

National participation necessary for state actualization - Prof Kole Omotosho

The sole and most valid reason why politicians serving at the national level ought to do so is with the burning desire to rectify, to help to correct the legislative mistakes and idiosyncrasies that make development impossible at the state and local levels, Ondo State born writer and scholar, Professor Kole Omotosho has said.

Speaking yesterday at a public lecture to mark the Second Anniversary of the Dr. Olusegun Mimiko Government in Ondo, Omotosho who is currently of the Africa Diaspora Research Group, Fourways, Sandton, Johannesburg South Africa, said the Sisyphean struggle of the Nigerian politician to roll up the heavy stone up the steep slope of Nigerian political and economic existence was located in the failure to convert the national government from the government of men to the government of law.

In the lecture titled "Liberation from Perdition: What Option for a Nigerian Politician – Service at National Level or Service at State Level?"

Omotosho said "if it is impossible to do anything on the state level because of the ideas and concepts at work at the national level it might be time for the Nigeria politician to serve at the national level. But there must be clarity as to the reason for going there. It is to be able to do something here."

The literati who alluded to three different stories, one of which was from D.O. Fagunwa's **Irinkerindo Ninu Igbo Elegbeje** said "countries are shaped by their geography and by impersonal economic forces," adding that the area now called Nigeria was a country waiting to be brought into existence before its founding by British imperial soldiers, missionaries, district officers and tax collectors for their purposes as a colony of exploitation.

He added that it was after colonial rule that the issue of impersonal economic forces, dictated by the fact that the natives, the inheritors of the colony, were not the originators of the economic system in which they were made to produce what they do not consume and consume what they do not produce.

Having established a connection between geographical location and impersonal economic forces as shapers of countries, Omotosho also said countries are also shaped by their histories and by the choices made by their governments and people as well the choices not made, the options which were rejected.

On the specifics of the topic, he traced the history trajectories followed by the three political heavyweights of the post colonial era, Nnamdi Azikiwe, Obafemi Awolowo and Ahmadu Bello with questions bothering on where the Nigerian pioneers chose to serve and what influenced their choices.

He said that for Azikiwe, "It would seem that wherever the call came from, as long as it would advance the course of political stability and continuity Nnamdi Azikiwe would go there." Accepting that though his achievements in this regard are difficult to isolate, it was obvious he was uncomfortable with the idea of the Northern monopoly of political power. Saying that Sir Ahmadu Bello was only interested in the North from the beginning, he added that "the only interest which the national level of political service had for Ahmadu Bello was the possibility of the country becoming an Islamic state!

While recording the novel efforts of Awolowo to better the lot of the people of the South West where he held sway, he was unmistakable in drawing a connection between Awolowo's foray into the centre and the need to find means of overcoming the limitations inherent in the existing constitutions order.

In the second part of his presentation, Omotosho looked at the state of technology today and developments in industrial production as a way of justifying his conclusion that "the longer a country refuses to join the education production chain the more difficult it would be for such a country to look risk and uncertainty in the face."

In his remarks, Mimiko said the future of the country depends on the quality of education at all levels which is why the Labour Party administration in Ondo State has come up with the idea of building Mega Primary schools as a foundation of education.

According to him, government must get primary education right to reverse the ugly trend whereby graduates in the country would be able to compete favourably with their peers across the globe.

The governor also agreed with the resource person that state governments must not wait for the Federal Government before developing at their own pace noting that late Chief Obafemi Awolowo was developing the South West ahead of the Federal Government.

On youth empowerment, Mimiko reiterated his administration's commitment to build the capacity of youths to enable them play active role in the task of nation building.

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