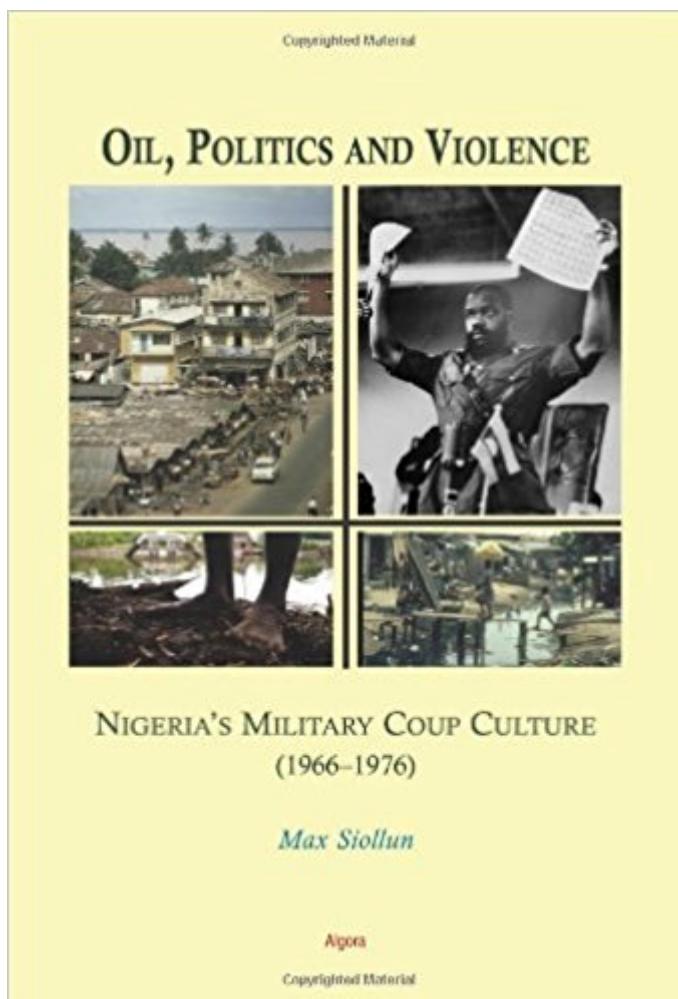


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# Oil, Politics And Violence: Nigeria's Military Coup Culture 1966-1976



## 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

"I cannot commend this book too highly...this book is a revelation". - Kaye Whiteman (Business Day)"The most comprehensive and authentic documentation on the Nigerian coup and counter coup of 1966 and the Biafran War that I have ever seen." - Former Australian High Commissioner to NigeriaThis is a political history of Nigeria covering 1966-1976. The focus is on the outsized role of the Nigerian military in Nigerian politics and the role of oil wealth and the exploitation of ethnic divisions in preserving that role. --©2009 Book News Inc. Portland, OR

Max Siollun is a historian and commentator on Nigerian political and governmental issues, specializing in Nigerian history and the Nigerian military's participation in politics. Although born in Nigeria, he was educated in England and is a graduate of the University of London. For the past decade has been a well known columnist for several publications on Nigerian history and contemporary affairs. His balanced critiques on Nigerian history and the Nigerian military's intervention in politics has given him a reputation as one of the most renowned scholars on Nigeria's post-independence history, and unprecedented access to documentary and eyewitness sources regarding Nigeria's history.

First I would say if you are a child of Independence ( 1958 - 1966), you should run to buy this book. It will explain so many things that you experienced as a child but can only relate to as an adult. If you ever played the game where you had to be as stiff as a board while your pals lifted you up - you will now only realize that you were pretending to be a corpse from the Nigerian civil war. The only thing I can truly say is buy the book and read it yourself. It starts fairly slowly creating the impression of a Phd thesis but from the second chapter and beyond when the "fly on the wall" accounts of fairly inane events by (mostly drunken) elements whose names are familiar and perhaps even whose children are or were friends are related, you suddenly start to realize how Nigeria is the way it is today. Run, do not walk, and to get your own copy of this book.

