

# "LAYING LANDMARKS BEYOND THE PRESENT AND THE PAST; THE CHALLENGES AND PROSPECTS OF A MUTUALLY BETTER RELATIONSHIP, BETWEEN REMO AND IJEBU"

By Otunba Abdul Lateef Adebayo Owoyemi \*

In the Name of Almighty Allah, and With the Blessings of Almighty Allah. Amen.

## Part 1 - Opening Remarks

This paper consists of nine parts. They are:

1. Introductory Remarks;
2. The Two Legendary Icons and Awardees - Asiwaju Solomon Onafowokan and Balogun-General, Sir Dr Kesington Adebutu;
3. How to Pass On The Awardees' Legacies to Future Generations;
4. Ijebu and Remo Relations - Mr Martindale's British Seeds, of Predictable Discord and How to Move Forward Happily;
5. The Issues About Creation of a State for Ijebu and Remo;
6. The Issue of The Akarigbo's Headship, of Ogun State Obas Council;
7. Ijebu Ode, the Most Marginalized Provincial Capital in Nigeria;
8. The Huge Potentials of Feasible Reconciliation and Restoration o Harmony Between Remo and Ijebu;
9. My Concluding Remarks.

2. I feel specially and highly honored, to be the Motivational Guest Speaker, at this 5th Annual, and 2018 Edition, of the Remo Achievers' Awards ceremony.

3. I am particularly highly indebted to my great professional colleague and friend of several decades, the highly respected, wise, and shrewd King Akarigbo of Remoland, His Royal Majesty, King Babatunde Ajayi, Torungbuwa II, Bachelor of Laws, Master of Laws, Fellow, The Institute of Chartered Accountants of Nigeria, Fellow, The Chartered Institute of Taxation of Nigeria, Fellow, and current President, Chairman of the Governing Council, The Business Recovery and Insolvency Practitioners Association of Nigeria, Member, Nigerian Bar Association, First Nigerian Member, and Fellow of Insolvency International of United Kingdom (Insol), and by the design of Almighty God, Nigeria's most eligible, and most handsome King! I am sure if you have not given your consent to my nomination, the organizers of this event, would have had no other choice, than to have found another motivational guest speaker. So, Your Royal Majesty, I am most grateful to you, Sir.

4. I am also equally grateful, to both the members of the organizing committee of this great event, ably led, over the past five years, by Ambassador Elizabeth Jekami. A friend warned me, that I should be careful not to look at her too many times, otherwise, I might find myself "visiting the Akarigbo" every Friday evening till midnight ! Remoland has many highly intelligent and highly discerning people, and that they have continued to support you, over the past 5 years, is not only a fitting testimony to your high intelligence quota and charming nature, but also, a public recognition of your high integrity and trustworthiness.

God bless and amply reward you and your aspirations. Amen.

5. I must also not fail, to express my gratitude to the two centers of attention at this event, namely, Asiwaju of Remoland, Solomon Kayode Onafowokan, Officer of the Order of the Niger, and the Balogun-General of Remoland, Sir Dr Kesington Adebukanla Adebutu, Commander of the Order of the Niger, either of who, could have easily aborted my nomination, through a whisper of opposition, but happily did not. I thank you both. I must also thank our Chairman of today's history making event, Aare Kolawole Oyefeso, with whom, I have interacted, as Co-members, of the Ogun State Elders Consultative Forum, for many years, and who, on learning that I would be the Guest Speaker, could easily have declined to serve as the Chairman, but found me worthy of the role. Aare, I thank you so much and hope, God Willing, that I will not disappoint either you, or the revered Monarchs of Remoland and other very eminent men and women, assembled here today. May Almighty God, guide me right. Amen.

6. The above compliments having been duly paid, I would like to say, with great humility but honestly, that it is not my desire here today, to cast jokes and say sweet but empty words, that will make us clap and clap. No. By the Grace of Almighty God, I will endeavor to speak the Truth, as I humbly believe, I have always been inspired by Almighty God to do, as consistently as possible - Truth that most people here today, or absent, will recall, think seriously about, and act upon, in the years and decades ahead, for the benefits of both ourselves, and posterity. So shall it be by the grace of God. Amen. What follow are entirely my thoughts, and I speak only for myself and for no one else, especially, my comments and opinions, on the past, present and future relationship between Remo and Ijebu, except where I have quoted from historical records. Thank you very much.

## **Part 2 - The Two Legendary Icons and Awardees, Asiwaju Solomon Onafowokan and Balogun-General, Sir Dr Kesington Adebutu.**

7. I have no doubt, that the full citations for the two noble Awardees, will be given shortly. So, my own bio-reference will be in the limits of brevity.

Choosing who of these two legendary icons to speak briefly upon first, is a fairly difficult task. Both are not only high, nationally well known and respected accomplishers in their individual rights, but each one is a holder of two of the most legendary titles, that an Akarigbo can ever bestow. In business and industry and as employers of labour of note, each Awardee has been for many decades, and remains, also a great legend, in his own right !

