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# The Issue of Political Instability in Nigeria: A Case Study of The Second Republic (1979-1983).



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APPROVAL

THIS THESIS IS SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF  
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DEDICATION

Dedicated

to

Baba and Mama

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

To God who has granted me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, the courage to change the things I can and the wisdom to know the difference.

My sincere gratitude goes to my supervisor and Head of Department, Dr. Umaru Sanda Hussaini for his personal guidance, wisdom and knowledge. Despite his huge commitments he painstakingly, read through the manuscript and offered well meaning and constructive criticisms.

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My brothers - Solo, Sabo, Danlami and their families and Kabiru deserve a mention. Thank you all for your moral and financial assistance.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 BRIEF REVIEW OF NIGERIAN POLITICS FROM INDEPENDENCE TO 1979.

Nigeria became independent on October 1, 1960 and adopted the British - type Parliamentary system of government under the leadership of Alhaji Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa. However, no sooner was independence achieved than Nigeria's post - independence political experience became a turbulent one.

"Several factors contributed to the political instability: a shaky tripartite federal structure with strong regionalism, disparity in sizes and populations of the three regions, three major regionally-based and tribally-sustained political parties, cut-throat politicians most of whom hadn't the vaguest idea about the art of politics and a weak constitution".<sup>1</sup>

Six years later the phenomenon of coup d'etat, which started on the African continent when Gamal Abdel Nasser deposed king Farouk of Egypt on July 23, 1952, caught up with the young nation. Five majors led by Chukwuma Nzeagwu executed the first bloody coup in the history of Nigeria on January 15, 1966. The first Republic was characterised by a chain of crises starting with the 1963 census controversy, the 1964 Tiv riot, the Western Region crises which lingered since 1962 and the 1964-65 General elections. The immediate

factors responsible for the collapse of the weak and already unstable political order were the federal elections in 1964 and the Western Regional elections the following year. "The elections were so violent and the aftermath so inhibitive to political stability".<sup>2</sup>

The waywardness of the politicians led to public disenchantment so much so that the arrival of the soldiers was greeted with jubilation. But the lopsided manner in which the January, 1966 coup was executed, particularly the killings of mainly Northern politicians and military officers, provoked a chain of reactions. The incompetence with which the new military regime handled the tense situation and failure to take action against the coup plotters indicated to the Northerners a complacency to which the new military regime could not be absolved.

A counter coup was staged on July 29, 1966 which resulted in the emergence of Lt.Col. Yakubu Gowon as the new leader. However, the coup was followed by a spate of violence and mass killings of Igbos in the Northern part of the country. Gradually the nation drifted to civil war and when Col. Odumegu Ojukwu declared Eastern Nigeria as the Republic of Biafra on May 30, 1967, more trouble lay ahead. A full scale war began in July and the conflict which lasted for thirty months "cost the nation an estimated ₦300 million

and hundreds of thousands of lives on both side."<sup>3</sup> Then came finally the reintegration, reconciliation, rehabilitation and reconstruction of the war ravaged areas. However, the end of the civil war and the euphoria that accompanied it did not mean that the country was out of the woods

The oil boom soon followed after the war but financial extravagance, inept leadership and corruption put the dream of a prosperous Nigeria to rest. A promise to return Nigeria to normal constitutional government in 1976 did not materialise. This, along with the failure of the government to live up to the expectations of the populace despite its huge financial resources led to another military takeover on July 29, 1975 while Gowon was attending an O.A.U. Conference in faraway Kampala, Uganda.

When General Murtala Mohammed took over he was just what the country needed to sweep clean the **cobwebs** of the morally bankrupt Gowon regime. With business-like fashion and with military precision, Murtala along with his colleagues of the Supreme Military Council mapped out a series of concrete political programmes for the return to civilian rule in October, 1979. The Government tried to correct the ills of the society and put the nation on the right path to progress. But Murtala was to be cut down in a hail of assassin's bullets on February 13, 1976 in an attempted coup led by Lt. Col. B.S. Dimka.



General Olusegun Obasanjo took the mantle of leadership and continued with the plans laid by his predecessor. Following the submission of the report of the constitution Drafting Committee and deliberations by the Constituent Assembly, power was finally handed over to the civilian regime of Alhaji Shehu Shagari on October 1, 1979, thus ushering the country into a new political era.

#### 1.2 SURVEY OF NIGERIAN LEADERSHIP SPANNING THE PERIOD 1960-1979

The post-independence government was led by Prime Minister Abubakar Tafawa Balewa who was well known for his political moderation. Balewa's regime saw the young nation emerging from one crisis to another. Discontent with the Balewa government manifested itself over foreign policy which was heavily criticised for being too pro-West. It was even alleged that the Soviet Union was refused land for an Embassy on the advice of Britain. The 1962 national census and the Western Region elections coupled with the 1964 federal elections compounded the country's leadership problems. The First Republic leadership could not resolve the several crises that had engulfed the country and so on January 15, 1966, the Balewa administration was toppled in a bloody coup.

Major-General Aguiyi-Ironsi, being the most senior army officer assumed leadership following the coup's partial success. The declaration of Decree 34 by Ironsi was the first

major political blunder made by that regime. The decree stipulated a unitary system of government for the country and it lent colour to the January 15, 1966 coup which many Nigerians regarded as an attempt to plant one section of the country in power especially having killed key political and military figures of the North. Ironsi's major problem seemed to have been his source of advice, a group of advisers "whose sectional considerations thwarted his apparently genuine intention to provide some bases for political stability."<sup>4</sup> The regime created more problems than solved old ones and therefore, no permanent reform could result from this period. It seemed that Ironsi had not done a thorough homework of the Nigerian political situation before he took over power. This made him appear incompetent and incapable of providing the country with some bases for political stability.

The Gowon Government was not:

"A military dictatorship but an effective military-led participatory government in which the civilians were given powerful and influential positions in the policy-making areas of leaderships".

The creation of new states to make a total of twelve was one of the major achievements of General Gowon because it is believed to be one way of removing the fear of domination, Lindsay Barrett describes it as "the most important political act undertaken by a Nigerian government since the decision to

go republican in 1963." <sup>6</sup> However, Gowon laid down no programme of training for a new political leadership to take over eventually from his government. Under Gowon's leadership, corruption was not only widespread but the regime's management of administrative affairs was also inept. "In 1973-74, the administration contracted for the supply of twenty million tons of imported cement which was ten times the known handling capacity of the Nigerian ports." <sup>7</sup> This culminated in the famous "cement armada" issue with the government having to pay a large sum of money daily in demurrage charges. Gowon had also promised to handover power to the civilians in 1976 and even announced a nine point programme of transition but was to renege on his promise by describing the date as being unrealistic. Financial extravagance and planlessness of the economy characterised the Gowon regime and it saw the emergence of powerful civil servants, Governors and aides.