Max Siollun's well-researched book, "Oil, Politics and Violence," is required reading for all Nigerians, their friends and their critics, including those long dead, those now living, and those yet to be born.

Audacious, balanced and perceptive, the brisk narrative is non-stop reading that you would hate to finish because good reads do in fact finish unless you paused. The book will feed your mind, touch your heart, and pain your body over pages and passages of good intentions, bloody intrigues and politicized soldiering for power and opportunity. Apparently, the country and the mass of impoverished Nigerians have been the worse for it all. The painstaking author brings together what many others have attempted to do by way of lopsided period accounts, biographies, autobiographies and memoirs of varying quality. If there is just one book worth having on the most trying decade and the first fifty years of Nigeria's flag independence since 1960, this would be it. Go out and get a copy of this graphic and visceral book for you and your friends and foes alike. Despite or because of the proven crass irresponsibility of the country's successive generations of civilian and military politicians, you all might just end up taking Nigeria's leadership and followership fortunes and vicissitudes a lot more seriously. A country so well endowed with natural and human resources not only can do a lot better, but deserves a lot more than the corruption and ineptitude that have become standard operating procedure in both high and low places. It is time the curse of oil became transformed into the blessings of socioeconomic opportunity and improved standards of living for the masses.K.G.

I picked up Max Siollun's book (Oil, Politics and Violence: Nigeria's Military Coup Culture 1966-1976), and could not put it down until the last page. It reads like a fast paced thriller; an unbiased narrative of Nigeria's birth - the politics and circumstances within which this young nation was nurtured, and the pitfalls of the competing interests of all the stakeholders - the colonizer and the colonized. I was so moved by this book that I bought numerous copies for friend's and family across the globe. It one of those that leaves you feeling like "somebody else has to also hear this"! I have read many other books on Nigeria's History and The Biafran War, and would have to say that Mr Siollun's book adds unparalleled depth and candor to the story of Nigeria's history. I recommend this book to anyone who is interested in the history of Nigeria, seeks to understand the paradox that is today's Nigeria, or aspires to help Nigeria live up to its potential.

Max has done an excellent job putting this book together! It is absolutely a must read for any Nigerian or anyone interested in Nigeria's history. What makes this book so unique is that it is devoid of ethnic and religious sentiments that often colour writings relating to Nigerian history. Max's research is stunning and this makes this work absolutely remarkable. The events chronicled about in this book show how the politicization of Nigeria's military led to the ruin of democratic institutions in

Nigeria and emphasises the timeless words that "Those that do not heed history are doomed to repeat it". This is surely a CLASSIC and every Nigerian should be grateful to Max for writing this book. For a country where much of what is believed is "hearsay", it is refreshing to read an unbiased account of which I believe are based on factual events. If you have read this review, you should read "Oil, Politics and Violence: Nigeria's Military Coup Culture 1966-1976" by Max SiollunDimu

Ehalaiye, Wellington, New Zealand

It is very clear to anyone, who knows a thing or two about Nigerian History that this book is very well researched and written. Max writes the book, similar to the way a detective solves a case. All the facts are dissected from multiple angles and then various hypotheses are drawn out, until the most logical conclusion is arrived at. For a 268 page book, it is cornucopia of facts and tidbits of soldiers and politicians, who shaped the political landscape of Nigeria. He also does an extremely good job of setting the atmosphere, the expectations and grievances of various groups and interest, and also getting into the minds of the numerous "principals". So, as a reader, you now have a very intimate understanding of who shaped and influenced the various coups, and counter-coups; and why. The ingredients for the "Nigerian" problem is transparent and well laid out in the pages of the book. However, my only disappointment is that Max Siollun does not offer a solution. I guess he can't do it all, that is left for the readers to figure out from being familiar with the causes.

This is by far the best book about Nigeria's history covering 1966 -1976. Excellent research and engaging discussion of the issues - Sadly most of them are still unresolved. Nigeria is yet to untangle herself from effects of this period.

A collection of tales and events from the Civil War of Nigeria. So many stories that have now been connected. Good research work and the book is just the beginning in a journey into Nigeria's past.

Bought it for my dad. He loved it.

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