8. I have been more closely associated with Asiwaju Onafowokan, than with the Balogun-General of Remoland, Sir Kesington Adebutu, although, quite unknown to him, our path once crossed briefly, several years back, during my intervention, to ensure that the Late Alaperu, Oba Ogunfowora, chose my late father-in-law, Chief Adesegun Oyeti, as the Osi Balogun of Iperu, the third in Lopere rank, to the then Balogun of Iperu, the famous Sir Adebutu ! We also sat together as guests of the Late Akarigbo Oba Sonariwo at the wedding party of his son, at the Nigerian Army Cantonment, Bonny Camp, Victoria Island, in Lagos, a few years back. Asiwaju Onafowokan was also personally present at Idowa, with Their Royal Highnesses, the Alaperu of Iperu, the Elepe of Epe and the then

Akarigbo-in-Waiting, and by the Grace of God now, His Royal Majesty Oba Babatunde Ajayi, during my 80th birthday prayer, in April 2017. So if on this occasion I choose to proceed in the alphabetical order of their respective Chieftaincy titles of Asiwaju and Balogun, I have no doubt that the amiable Balogun-General of Remoland will readily pardon my partiality ! I have the bad habit of being fanatically loyal !

9. Asiwaju Onafowokan is a legend among legends in the history of Commerce and Industry in Nigeria. For several years, he ably headed and piloted to even greater heights, the fortunes of a child that was born to be much more greater than his father, the Chamber of all Chambers, the Lagos Chamber of Commerce and Industry. Asiwaju led the great institution in such a wise, exemplary and foresighted way that today, Chief S.K. Onafowokan will readily be ranked amongst the historic and never to be forgotten Barons of Industry in Africa, such as Chief C.O Lawson and High Chief Henry Fajemirokun, both of blessed memory. Today, Asiwaju is Chairman of several high profile, and very viable, highly successful enterprises. They include the very famous Coleman Wires and Cables, whose brand advertisements, rank amongst the most imaginative, hard hitting, promos in West Africa, if not the whole of Africa. Coleman's is an advertisement no one is ever tired of seeing and the credit for that goes to its Chairman, the Asiwaju of Remoland. Almighty God will continue to make you a blessed Leader wherever you may be.

10. We in Ijebu are ever appreciative and proud of Sir Kesington Adebute as the owner of one of the most nationally well known gaming companies in Nigeria, called "Baba Ijebu". This is an institution that gives hope of affluence to millions of ordinary Nigerians, and offer gainful employment directly and indirectly to several millions of the middle aged and youths all over Nigeria. There are businessmen and there are businessmen, but only a very few Nigerian businessmen that can be publicly presented as without any record of partnership betrayal, over-smartness, and "cunny cunny"! Remoland is very fortunate that the two awardees of today are two shining symbols of highly successful businessmen, free of blemish, free of stories, and free of any stain on their honour and integrity, their past and their present ! Believe you me, here are two great men of absolute trustworthiness ! These are two highly successful businessmen that prove beyond any iota of doubt, that in our diverse country Nigeria, it is still quite possible for one to be very successful and hugely celebrated a businessmen or woman, without the blemish of unfair dealings, betrayal of friends and business partners, both locally and internationally. Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen, the two legendary icons being honoured today, Asiwaju Solomon Kayode Onafowokan and Balogun -General Sir Kesington Adebute, are to the best of my knowledge and information, among the most trustworthy and fair dealing businessmen, Africa has ever produced. Kindly join me in giving both of them a standing ovation.

11. Balogun-General Kesington Adebute, I have glanced at the very long list of your acts of charity and benevolence, and I must confess that henceforth, I shall always see you as one of the most quiet, and most noise-free philanthropists, any where in Nigeria. I am both surprised and shocked, that I have never read any newspaper or magazine, in which you were recounting or celebrating any of your very long list of quite substantial charitable projects and donations. It also occurred to me, that you hardly ever celebrate yourself or your attainments through press interviews or on the pages of newspapers ! By the Grace of Almighty God, I too will endeavour to copy your unique style of noiseless giving, and stupendous philanthropy, when, God Willing, I too become a philanthropist ! All those who wish God to grant my prayer should please join me in once again, applauding the Balogun-General and the Asiwaju.

12. You the people of Remo are justly proud of them, and we the people of ijobuland hold both of them in the highest possible esteem. You will all agree with me, that it is the original Ijebu in them, and their great grand parents, is what has made and still makes them so bright, so wise, so foresighted, and so charming and magnificent every where and everyday ! May your shadows continue to loom larger, and may your business enterprises continue to grow and prosper. May the children of each of you, be greater and more blessed, than you, and during your life times. Amen.