However, Gowon still retained an aura of simplicity and honour which attracted civilian loyalty. Within the army he retained the loyalty of a number of officers mostly from the minority areas who felt that their careers held greater promise under his leadership.

General Murtala Muhammed's leadership operated with a sense of style and charisma that "blanketed out the milder

style of the Gowon era."<sup>8</sup> Murtala infused some sense of discipline into the society by embarking on a clean-up exercise in the civil service and fighting the twin evil of bribery and corruption. The creation of more states, besides providing political stability, also brought government nearer to the people. It also enhanced the realization of a more widespread development throughout the country. He set up a Constitution Drafting Committee to draw up a new constitution for the country with a view to returning to civil rule in 1979. By doing this, Murtala achieved in barely four months what the previous regime did not attempt in nine years.

To the outside world, Murtala Mohammed is perhaps best remembered for his dynamic foreign policy which placed Nigeria in its proper place in international diplomacy. Nigerian self-confidence as leader of the African input in the area of intercontinental politics was suddenly enhanced by the bold and unexpected support for the left-wing liberation movements of Southern Africa.

The change that had come under the dynamic and charismatic leadership of General Muhammad was welcome not only because of its freshness but moreso because of its precision in action. However, Murtala's death came too soon in his governance for one to be able to assess categorically the nature of the legacy he would have left as an individual.

The swiftness with which the ~~Dimka~~ coup was put down convinced Nigerians that they were blessed with a decisive and firm group of leaders and this perception served to give Obasanjo a base of acceptance and support from the public. But Obasanjo lacked the charisma, the flair and much needed aggressive dynamism of the late General Muhammed. Obasanjo, however, tried to tread softly and made all efforts to ensure that power, which had been in the preserve of the military for thirteen years, was handed over to the civilians in October, 1979. Policies initiated by his predecessor were continued with less vigour and zeal. As one critic put it:

"The revolution ended with the unfortunate assassination of General Muhammed; from then on, it was like the tired anchor leg of a relay race, nevertheless, obviously determined to reach the finishing line."<sup>9</sup>

### 1.3 STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

Since Nigeria became independent some twenty nine years ago, its history has been that of political instability which has triggered a civil war, botched attempts at democracy, military interventions, distrust among the various ethnic groups, class discrimination and suppression of dissent. In this same period the military has ruled the country for about twenty years while the civilians have held the mantle of leadership for only nine years. The issue of political instability has been of great concern to the citizens of this

country. Frequent military intervention in Nigeria has tended to become an accepted norm so much so that the prospects of a civilian regime have become an illusion.

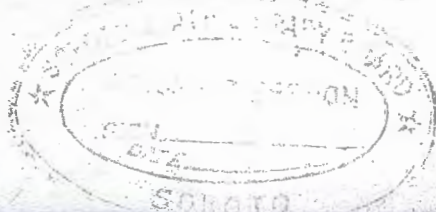
These and other related problems are what this research intends to address. The researcher hopes to find out the extent to which these factors have contributed to the political instability of Nigeria especially during the second Republic.

#### 1.4 SCOPE, OBJECTIVES AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY.

The scope of this study is limited to four years (1979-1983) during which the civilians were at the helm of the political affairs of Nigeria.

This study was largely inspired by the activities of politicians during the Second Republic which led to the end of another civilian era in Nigerian politics. It aims to highlight the issue of political instability in the country with special reference to the period between 1979-1983 which the citizens saw as a firm foundation laid for democracy after some thirteen years of military rule.

The significance of this study lies in the fact that after about twenty nine years of nationhood, Nigeria is yet to evolve a durable political system that would guide the conduct of not only the governors but the governed in an atmosphere devoid of blood spilling, distrust and treachery.



A stable political atmosphere promotes development while an unstable one does not.

This study could furthermore be seen as rather significant considering the fact that the country is in a transition period in readiness for the Third Republic. The politicians and the general public should learn a lesson from past mistakes since a viable political future is in the interest of the whole nation. Lastly, I expect that this study would in future stimulate related academic works, and additionally provide a ready source of relevant information.

#### 1.5 METHODOLOGY

The methodology of this research will be based on descriptive and historical analysis on the subject matter concerned. It would also be largely on content analysis of newspaper clippings, articles, news magazines and other books in the library or purchased from bookstores.

FOOTNOTES

1. Ojiogbo O., Nigeria Returns to Civilian Rule, (Belgrade, Mladiviska Knjiga, 1980)p.18.
2. Ibid. p.24
3. Ray Ekpu, "Riches to Rags", Newswatch, (Lagos, Newswatch Communications Limited, October 6,1988). p.43
4. Ojiogbo. O., Opcit p.30.
5. Barrett L. Agbada to Khaki - Reporting a change of Government in Nigeria, (Enugu, Fourth Dimension Publishers, 1985)p.64.
6. Ibid. p.64.
7. Dudley B., An Introduction to Nigerian Government and Politics (Lagos, The McMillan Press Limited, 1982) p.81.
8. Barrett L. Opcit. p.68
9. Ojiogbo O. Opcit. P.74.



CHAPTER TWO2.1 LITERATURE REVIEW

The issue of political instability in Nigeria has been of great concern to all Nigerians concerned with the country's political future. Of the country's nearly twenty-nine years of independence, the military has ruled for about twenty years while the civilians have only been at the helm of affairs for nine years confirming ex-President Shagari's view that there really are two political parties in Nigeria - the military and the civilians.

Two attempts at democracy - 1960-1966 and 1979-1983 - were shortlived when the soldiers toppled the civilian administrations. Five coups and numerous other botched attempts have been recorded in the history of the country; and this is lamentable considering the fact that Nigeria, since independence, ought to have developed a degree of political development which would allow for constitutional change of government without resort to violence and bloodletting.

As the country prepares to return to civil rule in 1992 we need to reflect on the issue of political instability which has plagued the country's political development process. Ladipo Adamolekun, in his book The fall of the Second Republic, sees the cause of political instability in the second civilian era as the deviant practises of the politicians

from the constitutionally laid down rules.

"What happened in practice between October, 1979 and December, 1983 did not faithfully reflect what the constitutional text prescribed. The preponderant majority of political actors were more in favour of the features of competitive politics in the constitution than the features of consensus politics."<sup>1</sup>

While the first Executive President called on the other political parties to form a national government, only the NPP agreed to enter into a fifteen-month accord; the PRP insisted it would only participate in the company of the other three parties. In the words of Ladipo Adamolekun, the UPN and GNPP "apparently opted out because they preferred competitive to consensus politics".<sup>2</sup> As regards the NPN-NPP Accord, James Ojiako sees the prime mistake as limiting it to the federal level only. "There was co-operation at the national level and conflict between the two parties in the states".<sup>3</sup> The accord was to launch the second Republic and as soon as that objective was achieved the parties reverted to safeguarding their interests.

