

# **FROM REGIONAL AGITATION TO MERCENARY CONTRACTORS AND PIPELINE PROTECTION, A DIPLOMACY OF NIGER-DELTA SURVIVAL OR PERSONAL ECONOMIC AGENDA?**

**A PAPER BY**

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**Abstract:**

*The years beginning from 1830 to 1914, and especially 1854, when William Balfour Baikie led the expeditions which opened the interiors of the towns and communities along the River Niger; the areas which are known to be the Niger Delta region of Nigeria, were largely unknown to outsiders. However, beginning from 1956, when Dr. Archy found its first oil in commercial quantity in Olebiri in the former Rivers State, the seed of organized militancy, agitation, and resistances to both government of Nigeria and oil companies was planted. Therefore, the consequences and implications of these age long resistances were obvious and real, many of which positive, while a lot of others were obviously negative. Thus, the salient question which seems not to have received adequate answers is: were the agitations in the Niger-Delta part of the diplomacy for regional survival, or for individual creek war lords and their supporters economic benefits? In trying to provide answers to this question, efforts were made to trace the history of oil exploration and exploitation of oil in the Niger-Delta as well as its disadvantage and benefits to the Niger –Deltans. The study also attempts a chronicle of the history of militancy and resistance in the region, as it also explores the consequence on the Nigeria at large. The paper concludes by investigating the recent slide of the agitations from what arguably was a regional quest for protection and empowerment, to personal militancy, militia company establishment, individual mercenary contractors and oil pipeline protection, as it also highlights the consequences of this slide on the*

*region. To achieve the objective of this study, historical research methodology anchored on primary and secondary source was employed.*

**Key Words: Niger –Delta, Mercenary, Regional, Diplomacy, Militancy, Consequences**