions in Nigeria. The HSN has continued to nurture and provide guidance to these other affiliated organizations. It is to the credit of the founding fathers of the HSN that the structures they erected over five decades ago have continued to be relevant in spite of the suffocating stresses and strains that confront the discipline and practice of history. In 2005, the Historical Society of Nigeria celebrated its fiftieth anniversary at the University of Ibadan from where it all began.

The Society has since inception the desire to promote historical awareness of members of a given group or society. This is appreciated more when seen in the light of the section 4(1) Constitution of the Historical Society of Nigeria (HSN) provides that the aims and objectives of the society shall be 'To vigorously promote, support, strengthen and uphold the study of Nigerian History and historical scholarship' (Constitution of the HSN 2007). Another subsection goes further to include as the society's *raison d'être* the promotion 'of an enduring sense of history and historical consciousness amongst the citizens' (Constitution of the HSN 2007, s4(4)). In other words, its focus is not just professional academic practitioners but the entire Nigerian citizenry. Historicizing the nexus between the emergence of the new school of history and the Historical Society of Nigeria, O Yakubu and C.B.N Ogbogbo (2006), argued thus,

The school was characterized by its overt Nigerian nationalism and it was geared towards forging a Nigerian identity through publicizing the glories of pre-colonial history. The school was quite traditional in its subject matter, being largely confined to the political history that colleagues in Europe and North America were then rejecting. It was very modern, however, in the sources used. Much use was made of oral history and throughout the school took a strongly interdisciplinary approach to gathering information. This was especially true after the founding of the Institute for African Studies that brought together experts from many disciplines. There was some friction between the Ibadan School and the Africanists in Britain and the U.S.. The Africanists felt that the Nigerian scholars should be more objective and less involved in current politics. However, the quality of the methodology and scholarship of the Ibadan scholars was never questioned. Conversely the African scholars of the Ibadan School saw the American and British universities as bastions of imperialism. Nationalists shunned the western based Journal of African History in favour of the domestic Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria.

In line with the above position, M Oladejo (2014) historicizing the achievements of the society wrote:

The synthesis of historians would have been incomplete without the Historical Society of Nigeria,... established by Dike and H.F.C. Abdullahi (Abdullah Smith) to provide a stable and reliable medium to present historical findings. It was the workshops organized by this society that enabled the publication of the two books mentioned earlier-Africa in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries as well as A Thousand Years of West African History. With the HSN, there came the need to regularize the presentation of Historical findings through journals. This brought about the Journal of Historical Society of Nigeria (JHSN) in the 1960s. The HSN became a body for Historians to distinguish the outcome of research in history from other disciplines.

History, the Historian and the Danger Sign-post: The Nigeria Experience

A clear understanding of the situation in which the historian and history finds themselves today can only be understood once scholars are able to grasp clearly the idea behind the teaching of history as established by the founding fathers of the department in Nigerian university. They emphasized the building of critical and analytical minds. In the document establishing history department in one of the first generation universities, the objective is stated thus;

The basic objective of the history teaching programme ...is to give... a thorough grasp of Nigerian history and historiography, placed firmly in the context of African history and historiography and of historical movements of the world significance from other continents. The purpose of this is to make the students comprehend the historical forces and developments which have shaped and are shaping the lives of the peoples of Nigeria, Africa and the rest of the world. And at the same time, develop in the student the commitment and capacity to consciously relate to these forces and developments in ways which foster Nigerian and African unity and

independence. (A.B.U, Zaria, 1977, University of Ife, 1962, 1978/79, Usman, Y.B, 1977).

The above is not completely different from those of other history departments established during that period. However, in the opinion of this paper have been relegated to the background and discarded in most universities and the society in general.