### **Part 3 - How to Pass on The Awardees' Legacies to Future Generations.**

13. I am sure, we all will agree that the character, integrity, hard work and successes of both Asiwaju Onafowokan and Balogun-General Kesington Adebute should not in many decades to come, die with one or both of them. We must all work to ensure that our youth and coming generations, live and die in their most illustrious moulds. Towards attaining this desideratum, I have a total of 8 recommendations to make. They are as follows:

1. This Annual Remo Achievers Awards, is a legacy that must not be allowed to die or flounder. It must survive the lifespans of those who conceived it and nurtured it, to its current enviable status.
2. It must be rapidly transformed to a "Remo National Awards Foundation" as quickly as possible. The new Foundation should not only acknowledge and formalize the leadership roles of the founder or founders of this laudable initiative, but also motivate and endeavor to incorporate a number of highly notable and genuine, well respected and high integrity indigenes of Remoland as members of the Governing Board. The Akarigbo will, of course, be the Foundation's Grand Royal Patron, while a number of other Remo Monarchs, serve as Royal Patrons.
3. At least once a year, His Royal Majesty should host a social event to raise substantial funds for the Foundation, and as often as expedient.
4. The awards should be in at least three categories namely, Icons of Business and Industry, the Best Achiever in Education and the Most Significant Contributor to Employment Generation in Remoland.
5. Adequate arrangements should be made for proper accounting for the revenues and expenditures, and for yearly auditing of the Foundation's accounts, within 3 months of its end of year. Copies of such audited financial statements and the Annual Report of the Foundation, should as of right, be made available to both the Royal Grand Patron and each Royal Patron, within the first half of each succeeding year.
6. In due course, its scope of awards may be extended to recognize non Remo indigenes who had made the most significant contributions towards the welfare of Remoland.
7. The annual Awards' brochures, should also contain the photographs and names of all prior Awardees.
8. Lastly, the Foundation should encourage and if possible, arrange for current and past Awardees, to address the students of at least three secondary/post secondary educational institutions in Remoland as a means of directly motivating the students, towards attaining similar characteristics and individual attainments, through focusing more decisively on their studies and characters, shunning of cultism, drugs and every unbecoming behaviour.

#### **Part 4 - Ijebu and Remo Relations - Mr Martindale's British Seeds of Predicable Discord, and How to Move Forward Happily.**

14. I have no doubt that some of the well informed participants here today, will be aware through the media or by other means, that as a son of two of the 4 Oba Dagburewe of Idowa Ruling Houses, as well as of one of the 4 Awujale of Ijebuland Ruling Houses in Ijebu Ode, I had, in turns, been mentioned on a few occasions in reference to my activities pertaining to royalty in Ijebuland, most recently, in the five year unfortunate squabbles over the affairs of Fusengbuwa Ruling House, one of the four Ruling Houses of the Awujale. In addition, I was installed in July 1981 as Otunba Sikuloye of Idowa by my uncle, the 21st Dagburewe Oba Ephraim Olaneye, subsequent which, from March 1982 until December 2003, (that is a period of 21 years),

I was one of the two contestants, for the position of 22nd Dagburewe of Idowa. Also in April 2006, His Royal Majesty, the Awujale appointed me the Otunba Ja-Diara one of the most senior and hereditary Otunbadhip titles of Ijebu Ode. All these have made me become heavily interested and involved in matters concerning the royalty in Ijebuland.

15. On the Remo side, my most senior wife, Olori Abiola Ayinke is a Princess of the Agbonmagbe Ruling House of Iperu, being the eldest daughter of Late Chief Adesegun Oyeti. Through her, five of my children have royal root in Remoland. Also, another of my sons is a prince of both the Adedoyin Royal Family of the Akarigbo Dynasty as well as a prince of the Ewusi of Makun Royal Dynasty through his maternal grandfather, Prince Emanuel Sholanke of Ijaodankan Street, Makun Shagamu.

16. These very strong linkages of my humble self and my children in Royal affairs both in Idowa and Ijebu Ode, and of my children and grand children, in both Iperu and Shagamu, make me think and meditate, ever so often, about what can, and should, be done, to clear away, the long standing not too happy relationship and confusion between Ijebuland and Remoland. My objective and well grounded conclusion, from my close study of several Ijebu native history books and enquiry reports, especially the often mentioned "Martindale Reports of 1937" covering not only Remo, but also all the then districts of Ijebu Province, some five in all, convinced me beyond any doubt that the post 1937 misgivings and occasional squabbles between Remo and Ijebu, were deliberately premeditated and effected by the Ijebu Province British colonial administrators, to humiliate, rubbish, castrate and weaken the then Awujale, through the instrumentality of a certain Mr M.H. Martindale.

17. It was also aimed to keep Ijebu and Remo, not only perpetually divided, but also remain as continually unfriendly, bickering neighbours ! Since the publication of the colonial officer's highly controversial one man "inquiry reports" in December 1937, Ijebu had never been the same homogeneous entity it was for nearly a thousand years before the British came. Before this vindictive exercise, the Awujale and his twin Royal brother, the Dagburewe, were seen by the colonial overlords, as two arrogant and stubborn leaders of an arrogant and proud people who were implacable enemies of the British colonial interests in breaking further into the southern hinterland of the colonial territory. The Dagburewe who originally shared a common border with the Akarigbo and had his pre-1937 area of Royal jurisdiction and authority, forcibly reduced from over 48 towns that then included Omu, Ala, Ibefun, Agbowa, Ososa, Aiyepe, Okun Owa, Odogbolu amongst others and right up to Ikorodu, mercilessly shrunk to only Idowa and some 6 small villages !