The persistent politics of confrontation in the early stages of the Second Republic prompted Alhaji Adamu Ciroma, a leading Cabinet Minister to declare that:

"The 'opposition' state governments are doing their best to frustrate the implementation of Federal Government policies and programmes ... Moreover, the non-NPN Governors have been attempting to exert their influence on members

of the National Assembly. The 'opposition' Governments have constituted themselves into a baneful and stridently noisy menace to the political system".<sup>4</sup>

There was strong emphasis by all political parties on partisan competition during the first year of the civilian era. The overall climate in which the President has had to operate has been one characterised by "intense and sometimes bitter inter-party and inter-governmental rivalry".<sup>5</sup>

The actions of the members of the legislature portrayed them as being more interested in their personal welfare than the national duty for which they were elected. They decided to be the sole authorities in determining their own salaries and allowances and rejected the involvement of both the executive and national leadership of their different parties in the exercise. In pursuit of their objective for accumulation of personal wealth majority of the legislators were involved in receiving payments in cash and kind from the executive. Lindsay Barrett believes that the return of the soldiers to the helm of political leadership in 1984 was the result of an act of provocation.

"The crisis of economic viability and the breakdown of official responsibility and accountability which characterised the political attitude of the majority of civilian participants in the political culture of 1979-1983 in Nigeria were symptoms of this act".<sup>6</sup>

Rather than deliberate on the more pressing issues of stabilization of the economic productivity of the nation's industrial and agricultural sectors, the legislators had expended their energies on deliberating issues of personal remunerations and terms of service. Public trust had been abused to the point of total dissent in the Second Republic that the Military had to intervene.

In his review of Senator Mahamud Waziri's book Stewardship My vision for Nigeria, Dan Agbese of Newswatch believes that some principal actors of the Second Republic acknowledged that the country was heading for the woods. For instance, Senator Waziri in a speech to the Senate on October 15, 1983 told his colleagues; "Our public image for the last four years... has not been anything remarkable. We have done irreparable damage to our image as the country's lawmakers".<sup>7</sup> Also in 1983 Senator Waziri had cause to caution the Shagari administration:

"There are at present a conglomeration of bucaners, position seekers, flatterers and sycophants who have built a formidable wall.. and have isolated the President of this great Republic from the reality of the Nigerian situation.... This trend is dangerous for we are rich in oil but ragged in spirit".<sup>8</sup>

Writing in the preface to First Four Years of Nigeria Executive Presidency-Success or Failure, James Ojiako described the Second Republic as:

"Four years of wrangling among party leaders; four years of the constitutional and unconstitutional; four years of fragile economy and continuous war on inflation; four years when recklessness was seen to override genuine impeachment move. Yet they were four

crucial years of determined effort to lay the foundation of Nigeria Nation".<sup>9</sup>

Party squabbles reminiscent of the First Republic were witnessed in the Second civilian era and virtually all parties were involved. Even the NPN and UPN originally noted for their party discipline were also involved in the intra-party fighting. With this the stability of the Second Republic soon became in doubt.

Ladipo Adamolekun also cited the issue of the intense and unproductive inter-governmental conflicts in the fields of housing and agriculture. The Second Republic was characterised by the struggle over who takes the credit for specific development programmes and projects. Political instability in the Second Republic had its roots in the departure of practice from theory in the actual operation of the 1979 constitution. Worse still:

"the consequent pre-occupation of the politicians with the maintainance of inter-ethnic, communal and sectional equality has undermined the effective functioning of the key political institutions - the political parties, the executive and the legislatures".<sup>10</sup>

In trying to establish the factors that led to political instability in the Second Republic, James Ojiako traced events that occurred between 1979-1988. Notable among them were the chain of embarrassing lapses on the part of the legislators

which included the issue of the gun-totting legislator, the seat confrontation between the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives, the several walk-outs by the legislators and physical combats in the House. He also commented on the issue of impeachment which was used as a tool to victimise political opponents. The impeachment of Governor Balarabe Musa of Kaduna State following the crisis between the Executive and the legislature "put the constitution on trial".<sup>11</sup>

Dr. Kola Balogun, a minister in the First Republic attributed what went wrong to the ignorance of the leaders in political economy. He added that "if Shagari had had enough knowledge of the economy, the Second Republic would not have failed".<sup>12</sup> Apart from ignorance, the Second Republic was also bedevilled with corruption, insecurity, political intolerance and election rigging. "The Nigerian society of the Second half of 1983 was characterised by "moral decadence, economic paralysis and political decay".<sup>13</sup> These prompted the military to intervene in the political process.

However, when the issue of political instability in Nigeria is discussed the military should also share some of the blame. When the last of the military regimes handed over power in 1979 the economic issues which faced the country were basically rooted in:

"The projects carried out by the military which left Nigeria staggering under huge external debt commitments and a growing dependence on the importation of raw materials and essential goods to sustain high economic expectations".<sup>14</sup>

But the civilians, who in 1979, inherited an illusion from the military proceeded to act as if the legacy was real.

"President Shehu Shagari's economic advisers were misleading in their vocal proposal for the accelerated development of a free - enterprise based development economy in which their major industrial and agricultural programmes were also dependent upon unlimited international credit and at least a decade of rising revenue".<sup>15</sup>

The 1983 General elections seriously put to test the credibility of the civilian administration. The landslide victory of the NPN in the elections, conducted under a tense atmosphere, generated alot of controversy, The total breakdown of law and order in some states and heightened tension among political actors following the elections, among other factors, led to the fourth putsch in Nigeria. Commenting on the issue of democracy in Nigeria after Major General Buhari took over, in a radio interview, Lt. General T.Y. Danjuma (rtd) said:

"I observed in the Western Press that they are mourning the death of democracy: actually democracy died with the 1983 elections. Democracy had been in jeopardy for the past four years of civilian rule. The politicians killed democracy and the army just buried it".<sup>16</sup>

In conclusion, Ladipo Adamolekun said:

"The decadence of the political elite was confirmed by their inability to effect a smooth transition from the first to the second presidency between August and October, 1983. This spectacular failure together with their other acts of omission and commission, notably economic mismanagement and pervasive corruption, brought the experiment with the executive presidential system to an abrupt end just after fifty-one months".<sup>17</sup>