Society, Government and the Strangling of History/Historian

Years after gaining independence, history that would have remained the major tool for nation building, was neglected and the teachers dispersed into various directions in search for greener pastures. In the first place, the quest by the Nigerian government to join the league of scientific and technological developed nations of the world made her to pay less attention to history. This was based on the belief that history has no role to play in quest for optimum increase in technological capacities. Thus, While developed parts of the world were depending on the lessons of history to develop these capacities, the governments in Nigeria, felt that it did not need history to develop this as such the attempt to scrap history and replace it with other more technologically innovative courses. The result was that history was seen as a useless, or at best a not-so-useful discipline. Akinwale (2015) specifically points to the period from the late 1970's and early 1980's, when under the guise of transfer of technology phrase, the Nigerian people were made to believe that arts subjects especially History and literature were not as important as science subjects. The position of the government on this issue was specifically made clear in 1983, when the then Minister of Students Affairs argued thus:

The country now needs technological and result oriented education so as to prepare for the future. America and Russia did not go to the moon by studying **history**, philosophy, English language etc, but did so by encouraging technological growth (Nigerian Statesman, 1983)

Under this situation greater emphasis was being laid on technical education in Nigeria's policy of education. In the opinion of Akinwale (2015) this marked the beginning of policy failure as the nation needed the so called not-too-useful subjects for nation building and integration. This marked the beginning of the war against history, which is not only impacting negatively on the historian, but the nation at large. In line with this and the disappointment this has brought on the people and national development and integration, Akinwale (2015), continued thus

Forty year after the rhetoric and policy of "transfer of technology" and the attendant marginalization of arts in our education, we have schools where History and Literature are no longer taught. We have bred, and we continue to breed, a generation of Nigerians who neither know the history of Nigeria nor possess the ability to analyse a discourse. Gather ten Nigerians below the age of 45, and you would be extremely lucky to find one who studied history in secondary school.

Today we have a generation that will most probably go down in history as the most unfairly treated in Nigeria, a generation that represents the pitiable state of Nigeria

In a more categorical term O Ikime (1977) , had noted this much earlier thus:

Any government which allows itself to be persuaded at this state of our development to neglect historical research in pursuit of science and technology will find that science and technology, excellent weapons as they are for the boosting of the national ego, do not on their own necessarily create the nation. For a look at the really advanced technological nations of the world, will reveal that these nations first attained true nationhood, before they set their tracks for rapid technological advancement. America, Japan, China, Britain – these all first had to go through the turmoil of nation-building before they attained their greatest height in science and technology

Apart from the shift from and gradual neglect of history from the late 1970 – early 1980's, the government at various levels from the 1980's began to wage war on those teaching history and related courses, as they began to feel threatened by the perceived emergence of young idealists and Marxists, who stood up to them to condemn the loss of focus of the founding fathers of independent Nigeria. To these set of people, the historians and their allies came to symbolize the revolution and change. To the administration, the basis of the teachings of some of the early universities (especially history) was too radical and uncompromising (for example, the vision of University of Ife encouraged independence of academic enterprise and selfless public service). This was exemplified by the staff recruited and scholars nurtured in the faculties Arts and Social Science of the University of Calabar, Ibadan, Ife and Zaria as well as their contributions aggressive anti-imperialist incursions and commitment in other parts of African continent especially Southern Africa (Kukah, 1999). This led to situation in which teachers were either threatened or were deported on the ground, that they were inciting students against the government or inculcating subversive ideas in students (A. Abba, 2006).

The Journey so far and the Road ahead: Any Hope?

In the present day Nigeria, it is no longer news that the study of history especially in secondary schools has been relegated to the background and crying to be salvaged from the erosion of extinction. In most cases students are forced to offer government in place of history. The case of Lagos state is a good example, where history has been deleted as subject of study from school curriculum, while Osun state in 2002, engaged in mass sacking of History teachers from schools. At the Junior Secondary School level, Social Studies have been introduced to take the place of History, while the teaching of Social Studies have been hijacked by Social Scientists exclusively for the National Certificate Examinations and B.Ed students, with no acquaintance at all with historical orientation (Ade-Ajayi, 2008). Omolewa (1987 cited in Bello, 2012), argued that these actions are taking place years after independence, the idea behind it is still in line with the idea of the Western world to deny the black world a place in history, as was the case before the coming of Historical Society of Nigeria in the late 1950's. The scholar opined thus:

...a consistent assault on history teaching at the first tier of the secondary school curriculum, by a highly inspired group from the United States. The history of the liquidation of history as a subject in the junior schools began with the United States agencies-assisted Ohio project, Ayetoro project and lately the Comparative Education Studies and Adaptation Center (CESAC)...towards confiscation and condemnation of Africa's histories and futures

The above situation has thrown the teaching and study of history in modern Nigeria into problems, so much so that unlike the early scholars who were ready to ensure good governance, the present day students give lots of excuses why they cannot study history. For example, students are complaining about the wideness of history syllabus, the dearth of capacity, committed and genuinely interested teachers as well as the perceived uselessness of history as a subject. It is therefore not surprising that this situation has given birth to a scenario in which the study of history at the tertiary level suffers great hemorrhage. Thus in the first place only a very few candidates are qualified to and are interested in studying history; secondly, out of the few that are studying history, many are reluctant candidates who see the acceptance to study history as a means of getting into the university system, with the view of abandoning the course for more lucrative ones after the first one or two years. In some other cases, as a way of luring students to study history, the content of the history curriculum has been watered down under the guise of departments of History and International Relations, History and Diplomacy, History and Public Administration, History and Strategic studies etc (J.F.Ade-Ajayi, 2008). In line with this, O Yakubu and C.B.N Ogbogbo (2006) argued thus:

Historical studies have been the subject of a brutal assault by successive Nigerian governments in the past two decades. Historical studies have been virtually extinguished from Nigerian primary and secondary school curricula. At the tertiary level some departments of history, in the quest for survival, have put on the toga of international relations and at other times diplomatic/strategic studies. Prominent among them are the universities of Benin, Lagos, Uyo and Ambrose Alli University. The impression is that history can no longer survive on its own. The situation is indeed tragic. All these are the product of ignorant but deliberate government policies. In the guise of promoting science and technology, which is erroneously conceptualized as the only engine of development, there has been deliberate undermining of the humanities, which have history as their core.

The consequence of the above has been summarized thus by A.O.Adesoji

The apathy or neglect, which the study of history suffers in contemporary period, is no doubt without its consequences. The seeming confusion in our society, the unbridled desire for power and its attendant consequences and more importantly, the inability to learn from the past experiences (which has made the society prone to repeating past mistakes) are the consequences of neglect of history

The immediate impact of the above is that the dreams of the founding fathers of Nigerian independence as well as the hope of the people that struggled for self determination from the colonial masters have been dashed. The situation is such that even years after the collective

struggle for independence, the differentials which Nigerian accused the colonial administration still exist among us and even new ones are being introduced. Thus the differences in socio-political institutions between groups are still used as index of development or lack of it, resulting in different treatments being meted to such groups, and creating new tensions which did not exist before this period. In this way emphasis on daily bases has been on factors making for disunity at the expense of factors making for unity. This in the view of scholars formed the basis of what has come to be the distorted and manipulated history fed to the millions of Nigerians. E. Ayandele (1978), noted this thus:

.....we are not telling the whole story unless we also stress the factors for unity and cooperation that existed before the advent of the white man. And these factors were many. Consider for example the mosaic of inter-state routes that linked the south and the north; and think not only of the economic role the routes played but also of the diffusion along them of religious, social, and political ideas. Few people realize that in the eighteenth century the natron used by the Efik came largely from the Chad basin; that in the same century the Ijebu were the specialist makers of a coarse type of cloth used by slaves and poor people in Northern Nigeria; that up to 1830 the larger part of what is now Nigeria regularly patronized the market of Kulfu, near present-day Kontagora; that for a long time the Edo trafficked with the Nupe and bartered their camwood for manufactured articles of northern origin; that as late as the second half of the nineteenth century, the Nupe were the most excellent weavers in the textile establishments of the cities of the far north; that Ijaw men from Nembe were trading directly as far north as the Nupe kingdom before 1841; that the Yoruba obtained their horses from Tripoli through Kanuri middlemen long before the nineteenth century; that, as slaves, a large number of Hausa were an economic asset to the Yoruba. Even Igboland was not completely closed to the rest of Nigeria before the advent of the British; trade went on between the Igbo and their neighbours, and many Igbo went to the north as slaves;... (and that) in December 1842 messengers of the Sultan of Sokoto were with odeke in Abeokuta; that the Sultan of Sokoto made some effort to persuade the Yoruba to end their civil war, that Balogun Ogundipe, the uncrowned king of the Egba for nearly a quarter of a century, offered advice to the Etsu of Nupe in 1870.