18. The savagery inflicted on Dagburewe's royal twin brother, the Awujale and Paramount overlord of the entire Ijebu nation, was even more horrible and devastating. Not only were the entire towns and villages of Remoland which desired severance hived off, even a number of Remo towns that insisted on being left under the Awujale, were forcefully directed to submit to the Akarigbo. Realizing that the Awujale enjoyed enormous influence throughout Yorubaland through his ownership of and control over almost all the coastal communities between Ijebu and the Atlantic Ocean, and gateway to international trade and commerce, the British overlords forcefully divested the Awujale of control and overlordship over each and every one of the coastal towns stretching from and including Epe, Lekki, Ejinrin, Itoikin and Ikorodu. This was to make sure Ijebu became landlocked and with no more direct access to the trade routes with the European merchants and traders which hitherto had given the Awujale and Ijebus incomparable leverage over the flow of commerce and weapons of warfare, from the sea coasts to the Yoruba hinterland, Dahomey and beyond.

19. Reliable historical records indicate that the generally accepted first King Awujale Obanta, who legitimately claimed ownership and exercised undisputed overlordship over the entire Ijebu area which then extended from Lekki in Lagos right up to the ancient border of modern Iwo, arrived in Ijebu from Ile Ife in 1430. Twenty years later, the first King Akarigbo arrived from Ile-ife and settled at Oke-Iyemule in Ijebu-Ode in 1450. The 13th Awujale King Owa Otutubiosun left Ijebu-Ode to found and remain in Idowa and originated the title of King Dagburewe in 1540. These were the foremost three ancient kings in Ijebu land.

20. Very significantly for us here today most especially from Remo, there is no record anywhere, not even in the white man's Ijebu dismemberment Martindale Inquiry report booklet, that any Awujale ever stretched his hands, to maltreat any indigene of Remo. Also no Awujale in history has ever interfered with the peaceful governance of Remoland by an Akarigbo. No Awujale has ever sponsored or supported the emergence of any rival Obas in any Remo town, even including in those more than 11 towns founded by Awujale princes, from the 4 Awujale Ruling Houses, even though the histories of their ancestral royal roots to the Awujale, endure till date.

21. As we shall see later, on critical occasions, succeeding Awujales had gladly and decisively risen to the aid of the Akarigbo and Remoland in times of danger, such as between 1869 and 1872, and more recently in 1990. From 1976 till today, no prominent indigene of Remo, has been able to recall at my request, if any of his or her grand parents, left behind, any history of oppression or maltreatment, by any Ijebu King, man or woman. Indeed in the immediate past, leading and highly distinguished legendary Ijebus were amongst the most fanatical and ever loyal supporters, of the Late Sage, Chief Obafemi Awolowo of blessed memory, not only throughout his life time,<sup>8</sup> but even after. We, in Ijebu remember all these ardent supporters of the late sage, and hold each of them in very high esteem.

22. We may all now begin to wander and ask why and where the sometimes passionate opposition by many Remo indigenes whenever a subject concerns Ijebu, or the Awujale or Ijebu people emanated from?

23. Our good friend, Mr Martindale, the white man colonial official, is our best and most authentic witness.

24. An objective reader of the [M.H Matinedale inquiry report of 1937](#) which the Remo Forum secured Evans Brothers Limited to publish in 2009 is in the possession of every notable Remo indigene. I am happy I was afforded a copy by one of the members of Remo Forum during our joint efforts towards the creation of a joint State.

25. From this Martindale book, I will draw attention to some parts that are relevant to a mature understanding of, I believe, the exaggerated "differences" between Ijebu and Remo . I quote the following:

1. " It is accepted that both the Awujale and the Akarigbo are directly from Oduduwa" (Part 2, Paragraph 7)

2. " It is also established that the relationship between the Awujale and the Akarigbo has always been that of "Elder to Younger Brother" which description had been interpreted and defined among Yoruba races as denoting mutual independence" (Part 2, Paragraph 8)

3. "Again despite the fact that the Balogun or war chief of Remo could not take the field (i.e go to war) without the sanction of the Akarigbo, it is significant that on no occasion did the Akarigbo institute hostility directed against the Awujale, it is evident that such an undertaking by reason of the spiritual attributes of the Awujale, would have been inconceivable". (Part 2, paragraph 12).

4. "The Awujale did not however cease from rendering spiritual aid, by way of propitiation and of invocation, in so far as it was sort for by the people of Ijebu Remo" (Part 2, paragraph 15/5).

25. It is also on record, that it was the 48th King Awujale, Oba Fidipote (1852-1886), who between 1869 and 1872, zealously worked for first, the moving closer of Imakun and Ofin and the merger of the following 11 settlements 1. Imakun, 2. Epe 3. Obido, 4. Sanyindo. 5. Latawa, 6. Ijagba,

7. Ado, 8. Ijoku 9. Oko. 10. Batoro and 11. Ofin to form the present day Shagamu so that they could together provide a more formidable military defence against constant harassments and invasions by itinerant marauders of the time, and which rendered many settlements extinct. It will be readily admitted that the pre-eminent position of Shagamu and of King Akarigbo of today,might not have evolved without such a seamless and peaceful integration. To my mind, this is one act of foresight and good leadership, for which generations after generations of Remo people, should always manifest love and appreciation not only to succeeding Awujales, but also their Chiefs and people. This is because no Oba "does it alone" !