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FOOTNOTES

1. Adamolekun L., The Fall of the Second Republic (Ibadan, Spectrum Books Limited, 1985) p.11.
2. Ibid. p.37
3. Ojiako J.O., First Four Years of Nigeria Executive Presidency-Success or Failure, (Lagos, Daily Times of Nigeria Ltd., 1983) p.47.
4. Soneye M.A and Balogun M.J. (eds), A Report on the Relationship between Policy Makers and the Higher Civil Service, (Topo-Badagry, Ascon Press, (1980) p.104.
5. Adamolekun L., Opcit p.39
6. Barrett L., Agbada to Khaki, Reporting a change of Government in Nigeria, (Enugu, Fourth Dimension Publishers, 1985) p.55
7. Dan Agbese, "Rich in oil, Poor in Spirit", Newswatch, (Lagos, Newswatch Communications Ltd, March 6, 1989) p.44.
8. Ibid. p.45.
9. Ojiako J.O. Opcit piii
10. Adamolekun L. Opcit p.45.
11. Ojiako J.O. Opcit p.176.
12. Abdul Oro, "Democracy: The ultimate Gold" African Guardian, (Lagos, Guardian Magazines Ltd, October 3, 1988) p.28.
13. Adamolekun L. Opcit p.75.
14. Barrett L. Opcit p.58.
15. Ibid. p.59
16. Nzeribe F.A., Nigeria, Another Hope Betrayed, (London, Killimanjaro, 1985) p. 151.
17. Adamolekun L. Opcit p.75.

## CHAPTER THREE

### 3.1 PRELUDE TO THE SECOND REPUBLIC

The journey to the Second Republic started when General Murtala Mohammed, in a bid to provide the bases for political stability, set up a fifty-member constitution Drafting Committee (C.D.C.) in October, 1975 under the Chairmanship of Chief F.R.A. Williams to draw up a new constitution for the country. General Mohammed told members at their inaugural meeting that their:

"Deliberations during the forthcoming months will be crucial as to whether or not we can create a political arrangement which will be viable and which will sustain us for many years to come. Nigerians everywhere will be looking up to you for a sound and enduring constitution".<sup>1</sup>

Almost a year later Chief Williams submitted the two volume report to Lt. General Olusegun Obasanjo. The Draft Constitution was then thrown open to public debate for a year before it was submitted to the Constituent Assembly.

Mr. Justice Udo Udoma, a judge of the Supreme Court of Nigeria was appointed chairman of the Constituent Assembly by the Supreme Military Council. The Assembly which was charged among other things, with receiving and collating comments from the public on the draft constitution consisted of two hundred and three elected members. The members were elected from the various local government councils and some of the members of the assembly were

appointed to represent some interests. General Obasanjo reminded members of the constituent Assembly that they had "a unique and golden opportunity to lay the foundations for the nation's future".<sup>2</sup>

The assembly began deliberations in December, 1976 and wound up its debates in June, 1978. The revised constitution was submitted to the Federal Military Government on August 29, 1978 and the assembly was dissolved formally in September, 1978. State governors were also replaced by Military administrators to oversee the transition to civilian rule.

Meanwhile General Obasanjo continued to address different groups and bodies in the country in an attempt to prepare the nation for the return to civilian rule. To the traditional rulers he said they:

"Are expected to play a crucial role, especially during this delicate period of transition from military to civil rule, not only to ensure a smooth transition of power ... but also to ensure moral regeneration, peace and stability thereafter".<sup>3</sup>

General Obasanjo also told public servants of their responsibilities in the transition period and in the Second Republic. He appealed to them to appreciate their responsibility particularly in the new political system that Nigeria was going to adopt. As regards the mass media, General Obasanjo stressed the role of a responsible press which acts as part

of the conscience of the nation. He enumerated that the respect which the journalism profession would enjoy depended, to a large extent, on the quality of, journalists and practitioners of the mass media.

On September 21, 1978 the Head of State signed Decree 25 which promulgated the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria into law. The same day the ban on politics was lifted and three months later, no less than fifty-three parties were vying for support. The Federal Electoral Commission (FEDECO) had earlier been constituted in November 1976 and charged with the responsibility of conducting and supervising elections as a prelude to the return to civil rule on or before October, 1, 1979. It had Chief Michael Ani as Chairman and Alhaji Ahmadu Kurfi as Secretary.

FEDECO on December 23, 1978 announced that five political had satisfied the electoral requirements. These were the Unity Party of Nigeria (UPN) led by Chief Obafemi Awolowo as its presidential candidate and Phillip Umeadi as his running mate; the People's Redemption Party (PRP) which fielded Mallam Aminu Kano and Samuel G. Ikoku as its presidential and vice-presidential candidates respectively; the Great Nigeria People's Party (GNPP) which was led by Alhaji Ibrahim Waziri as its presidential candidate and Dr. Ben Nzeribe as his running mate; the Nigeria People's Party (NPP) which had Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe as the presidential candidate and Prof.

Ishaya Audu as his running mate; the National Party of Nigeria (NPN) which fielded Alhaji Shehu Shagari as its presidential candidate and Dr. Alex Ekwueme as his vice-presidential running mate.

### 3.2 THE 1979 GENERAL ELECTIONS AND SUBSEQUENT MILITARY HANDOVER

The process of the formation of the five political parties that eventually succeeded in securing FEDECO's registration began well before the ban on politics was lifted. It is believed that some of them began organizing in 1970 or earlier when the Gowon Administration promised to hand political power to the civilians in 1976, a promise Gowon later considered to be 'unrealistic'. Nonetheless, political groupings continued to organize clandestinely under various guises such as "leaders of thought conferences", religious charity meetings, development association etc. According to Oyedele Oyediran in his book The Nigerian 1979 Elections:

"Various factors affected the emergence, development and nature of these (political) associations during the twelve-year ban on political activities. These included the creation of states in 1967 and 1976, the civil war, the promise made in 1975 to return the country to civil rule in 1979, the meetings of the CDC, the re-organization of local governments and election to local government councils in 1976, the election to the Constituent Assembly in 1977, the opportunity which the Constituent Assembly provided for politicians - old and new - to meet and discuss the issues at stake at these meetings"<sup>4</sup>

The UPN was more or less a reincarnation of the Action Group while the NPN could be described as the "lineal successor of the NPC".<sup>5</sup> The NPP was split along the line which resulted in the emergence of a faction under Waziri Ibrahim called the GNPP. The NPP under Zik bore a resemblance of the defunct NCNC while the PRP could be likened to NEPU. One could, as such, see that the Second Republic parties were reminiscent of the First Republic political parties.

The campaign was not fought on ideological differences among the political parties and indeed there was not much difference among the programmes and promises of the five political parties. For instance, they all believed in education as a social priority for the development and economic transformation of the nation. They also talked of a viable economic future and welcomed foreign investment but it was the NPN which was most lucid in its stress on foreign investment on a partnership basis in the national economy. The PRP was perhaps the only political party which emphasised greater involvement of the state in the economic development and industrial projects of the national economy.

