

INDEPENDENCE WITHOUT FREEDOM: LESSONS OF HISTORY ON STATE AND CIVIL RELATIONS IN NIGERIA SINCE 1960

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Abstract: Historically, independence as it relates to nation states refers to a situation of freedom from dependence on or control by another person, organization or state (Freedom from control). With this idea and vision in mind, various groups, bodies and organisations in colonial Africa came together to fight for and gain independence, as the people with a vested interest in propagating this belief, however, knew quite clearly what the implications are for them and the future of the country, i.e, expression without molestation, association without discrimination, participation without barriers among others. In the case of Nigeria, the first stage of struggle for independence started in the 1930's and ended in 1947. It was followed by the second stage in the process of attaining independence which was that of transition, which lasted till 1st October 1960, the day Nigeria became independent of colonial domination. However, immediately after gaining power, the people realized that they have only won independence without freedom, as the new leadership continued in the same line with their colonial teachers as they utilized every available means, especially the power of the state to continue to suppress the civil society. This paper is therefore an attempt at examining the role of the state in suppressing the voice of the people in independent Nigeria, through the use of brutal force and intimidation in post colonial Africa, a situation which is a complete semblance of the colonial culture.

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