26. In more recent times, no one will dispute the fact that it was the current Awujale, Oba Dr S.K Adetona, Ogbagba II, the 57th King Awujale and Paramount Ruler of Ijebuland, who magnanimously,single-handedly and conclusively intervened in Mid 1990, on behalf of the entire Remoland, to bring an abrupt, decisive and dramatic termination, to the then tough, resources consuming, and energy sapping battle, for succession, that eventually produced Oba Michael Adeniyi Sonariwo, as King Akarigbo, Erinjugbo II, on 14th July, 1990. Before that selfless intervention, in the course of which His Majesty Oba Adetona seemed to have re-enacted the ancient mystic powers of Past Awujales, to spiritually make profound supplications that had never failed to end any crisis that might be affecting Remo, there was hardly any notable religious leader, powerful political and business leader and Monarchs in Remo and indeed throughout Yorubaland, who had not been approached to intervene in resolving the crisis. But each of them failed, until recourse for

intervention was had to the 57th Awujale, His Royal Majesty, Oba Adetona, who I reliably learnt, during a midnight meeting that lasted no more than an hour, mediated and pronounced a happy and permanent end, to a fierce battle that was set to last at least 20 more years, and right up to the Nigerian Supreme Court in Abuja !

27. Without that sudden and immediate happy ending, the Akarigbo Stool, Shagamu and Remo could not conceivably have enjoyed the tremendous and very obvious unity, peace and developments, that characterized the 27 years reign, of King Michael Sonariwo from July 14th, 1990. May Almighty God grant him eternal peace and comfort. Amen.

28. Given the foregoing contributions to the progress, happiness, stability and economic progress of past and present Awujales to Remoland, as I have recounted above, one will be justified to begin to ask why the relationship between the descendants of the two Royal brothers, had become so unedifying and worrisome. From Mr Martindale's small book which negatively also impacted two other matters, one could name three factors. These are:

1. Revenue and fiscal arrangements shown by Martindale as unfair to Remo;
2. Encounters for Creation of a new state for Ijebu and Remos; and
3. Akarigbo's Tenures as Chairman of Ogun State Council of Obas.

29. Throughout the Martindale inquiry report for the Remo Area of Ijebuland (there were similar reports for Idowa area and several other parts of Ijebu) there was not a single complaint of victimization, oppression or undue interference in the affairs of Remoland or the authority of the Paramount Ruler, from any Awujale of Ijebuland.

30. The main complaint during the 1937 province-wide enquiries and after, was the imbalance between revenues generated respectively by Remo and Ijebu, to the Ijebu Central Administration Treasury vis-a-vis the values of capital development expenditure projects implemented in the Remo area, for a number of years pre 1937, which appeared unfair.

31. In support of the disparity in revenue contributions to the central purse, Part III, Paragraph 9, of the Inquiry Report contained the Table below:

Year	Revenue	Ijebu
1931-32	£ 6,258	£ 2,133
1932-33	5,842	1,653
1933-34	5,086	1,430
1934-35	5,081	1,610
1935-36	5,158	1,122
1936-37	5,537	1,202.

32. An extrapolation of the above indicates that of the yearly average total contribution of an average of £ 5.494 per year, only a paltry sum of £ 1,525 or 27.7 % was contributed by Ijebu area.

33. Apart from non-commensurate capital spending on Remo, the Awujale of being paid a much higher salary than the Akarigbo, the Ijebu Ode chiefs were more in number and earning higher stipends than the few stipend earning Chiefs of Remoland.



34. What prevailed then and being petitioned to the colonial administrators against up to 1937, in terms of a mismatch in revenue contribution to capital spending, is in my candid opinion, not too far incomparable, from the current 2018 state and national fiscal scenario either between Remoland and Egbaland in current day Ogun State, or between Yoruba South West and the North , within the Nigerian Federation !

35. Also put in issue in 1937, was the then appellate arrangements of judicial appeals from the Native Courts of Ijebu Remo and Ijebu Ode, to the Ijebu Judicial Council, "to which tribunal the sole Ijebu Remo representative is the Akarigbo, who, for political reason, does not attend" ! (See Part 3, Paragraph 16) .

36. From this same Mr Martindale's Report which a number of Remo indigenes, very much like to celebrate, we can all now see, that incidence of one Paramount Ruler boycotting the sittings of a jointly owned Council presided over by the other Paramount Ruler, did not commence with an Awujale, or at the Ogun State Council of Obas! Mr Martindale has shown us it predated 1937, and which of the two brothers first did it !