The arrangements for the elections were handled by FEDECO. Essentially, the arrangements involved the preparation of a voters' list of all those registered to vote; the division of the federation into single member

constituencies of which there were four hundred and forty nine and the further division of each constituency into a number of polling stations. There were polling clerks to supervise the voting procedure and a Returning Officer to supervise the activities of all polling clerks in the constituency. Each state had to have at least one Electoral Officer. There were separate ballot papers for each of the elections and a ballot paper showed not only the name of the candidate contesting a particular constituency but also the symbol of the party sponsoring the candidate.<sup>6</sup>

There were five elections on the whole, spread out in weekly intervals. The first which was held on July 7, 1979 elected members of the Senate and was followed a week later by another election of candidates into the House of Representatives. Two more elections for the State Houses of Assembly and State Governors followed and finally, the fifth for the election of the first Executive President of the country, held after a two-week interval on August 11, 1979. The preparations for the elections made Okion Ojigbo to commend the federal Military Government for providing "solid bases for political stability".<sup>7</sup>

Nigerians went to the polls with hope and enthusiasm to exercise their civic responsibility they had been

denied for almost a decade and a half. The elections took place peacefully as optimists had expected and voters turned out in their millions to exercise their civic right. However, that is not to say that the elections were without any problems. There were complaints of late arrival of ballot boxes, incomplete and wrong voters' list to wrong polling stations, lack of transport to take ballot materials from area offices to polling stations and the absence, late arrival and disappearance of electoral officers,

The elections showed that Nigerians as a nation may have successfully created some elaborate institutions of government and nationhood such as the constitution, but they as a people had not shed their old attitudes especially as regards politics of tribal allegiance and ethnic loyalties. The UPN like the old and banned AG won in only six states - the four solidly Yoruba states of Oyo, Ogun, Ondo and Lagos, Bendel state of the old Western region and Kwara State which also has a large chunk of Yoruba population. The NPP like the proscribed NCNC won in the Ibo states of Imo and Anambra, the hard-core Ibo areas of the old Eastern region which was the stronghold of the banned NCNC. Political realities were different to some extent in the old Northern region where the defunct NPC held sway in the First Republic. The NPN lost the gubernatorial seats in Kaduna, Kano and Plateau States



to the PRP and NPP respectively. The GNPP won the gubernatorial seats in Borno and Gongola States; areas where the NPC had also been strong. "The leader of the GNPP is a Kanuri from Borno State, thus, again showing the phenomenon of bloc-voting and tribal loyalties".<sup>8</sup>

Nationwide, the results showed that it was only the NPN which emerged as a genuine National Party, winning support from most part of the country across tribal frontiers and regional loyalties.

TABLE 1 STATE HOUSES OF ASSEMBLY RESULTS

STATES	GNPP	NPN	NPP	PRP	UPN	TOTAL NUMBER OF SEATS	PARTY IN. MAJORI- TY
Anambra	1	10	75	-	-	86	NPP
Bauchi	9	45	4	2	-	60	NPN
Bendel	-	22	3	-	35	60	UPN
Benue	4	44	3	-	-	51	NPN
Borno	60	11	-	1	-	72	GNPP
Cross River	16	57	3	-	8	84	NPN
Gongola	26	17	1	1	18	63	GNPP
Imo	2	8	80	-	-	90	NPP
Kaduna	11	68	4	11	5	99	NPN
Kano	2	13	-	123	-	138	PRP
Kwara	2	25	-	-	15	42	NPN
Lagos	-	-	-	-	36	36	UPN
Niger	2	28	-	-	-	30	NPN
Ogun	-	-	-	-	36	36	UPN
Ondo	-	1	-	-	65	66	UPN
Oyo	-	9	-	-	117	126	UPN
Plateau	3	11	34	-	-	48	NPP
Rivers	-	29	13	-	-	42	NPN
Sokoto	26	85	-	-	-	111	NPN

\* One seat, Awa Constituency, did not seem to have been contested for.

Source: Nigeria Returns to Civilian Rule

Ojiogbo O. (Belgrade, Mladiriska Kijiga, 1980)

TABLE II. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES RESULTS

STATES	GNPP	NPN	NPP	PRP	UPN	NUMBER OF SEATS
Anambra	-	3	26	-	-	29
Bauchi	1	18	1	-	-	20
Bendel	-	6	2	-	12	20
Benue	-	18	1	-	-	19
Borno	22	2	-	-	-	24
Cross River	4	22	-	-	2	28
Gongola	8	5	1	-	7	21
Imo	-	2	28	-	-	30
Kaduna	1	19	2	10	1	33
Kano	-	7	-	39	-	46
Kwara	1	8	-	-	5	14
Lagos	-	-	-	-	12	12
Niger	-	10	-	-	-	10
Ogun	-	-	-	-	12	12
Ondo	-	-	-	-	22	22
Oyo	-	4	-	-	38	42
Plateau	-	3	13	-	-	16
Rivers	-	10	4	-	-	14
Sokoto	6	31	-	-	-	37
Total	48	168	79	49	111	449
%	9.6	37.4	17.4	20.9	24.7	100

Source:-- NIGERIA RETURNS TO CIVILIAN RULE

Ojiogbo O. (Belgrade, Mladiriska, Krjiza, 1980 )

TABLE 111 HOUSE OF SENATE RESULTS

STATES	GNP	NPN	NPP	PRP	UPN	NUMBER OF SENATE SEATS
Anambra	-	-	5	-	-	5
Bauchi	-	5	-	-	-	5
Bendel	-	1	-	-	4	5
Benue	-	5	-	-	-	5
Borno	4	1	-	-	-	5
Cross River	2	3	-	-	-	5
Gongola	2	1	-	-	2	5
Imo	-	-	5	-	-	5
Kaduna	-	3	-	2	-	5
Kano	-	-	-	5	-	5
Kwara	-	3	-	-	2	5
Lagos	-	-	-	-	5	5
Niger	-	5	-	-	-	5
Ogun	-	-	-	-	5	5
Ondo	-	-	-	-	5	5
Oyo	-	-	-	-	5	5
Plateau	-	1	4	-	-	5
Rivers	-	3	2	-	-	5
Sokoto	-	6	-	-	-	5
Total	8	36	16	7	25	95
%	8.42	37.89	26.84	7.37	29.47	100

Source:- NIGERIA RETURNS TO CIVILIAN RULE

Ojigbo O. (Belgrade, Mladiriska Krjiga, 1980)