It is indeed a complete ignorance of the above excellent relationship that existed among the people that is largely responsible for the uprising, skirmishes and wanton destruction of lives and properties that is experienced in Nigeria on a daily basis. For example, every part of modern Nigeria has been experiencing clashes and crises, which ordinarily would have been avoided with the promotion and good knowledge of history. However, the lack of the processes of nation-building which history would have promoted has fuel these conflicts. The most recent is the conflicts that are almost exclusively defined by the competition for scarce economic goods, with specific attention on conflict over grazing opportunities between Fulani herdsmen and sedentary farming populations. In June, 2003, about 50 persons died and 10,000 displaced in new night raids on Tiv settlements on the Benue and Nasarawa border by Fulani herdsmen. (Independent, June 23, 2011). This phenomenon has continued till date in which on a daily basis there are news of violent clash between farmers and herdsmen in every part of the country. On March 7, 2010, a

vengeful attack by Fulani herdsmen on four villages near Jos, led to the merciless killing of over four hundred in Dodo-Nahawa and the neighbouring villages of Zot, Rasat and Kutgot. On 17 July, 2010, an attack by Fulani herdsmen on Mazah village in Jos claimed ten lives. In what seems like an attack for their stolen cattle, Fulani herdsmen attacked Nding Susuk, Nding Jok, Jong and Dorowa villages in Barkin Ladi Local government area in January 27, 2011, killing 14 people. In February and September 2011, they also attacked Tsohon Faron and Kunzen Gashish, in Barkin Ladi Local government area, killing 12 people. In November, 2011, Herdsmen violence in Plateau State led to the death of 20 people and the destruction of property as Berom natives and Fulani herdsmen clashed at the Barkin Ladi Local Council of the state. Also in January 2013, at least nine people were killed in clashes between ethnic groups in the central Nigerian state of Plateau. This was as a result of clashes which broke out between ethnic Fulani herdsmen and local farmers in the city of Wadata. It should be noted that this has been extended to parts of Kaduna state and Tiv land. Of more recent, villages in Tiv land were attacked by the herdsmen, while the palace of the Tor Tiv was burnt down; in a similar manner, in March 2015, parts of Kaduna south (Kaura) was attacked with sophisticated weapons leaving hundreds dead (Mohammed, 2012). All these could only take place in societies that lack sense of history as well as those whose history have been deliberately manipulated or distorted for selfish reason. This is more meaningful when considered in the light of the position of F.J. Teggart (1941), who argued thus:

History provides a body of ideas which serves to unify the attitudes of citizens of nations towards their country,....In every land the historian has been the heart at which the soul of the country has been kept alive....Not only has history writing awakened peoples to a consciousness of nationality, it has promoted them to action by inciting hope for the future

The situation in our country is a true reflection of the view of Teggart as represented above. This has been given credence to by historians in Nigeria, who in more specific term, pointed to our inability to take advantage of the lessons of history to unify the country. This is best understood when view in the light of the opinion as posited by a scholar thus:

Perhaps, one reason why there is so much violence, aggression and instability in our day to day life is that we so little consciousness (**history**) of a time perspective. We act and react as if there is only today, no yesterday, no tomorrow. We seem to care so little about the past;The nation suffers which has no sense of history. Its values remain superficial and ephemeral unless imbued with a deep sense of continuity and a perception of success and achievement that transcends acquisition of temporary power or transient wealth. Such a nation cannot achieve a sense of purpose or direction or stability, and without them the future is bleak (**emphasis is mine**) (Ade-Ajayi, 2008)