37. The Report went on in Part III to provide as follows:

"31. It is anticipated that in the near future, in place of the present arrangement in which the Awujale is the sole Native Authority of the Ijebu Province (who is also guided by an unauthorised Advisory Board" (!) "the Awujale of Ijebu Ode in Council, will be constituted a Native Authority. When effected, it is advocated that the Ijebu Ode and Ijebu Remo Councils should be combined to constitute a Superior Native Authority with the Awujale as President and the Akarigbo as Vice President thereof, thus embodying the "Elder to Younger Brother" relationship. "32. The Joint Council should convene for the purpose of determining matters of policy affecting Ijebu interest generally, but should not concern itself in respect of internal affairs either of Ijebu Ode or of Ijebu Remo. "33. The meeting should be held at Ijebu Ode but the attendance of the Councillors should be voluntary" !

38. The present generations of Remo and Ijebu people can now more clearly see how cunning and deceptive the British really were, towards sowing the seeds of future discord amongst the two brother people of Ijebu and Remo. Imagine what would happen to a Traditional Council in which the members were not obliged to participate but should attend its meetings only voluntarily ! It must sooner than later die a natural death, leaving behind an unending blame game of who did what to whom leading to non-attendance.!

39. As part of the Mr Martindale reform of Ijebu native administration, "Ijebu Remo should be granted a native administration treasury with control by the proposed Ijebu Remo native Authority over the expenditure of all native administration revenues, derived from or accruing in the Ijebu Remo area, subject, however, to the exercise of such degree of advice and guidance by the resident of the Ijebu Province, as may be requisite". "In this regard, however, it is advocated, that for the future, there should be no payment of funds derived from or accruing in the Ijebu Remo Area, to the Ijebu Ode Native Administration Treasury, other than a **voluntary** contribution to the stipend of the Awujale of Ijebu Ode The amount of the voluntary contribution to the stipend of the Awujale referred to in the preceding paragraph, should be reconsidered yearly by the Ijebu Remo Native Authority, and in this one instance, it is suggested that the resident's control should **not** be imposed, except to secure that the annual contribution be not unreasonably large. A **limit of £500 per annum**, is suggested". (Part 3 paragraphs 35-37).

## **Part 5 - Issues About Creation of a State for Ijebu and Remo.**

40. Thus, we have earlier discovered today at Paragraphs 35 and 36 above, that first, a boycott of the sittings of a joint Council was not invented by any Awujale, secondly, the choice of Ijebu Ode in regard to the headquarters of an institution for joint administration of Ijebu and Remo, such as an Ijebu State, Paragraph 37 supra, shows that it had been settled by the British, since 1937.

41. It was perhaps a good foresight and a show of honesty and fairness on the part of the people of Remoland when at the town hall meeting of the state creation panel held by Ambassador Chief Author Mbanefo FCA, MFR, on Tuesday, 12th of March, 1996, all the Obas and the people that represented Remo, in the presence of my humble self, unanimously agreed and consented, that a new state should be created for Ijebuland and Ijebu Remo, that it be called Ijebu State and its headquarter should be in Ijebu Ode. These are historical facts that anyone can verify and confirm. I do not know what has since happened to alter situation.

42. In regard to the centuries old tradition of our Remo brothers and sisters contribute whatever they could afford to the sustenance of the Throne of Awujale since the coming into existence of Remoland, there is no history that any Awujale ever rejected the stipend required to be contributed by Remo, either because the value was too small, or for any other reason. Each past Awujale graciously received the token of common bond and brotherhood and would whole heartedly ask God and our Ancestors to continue to protect and bless his people in Remo so that they could be enabled to do even more in the years ahead. If any confusion in logic thereafter arose over the issue between Remo and Ijebu, I am of the humble but honest opinion, that the British colonial authorities deliberately and mischievously planted that seed of future discord fully conscious in 1937, that by making the payment of the stipend to Awujale not only voluntary but also by specifying a maximum without a minimum, an implosion must definitely occur given the nature of all human beings !

43. With such an ambiguous colonial era legislation, the Remo could lawfully gradually reduce their voluntary contribution from £500 to zero. Equally any Awujale will be justified to see the action as an act of rebellion taken in bad faith, feel perpetually cheated, betrayed and deprived, by his sons and daughters, now subjects of his younger brother the Akarigbo, his chiefs and advisers. Yet the fore bearers of both people rightly or wrongly held to the strong belief that the Awujale's blessings, invocations and supplications to God and our common ancestors, will always positively impact the Akarigbo and entire Remo, but not vice versa !

44. I personally believe that it is not unwise to always respect even a gentlemanly undertaking and will be never too late for the Akarigbo and the authorities of Remo to take steps to review what I see as a short sighted money saving decision and restore to the Awujale what is traditionally his, no matter how small their circumstance may reasonably make the amount from time to time. Otherwise no future Awujale would ever bear the pain with indifference no matter wealthy Almighty God may make him in person ! Such a noble and foresighted course of action will please our common ancestors, vastly enhance the political, social and economic benefits that will flow towards Remo from Ijebu and engender a stronger desire to support and cooperate between all present and future Akarigbo and Awujale and by extension between Remo and Ijebu.