TABLE IV GUBERNATORIAL RESULTS BY STATE AND PARTY

STATES	GNPP	NPN	NPP	PRP	UPN	TOTAL
Anambra	-	-	1	-	-	1
Bauchi	-	1	-	-	-	1
Bendel	-	-	-	-	1	1
Benue	-	1	-	-	-	1
Borno	1	-	-	-	-	1
Cross River	-	1	-	-	-	1
Gongola	1	-	-	-	-	1
Imo	-	-	1	-	-	1
Kaduna	-	-	-	1	-	1
Kano	-	-	-	1	-	1
Kwara	-	1	-	-	-	1
Lagos	-	-	-	-	1	1
Niger	-	1	-	-	-	1
Ogun	-	-	-	-	1	1
Ondo	-	-	-	-	1	1
Oyo	-	-	-	-	1	1
Plateau	-	-	1	-	-	1
Rivers	-	1	-	-	-	1
Sokoto	-	1	-	-	-	1
Total	2	7	3	2	5	19
%	10.53	36.84	15.79	10.53	26.32	100

Source: NIGERIA RETURNS TO CIVILIAN RULE

Ojiogbo O. (Belgrade, Mladiriska Krjiga, 1980)

TABLE V. PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION RESULTS (PERCENTAGE)

STATES	SHAGARI	AWOLOWO	AZIKIWE	AMINU	WAZIRI
Anambra	13.5	0.75	82.88	1.2	1.67
Bauchi	62.48	3.0	4.74	14.34	16.44
Bendel	36.2	53.2	8.6	0.7	1.2
Benue	76.38	2.57	11.77	1.35	7.97
Borno	34.71	3.35	1.35	6.52	54.04
Cross River	64.40	11.76	7.66	1.01	15.14
Gongola	35.52	21.67	4.35	4.34	34.09
Imo	8.80	0.64	84.69	0.89	3.0
Kaduna	43.05	7.0	5.0	31.0	14.0
Kano	19.94	1.23	0.91	76.41	1.54
Kwara	53.62	37.48	0.52	6.67	5.71
Lagos	7.18	82.30	9.57	0.47	0.48
Niger	74.88	3.67	1.11	3.77	16.6
Ogun	6.23	92.61	0.32	0.31	0.53
Ondo	4.19	94.50	0.86	0.18	0.26
Oyo	12.75	85.78	0.55	0.32	0.57
Plateau	34.73	5.29	49.7	3.98	6.82
Rivers	72.65	10.33	14.35	0.46	2.18
Sokoto	66.58	2.52	0.92	3.33	26.61
%	33.77	29.18	16.75	10.18	10.01
NUMBER OF STATES WON	13	6	3	2	3

Source- NIGERIA RETURNS TO CIVILIAN RULE:

Ojiogbo O. (Belgrade, Mladiriska Krjiga, 1980)

Alhaji Shehu Shagari was on August 17, 1979 declared winner of the Presidential election. In a two-page prepared statement read at a Press Conference in Lagos by Returning Officer, Mr. Frederick Menkiti, the FEDECO said that Alhaji Shehu Shagari:

"satisfied the provision of Section 34A sub-section 1 (c) (i) of the Electoral Decree No. 73 of 1979 by scoring the highest number of votes cast at the election. He has also satisfied the provision of sub-section 1 (c) (ii) of the same section. He has not less than one-quarter of the votes cast at the election in each of at least two-thirds of all the states in the federation".

The rationale behind the electoral provision for a President to win at least one-quarter of the votes in at least two ... thirds of the states is that the person who emerges as the President should have not only the greatest popular support but also the widest spread of popular support, hence a reflection of his nation-wide acceptability.

Chief Awolowo petitioned to the Presidential Electoral Tribunal against Alhaji Shagari's declared victory. He argued that the electoral provision that a candidate must win at least a quarter of the votes in each of two-thirds of the states in the Federation had not been fulfilled. The tribunal on September 10, 1979 ruled unanimously that the interpretation of the phrase 'two-thirds of all the states in the Federation' is twelve two-third states.

The case was taken to the Supreme Court by Chief Awolowo where on September 27, 1979 six of the seven judges dismissed the appeal and upheld the decision that the election of Alhaji Shehu Shagari as the Executive President was legal and constitutional. On October 1, 1979 Alhaji Shehu Shagari was sworn in as the First Executive President of Nigeria during which the out-going military leader declared, "I am handing over Nigeria in its totality - its past, present and future".<sup>10</sup> The ceremony at which Alhaji Shagari received the constitution from his predecessor Head of State marked the end of Nigeria's thirteen years of military rule and the beginning of the nation's Second Republic.

### 3.3 TREND OF POLITICS IN THE SECOND REPUBLIC.

Immediately, Alhaji Shehu Shagari was sworn in as President he invited the other political parties to form a national government. The NPP agreed to enter into a cooperation pact with the ruling NPN whereby each party was to retain its identity and no one was deemed junior or senior partner. However, wranglings in November 1979 over the President's ministerial nominees sowed some seeds of discord into the coalition. The appointment of Presidential Liason Officers was also strongly opposed by NPP governors



who described it as unconstitutional. However, the impeachment of Alhaji Balarabe Musa, governor of Kaduna State was the last straw that broke the backbone of the NPN-NPP accord. The NPP saw the impeachment as an act capable of destroying the Second Republic and said it no longer wished to associate itself with NPN's attempt to plunge the country into confusion. On July 6, 1981 the NPP Chairman announced a six-month notice within which his party would dissolve the accord.

The prime mistake of the accord was to limit it to the Federal level. "There was cooperation at the national level and conflict between the two parties in the states".<sup>11</sup> As such the arrangement was not conducive to total peace between the two parties to the accord.

The second Republic also witnessed intra-party squabbles and virtually all the parties were involved. Trouble started with the PRP when its two governors refused to abide by party directives to refrain from further attending the meeting of the nine Progressive Governors. Subsequently the two governors were suspended and later expelled from the party. The party later split into two with Chief Michael Imoudu, a veteran labour leader, heading a faction.

Friction erupted within the GNPP when party members accused the Chairman of failure to carry out party decisions. It was stated that he was mandated to explore areas of cooperation with the NPP, PRP and UPN but instead he signed a secret accord with the UPN without consultation with party executives. He was also accused of handling the party like a one-man show, thus it was not surprising when the party broke into two factions.

The NPP was also not spared in the spate of intra-party crisis that afflicted the second Republic political parties. There was much division within the party when plans for the NPN-NPP accord were unfolded. While a section of the party was finalising arrangements for the accord, another section was preparing for possible co-operation with other parties. A group which called itself the Middle Belt NPP Parliamentary group of the National assembly kicked vehemently against the party's agreement to join President Shagari's government. There were also crisis in Bauchi, Lagos and Bendel States where a number of party members were either suspended or expelled.