The Way Forward

As it stands today, it is clear that both the historian and history in Nigeria are in serious crisis. This is because the role of being the vanguard of the society has escaped them, and in place of this, historians are being conscripted left, right and center by the powerful and the wealthy in the society to distort and/or manipulate history. We have witnessed situations in Nigeria, where historians were employed (and are still being employed) specifically by government to become propagandists and have instead of building the society, used in destroying the country. This probably justifies the position as maintained by C Ogbogbo (2015), when he argued thus;

If we pause to ponder on the question, in whose interest is the non-study of history in our schools? Who wants Nigerian children to be ignorant of the nation's history? It must be those who have negatively impacted on us and have been churning out all sorts of memoirs in an attempt to favourably position themselves in the annals of our history. There is so much junk and distortions churned out by those who have had the exceptional privilege of ruling this country in the name of providing and setting the records for future generations of Nigerians. These men / women are conscious of the weight and judgment of history and desire to be on its safe side. When they are unable to write, they encourage the non-propagation of history with the hope that with a weak memory, we will readily forget their atrocious past. It is this realization that must continue to embolden us in our quest to bring back to the schools an authentic history of Nigeria. For as JF Ade-Ajayi and Obaro Ikime have continuously reminded us, an enduring sense of history is a necessity for national development...The History blackout must be put to an end.

It is therefore in line with the above, that the paper argues that the Historical Society of Nigeria has more work to do. The first is that, it must continue to fight for the restoration of history in the academic curriculum of Nigerian schools. This will help prepare the minds of our young leaders for the challenges of tomorrow, i.e; the challenges of nation-building which was aborted with the exclusion and war against history and historians. This will be appreciated more when considered in the light of the fact that history serves to educate and ascertain society as a whole or even helps to influence aspects of contemporary public policy and action.

There is also the need to engage in publication of history books that could be read at book primary and secondary schools. As, it is now, there is the danger of scholars not wanting to write books, but to continue publishing in Journals, which is considered more important in our academic promotion.

There is the need to help restore history departments to their past glories, as the institution that helped to build the founding fathers of Historical Society of Nigeria are gradually disappearing, viz, History Research centers, staff training programmes, grants for research and to attend both local and international conferences and congresses. This has led to massive brain

drain from the academic arena to other sectors both within and outside the shore of Nigeria. On a general term, it has been established that between a period of two years (1988 and 1990), over 1000 lecturers left the services of Nigerian universities (Bangura 1994). Till date the system has continued to suffer from what have been described as the serious intellectual hemorrhage (Oni, 1987, Yesufu 1996). All these must be put in place, if any serious and meaningful achievement can be attain. The impact of the above is that the Nigeria education system has been weakened by both the psychological warfare and infrastructural denial by the authorities.

There is the need to put an end to binary system of education which dichotomies students into two factions, namely sciences and liberal arts. Presently, there seems to be a sort of disparity in the education family, as the government seems to highlight the role of science and technology in national development. In this way, the Nigerian government put admission ratio in tertiary institutions at 60 percent for Science and technology subjects and 40 percent for humanity subjects (Akinwumi et al 2010). This was the issue which National Association of Nigerian Students (NANS) in the early 1980's kicked against. In their confrontation with the government, the NANS produced a Charter of Demands, yet it has not been resolved. It is therefore the duty of Historical Society of Nigeria to revive this call, as history seems to be the department in humanities most affected.

Conclusion

The paper has argued that although history is recognized all over the world as a tool for national integration and development, but enough attention has not been devoted to it study and teaching. This situation is more in developing nations of the world like Nigeria, where it is considered as not too useful in the pursuit of advancement in science and technology. This in the opinion of the paper is not only dangerous but also self destructive, as amount to building a society with no foundation, i.e., breeding generation which end up growing in a sort of permanent present lacking any organic relation to the public past of the times they live in. In the case of Nigeria, the end result is represented in the loss of the identity of people and the constant drawn-dagger situation the citizens find themselves on daily basis.

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