45. In the political arena of today, three key political positions jointly tie Remo and Ijebu. These are the elective positions of Governor, Deputy Governor and Senator. With the important role of numbers in politics, only a better cemented filial and traditional relationship that will continuously guarantee a fair sharing of these important elective posts between Ijebu and Remo.

#### Part 6 - The Issue About The Akarigbo's Headship of Ogun State Obas Council.

46. If one were to judge by the history contained in the Mr Martindale Report, especially the Akarigbo's observed habit of habitually boycotting the meetings of the Joint Ijebu Judicial Council (Part 3, Paragraph 16) and abrogation of the customary Awujale stipend, any Awujale on the position of His Royal Majesty Oba Dr S.K Adetona will most likely refuse to partake in any official meeting over which the Akarigbo would preside. This is an issue over which the penultimate Akarigbo, King Sonariwo and many indigenes of Remo, big and small complained and still complain and hold against Ijebus.

47. I have never heard the present Awujale explain his resolve of deliberate boycotts to some of us close enough to him to raise the issue other than it was, and I strongly believe still is, that he the Awujale was not prepared to breach the long revered traditional understanding that an Awujale should never give an Akarigbo, his younger brother, an "Eewo" or poisonous food, to consume by the junior brother presiding over any meeting at which his elder brother was also a participant !!

It may therefore prove to be a 100% "destructive test" , if one were to succeed in persuading the ruling Awujale or any future one, to alter the long honoured taboo, in the interest of modernity or democracy.

48. However, in the long term interest of the two brother communities, and the many centuries of cohabitation without conflict or war between the "Older and Younger Brother" which even the wily British respected and honoured, this difficulty requires a two way solution.

49. First, the Authorities in Remo may agree and make an approach to the Awujale, to enquire from him, what it would take traditionally, to end the taboo or prohibition, since there is no taboo in human history, that could not be excised or rendered no longer effectual, if all the concerned parties agree and willingly cooperate to terminate same.

50. The other alternative is for the leaders of modern day Remo to resolve again voluntarily, that their parents or grand parents, goofed, in reducing the Awujale's agreed and customary traditional stipend contribution from the maximum of £500 to zero. They may agree to find out from the records or ask the Awujale when the unfortunate seizure decision was effected, agree a reasonable lump sum payment, to redress the traditional error, and restore the goodwill and genuine brotherhood, of several centuries past.

In my honest opinion, the existing neither here nor there relationship is unhealthy and dangerous. Given the neighbours-to-neughbiurs conflicts now occurring in every part of Nigeria, it will only take a minor human incident, on either side, to trigger both communities into even more costly and destructive hostility.

I am not sure if sentiments and appeals to modernity, political expediency or effluxion of time, or future changes in the presiding dramatist personae, will likely change this unhelpful situation.

## **Part 7 - Ijebu Ode, Most Marginalized Provincial Capital in Nigeria.**

51. The people of Remo, in my view, should stop being afraid of being politically dominated by the Awujale and the people of Ijebu Ode. Looked at closely and objectively, Ijebu Ode is the most marginalized and discriminated against, of all the provincial capitals or major cities and towns in Yorubaland. It was this humble speaker's accidental intervention at one of the meetings of Chief Obafemi Awolowo's Committee of Friends at the Park Lane Apapa residence, of the late sage, few months before the onset of democratic dispensation, that ultimately led to late Chief Olabisi Onabanjo, emerging, as the first post military Governor of Ogun State. No son or daughter of Ijebu Ode has become a Senator or member of the Federal House of Representatives since the return to democratic elections after the military era. The six Senators democratically elected from Ijebuland thus far, have been as follows;

Senator Abraham Adesanya - Ijebu Igbo  
Senator Biyi Durojaiye - Ijebu Igbo  
Senator Jubril Matins Kuye - Ago Iwoye  
Senator Gbenga Kaka - Ijebu Igbo  
Senator Lekan Mustapha - Ijebu Igbo  
Senator Buruji Kasahamu also Ijebu Igbo.

52. Similarly no politician of Ijebu Ode origin has during the same era, ever been deemed fit, to represent Ijebuland in the Federal House of Representatives. Hence, it can be seen that the Awujale had never intervened to force an Ijebu Ode indigene on any of the political parties. Similarly, there is hardly any State or Federal Government project located in Ijebu Ode, but all are in the district towns, and not because Ijebu Ode does not deserve them. The long standing, very dangerous gully erosion phenomenon keeps getting worse !

This reality will appear quite contrary to the fears widely nursed in Remo, that in any joint enterprise formed by Remo and Ijebu, the Awujale or Ijebu Ode people, will unjustly corner the lion's share. This is absolutely untrue.

These unjustifiable inherited prejudices against Ijebu Ode, which had unfortunately been passed from one generation to the next, is not restricted to the citizens of Remoland alone. The honest but bitter truth is that these prejudices exist even today amongst most elites of most towns and villages in Ijebuland, with the singular exception of Idowa and Ikija plus perhaps a couple of other towns ! However, whenever I have had the opportunity to ask such antagonists, to substantiate their vague allegations, not one has, to date, been able to do so. In like manner, if those of us here today in Remo, were to ask the persons sitting next to us "What did an Awujale or Ijebu Ode people, do to hurt your parents or grand parents ?" , I doubt if any person would have a coherent or logical instance !