The UPN which party leaders had emphasised the issue of party discipline and loyalty also found itself engulfed in party squabbles. This was because some legislators were determined to act according to their own will and

convictions. During the election of the Senate President a UPN senator voted for the NPN candidate while another voted in favour of the appointment of Chief Richard Akinjide as a cabinet minister against party directive. Party members in Kano State were dismissed for alleged anti-party activities while other members in Kwara State decamped to the NPN. In Bendel State a crisis of confidence rose in the hierarchy of the party when the women's wing of the party passed a vote of no confidence in Governor Ambrose Alli.

The struggle for party offices made its own mark on the NPN. Prior to the 1980 Kano convention of the party when it was expected that the post of Party-Chairman would be contested, the party split into two camps - some members backed Chief MKO Abiola while others stood solidly behind Chief Adisa Akinloye. The eve of the Kano Convention saw a protracted in-fighting in the Ogun and Oyo State branches of the party. More trouble lay ahead in the NPN camp when President Shagari was renominated as its Presidential candidate for the 1983 elections. Chief Abiola had indicated his desire to contest the nominations and the struggle to seek the party's nomination led to rancour within the party. Chief Abiola, a strong financier of the NPN, eventually pulled out from the party and his newspaper,

the Concord, began a series of attacks on Shagari's government.

The National assembly started with a number of complaints. Instead of tackling matters of national interest the National Assembly was rocked with scandals and embarrassing lapses on the part of the lawmakers—members protested against their accommodation and unanimously voted for the Federal Government flats on Victoria Island built for civil servants. The members also demanded exorbitant salaries which became a matter of serious disagreement at the National Assembly. Two well known Lagos lawyers - Chief Gani Fawehinmi and Mr. Tunji Braithwaite - described the salaries as unpatriotic and selfish, unrealistic and too high respectively. Members of the public also kicked against the salaries demanded by the politicians and it took the intervention of the President before the matter was laid to rest.

Some members of the National assembly also displayed behaviour not worthy of elected representatives of the people. Many a time decency was thrown to the winds as members engaged in verbal attacks and in some cases even a brawl. On November 19, 1989 a PRP member of the House, Malam Sidi Ali brandished a gun and dagger during a parliamentary session over a change in PRP leadership in

the House. A motion was later adopted suspending the legislator for six months and security beefed up at the premises of the assembly. The President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives were engaged in a seat confrontation at the occasion of the joint sitting of the assembly on the Fifth National Development Plan which was to be addressed by the President.

On March 30, 1981 the Speaker of the House walked out on the legislators leaving behind the mace after a major disagreement on methods of conducting House business. The legislators of the Second Republic also embarked on numerous trips abroad carrying with them large sums of money as estacode. Each committee found one excuse or the other to make an oversea trip with the resultant drain on the country's foreign exchange reserve.

Impeachment, a process for the removal of Chief Executives and legislative functionaries found guilty of gross misconduct in the performance of the functions of their offices, became a rampant phenomenon in the Second Republic. It all started in Ondo State where a vote of no confidence was passed on the Speaker and his deputy following the report of a five-man panel set up to investigate allegations of maladministration and inefficiency levelled against them. The removal of the Sokoto State House of Assembly Speaker by a two-third

majority followed some three months later. He had earlier on been suspended for anti-party activities.

However, Governor Melford Okilo of Rivers State survived an impeachment attempt when members of the State House Assembly signed a notice of allegation of gross misconduct. An interest group despatched from Lagos coupled with executive underground handwork aborted the impeachment plan. Governor Abubakar Barde of Gongola State wielded his executive powers to persuade his commissioners to lobby the legislators in an effort to ward off an impeachment motion. The legislators could not muster the required two-third majority to oust the Chief Executive.

One of the events that generated so much controversy during the Second Republic was the deportation of Alhaji Shugaba Darman, the Majority leader of the Borno State House of Assembly which Governor Mohammed Goni said was aimed at scoring a political point against the GNPP. Reacting to the deportation, the Nigerian Bar Association described the action as unconstitutional and against the rule of law. Nine Governors from Bendel, Borno, Gongola, Kaduna, Kano, Lagos, Ogun, Ondo and Oyo States said it was "the most outrageous and provocative action taken by any Head of Government since independence".<sup>12</sup>

The deportation order was suspended by a Maiduguri High Court judge pending the time Shugaba's nationality was determined. The matter, after months of judicial tussle, was laid to rest on July 25, 1980 when Shugaba was declared a Nigerian citizen and the court awarded ₦350,000 and ₦10,000 as damages and costs respectively to the deportee. The illegal deportation of Alhaji Shugaba Datman clearly brought to limelight the uneasy trend of Nigerian politics.

The stormy relationship between the executive and legislature in Kaduna state culminated in the impeachment of Governor Balarabe Musa. The NPN controlled sixty-eight out of the ninety-nine seats in the House of Assembly and Balarabe Musa had embarked on a number of changes that did not go down well with the NPN legislators. The House also had on four occasions turned down the governor's nominees for commissionership. Several unsuccessful attempts were made to resolve the differences between the Chief Executive and the Assembly but proved to no avail.

The process of impeachment began on May 7, 1981 when sixty-nine legislators laid a number of charges against Governor Balarabe Musa. Three weeks later an impeachment panel headed by Canon H.O. Mohammed was set up to investigate the charges. The Chairman of the panel had at

the oath taking ceremony declared that "the occasion was a sad one in the country's history".<sup>13</sup> After a series of court suits in which the governor tried to fight the impeachment motion the panel submitted its report on June 23, 1981 and three hours later the governor was ousted by the House of Assembly voting by a two-third majority.

Alhaji Balarabe Musa lost the impeachment suit when the Kaduna High Court ruled that it had no jurisdiction to prohibit the House of Assembly and its Speaker from performing their legislative duties. Reacting to Balarabe Musa's removal, the GNPP leader said "this unfortunate situation can cause a major political earthquake in Kaduna State in particular and Nigeria in general".<sup>14</sup>

Political analysts believe that the impeachment of Balarabe Musa was the greatest trial the constitution had undergone in the course of the Second Republic. The general trend of politics in the Second Republic was alarming and it pointed to the fact that the politicians had not learnt from the blunder of the First Republic politicians.