53. This same incidence of marginalization has been the lot of Idowa, Ijebu Ode's Royal brother and former pre-1937 District Head, of the towns in present Odogbolu Local Government Area is concerned. By scheming and ganging-up, each of the major once subordinate towns must politically have their fill in turns, with nothing left for Idowa, their pre-Martindale era, overlord ! Never !

## **Part 8 -The Huge Potentials of Feasible Reconciliation and Restoration, of Harmony Between Remo and Ijebu:**

54. No Nigerian President or State Governor, will sleep well if for instance, the Awujale and the Akarigbo jointly issue a public statement objecting to an intended public policy or decision.

55. In truth, Governor Ibikunle Amosun has constructed more roads, overhead bridges and bridges in Ogun State, in my opinion, than all the previous governors combined. However in truth, parts of the Ijebu Ode bridges and main highway, would appear not to have been as well designed or supervised, as the beauty of a job done on the Shagamu, high street. The road projects in Ijebu Ode and the overhead bridge in Ijebu Igbo remain uncompleted ! The network of roads and bridges undertaken in Remo and Ijebu area combined, in scope and aesthetics, appear quite small and insignificant if compared with the expanse, grandeur and omnipresence, of similar projects being undertaken in Abeokuta.

There is no doubt that a united Awujale and Akarigbo, would have significantly even if quietly, moderated this very glaring imbalance. This imbalance is even much more substantial and pronounced, than the unfair distribution of capital projects between Ijebu Ode and Remo, which the Akarigbo and Remo people, justly and vehemently protested against in 1937 !

56. We can all imagine how ecstatic it would be for people of Remoland to welcome the Awujale and Paramount Ruler of Ijebuland with his usually large entourage of all Ijebu Obas and leading individuals at an event being hosted by His Royal Majesty, the Akarigbo in Shagamu. Or the impact for good neighborliness and brotherhood that will be derived by the Akarigbo and other Obas and leading Indigenes of Remoland, storming Ijebu Ode as Royal guests, of His Royal Majesty, the Awujale, at either Ojude Oba Festival or at any other similar important occasion, in Ijebu Ode !

57. A lot of benefits will accrue to Ijebuland and Remoland, if their businessmen and women, engage in intensive inter-area markets and trading, or join hands to explore the huge commercial advantages of the two communities, being the nearest to over-congested Lagos. A combination of Remo and Ijebu Ode will be a central magnet for industries and businesses situate in Lagos State, Oyo State, Ondo State and Delta State, thereby generating huge employment for the youths of Remo and Ijebu. .

58. From all the multiple advantages only a few of which we gave broached, I pray Almighty God that I will be very alive and still very active when these happy events come to be.

#### **Part 9 - My Concluding Remarks:**

59. As a takeaway from this humble presentation, I appeal to our leaders of opinion in Remo, to review with a broad mind, all the issues, observations and suggestions I have brought to the fore in this paper, confirm the short and especially long term benefits in effecting some or each of them, and with great foresight and sincerity, decide where and what actions should be taken in the best interests of the Remo people and posterity.

In conclusion, if wisdom and wise counsel and not emotions or fears prevail, a sustainable modality should be developed for practicalizing those of my ideas and suggestions found to be of potential benefit to our joint people, most especially the people of Remoland.

Finally, I would like to urge the two history maker recipients of this 5th Annual Remo Icons' Awards, the Balogun-General of Remoland Dr Kesington Adebutu and Asiwaju Solomon Onafowokan, to agree to jointly dedicate the rest of their worthy lives, to helping Ijebu and Remo to re-establish the centuries of cordial and endearing cooperative relationship and mutually beneficial brotherhood, which once and for many centuries existed between Ijebu and Remo right from this day forward, I pray Almighty God to bless and reward your sincere endeavours beyond your wildest imagination. Amen.

60. I thank you, Your Royal Majesty, King Babatunde Ajayi, Torungbuwa II, Akarigbo and Paramount Ruler of Remoland. May these historic and positively momentous changes happen during your reign. Amen. I thank you all the other God chosen Revered Royal Monarchs here today, May you all live long and deliver hope and prosperity to all your subjects. Amen. May you all continue to move upwards and in complete harmony with the Akarigbo. Amen. Our Chairman, the two Iconic Honorees of this day, all highly respected distinguished men and women in this audience, highly regarded Ladies and Gentlemen, the trustworthy organizers of this historic event, I thank you for your audience.

I thank you all !

---

\*Being the Motivational Guest Speaker's Address, at the Remo Achievers' Awards, 2019,  
By

Otunba Abdul Lateef Adebayo Owoyemi,  
FCA, FCMA, FIMC, FCIS, FBR,

Managing Director, LOP Consulting Limited,  
Past President of ICAN and Past President of IMCON,  
Otunba Sikuloye of Idowa and  
Otunba Ja-Diara of Ijebuland.

Emails lateefowoyemi@lopconsulting.com  
lateefowoyemi@hotmail.com

6th December, 2018.