FOOTNOTES

1. Ojiogbo O. Nigeria Returns to Civilian Rule (Belgrade, Mladiriska Krjiga, 1980)p.59.
2. Ibid. p.76.
3. Ibid. p.80.
4. Oyediran O. The Nigerian 1979 Elections (Lagos,McMillan Nig. Ltd., 1980) p.92
5. Dudley B. An Introduction to Nigerian Government and Politics, (Lagos, The McMillan Ptoess Ltd,1982)p.190
6. Ibid. p.198
7. Ojiogbo. O. Opcit. p.194
8. Ibid. p.211
9. Ibid. p.229
10. Omotosho K. Just Before Dawn (Ibadan, Spectrum Books Ltd. 1988) p.49.
11. Ojiako J.O. First Four Years of Nigerian Presidency-Success or Failure, (Lagos,Daily Times of Nig. Ltd., 1983) p.47.
12. Ibid. p.129
13. Ibid. p.202
14. Ibid p.117

CHAPTER FOUR4.1 LEADERSHIP FACTOR AND POLITICAL TOLERANCE

Leadership is seen as the ability to guide a group in a desired direction, so that the decisions of the leader are implemented by group action. The leader is followed because he is loved, admired, respected or feared.<sup>1</sup> What happens in any society is largely a reflection of the leadership of that society.

The second Republic leadership was described as inept, insensitive and corrupt by the soldiers that overthrew that regime. A strong leadership was needed to steer the country through the turbulent political waves of that period. A strong leadership was also needed to have directed the nation's democratic process without giving the military a cause to intervene.

Shagari had spent almost three decades in the penumbra of power before he got to the helm of Nigerian affairs. Critics tend to portray the ex-President as a weak and lazy leader but the reality was that whatever good intentions he had, he was unfortunate to have found himself in the "midst of sycophants, position-seekers and flatterers who isolated him from the reality of the Nigerian situation".<sup>2</sup>

The Second Republic leadership was to a great extent weak. The excesses of the political actors went unchecked

and the President found it difficult to call erring politicians to order. The party had so much influence on the leadership and the caucus of the ruling party was more or less preoccupied with the task of amassing wealth. Thus the President whose stint in both the political sphere and the civil service was quite impressive had his reputation soiled by the acts of political actors in the civilian era between 1979-1983.

On the aspect of political tolerance, the idea of a government and an opposition re-emerged with the same problems of intense partisanship and intolerance that dominated political life under the First Republic. At the level of Federal and state governments there appeared to be a struggle over who takes the credit for specific development programmes and projects. There was a strong opposition to the Federal housing programme and even destruction of houses in Ibadan by the Oyo State Government. Some states refused to allocate land for federal government projects especially in the agricultural and housing sectors due to party differences.

The civilian era also witnessed a lot of confrontational politics. There was antagonism and resentment arising from ethnic support bases of the President's opponents. The Bendel State Government banned political gatherings and processions in the wake of the President's visit to the state. Some state governments also refused to display the

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sident's portraits in their offices while others went to  
extent of banning the wearing of "Shagari cap". There  
also stiff opposition to the appointment and posting of  
sident Liason Officers to oversee federal government  
jects. Political and legal tussles reared their head  
o the revenue allocation system at the National Assembly  
the courts while the federal character concept which was  
ected to help ensure unity and stability became a critical  
tor in the intense partisan competition among the political  
ors. The Governors of the other four political parties  
ganged up under the "Progressive" banner and held meetings  
ch showed open hostility to the NPN government. The  
osphere under which the Second Republic operated was not  
ducive for any meaningful political development.

#### THE ECONOMIC CRISIS AND NIGERIAN POLITICS

The Obasanjo administration left about #2.6b in the foreign  
erve when it handed over to the Shagari civilian regime.  
countries hiked oil prices soon after Shagari came to  
r following the Iranian crisis of 1979 which reduced world  
supplies. The country became the world's ninth largest  
producer but by 1981 oil earnings had slumped from \$22.4b  
9.6b.

Meanwhile the industrial countries of the west and Japan  
igned to their best brains the task of reversing the winning  
ak of OPEC. In no time, "with a curious mix of fiscal and

monetary policies in Washington"<sup>3</sup> a global recession was set in motion in 1981 and with floating interest rates rising fast the whole of the Third World was plunged into a debt crisis. The oil glut had a devastating effect on the Nigerian economy. According to the Central Bank of Nigeria Governor, "Nigeria's export earnings fell from ₦14.1b to ₦10b in 1983 while revenue from oil fell from ₦12.4b in 1980 to ₦6.7b in 1982. The country's external debt rose from ₦1.1b in 1977 to ₦7.7b in 1983".<sup>4</sup>

The Shagari government could not apply the necessary tight rein on the spending spree started in the 1970s. When the recession struck in 1981 the country's import bill skyrocketed to an unprecedented ₦1.2b a month. Edwin Madunagu referred to the situation as "the political economy of state robbery".<sup>5</sup> This simply entailed looting, fat estacode for globe trotting public officers, repatriation of huge profits by imperialists and their agents, inflation of contract cost both foreign and local, transfer of non-existent importation. All these went to empty the treasury of the country's foreign exchange earnings. Besides, arsonists had a field day - many public buildings like NET and Ministry of External Affairs went up in flames in order to cover frauds.

The otherwise buoyant economy of the first two fiscal

years 1979 and 1980 was allowed to run down through mismanagement. Also there was no adequate response to the global recession caused by the world wide oil, glut. The monetary and fiscal measures introduced under the Economic Stabilisation Act 1982 to boost local production of goods, improve foreign exchange reserves and make the economy more self-sufficient and self-reliant were not implemented in a manner as to produce the desired effect. Food imports did not benefit the populace but only enriched a few party stalwarts or those who had powerful connections. Such imports were either diverted, hoarded or sold at skyrocket prices beyond the reach of the average Nigerian. The administration of the import licensing system was so corrupt that genuine importers and manufacturers were denied licences. The Shagari government watched pathetically as Nigerians almost consumed themselves out of existence.

#### 4.3 PATTERN OF POLITICAL ALLIANCES AND 1983 ELECTIONS

The history of political alliances is as old as the Nigerian nation. During the 1959 pre-independence elections the NCNC teamed up with the NPC to form the first federal government while during the 1964 elections the NCNC teamed up with the Action Group to form the UPGA and the NPC joined ranks with NNDP to form NNA. The NPN-NPP accord had drawn together the remaining three parties, so when the accord was

terminated the NPP joined them.

The Governors of the four political parties started to hold monthly meetings and called themselves the "Progressives". The alliance of the four political parties was christened Progressive People's Alliance (PPA) but it also encountered some problems. Some of the prime movers of the alliance consistently stayed away from the meetings. Chief Awolowo's attempt to get a Progressive alliance to beat the NPN "floundered on the rocks of mutual recriminations and personal ambitions".<sup>6</sup> The main aim of the alliance was to wrest power from the ruling NPN and this the party viewed with serious concern. The NPN mobilised all the necessary machinery to counteract the threat posed by the alliance of the four parties in the forthcoming elections.

An additional party, Nigerian Advance Party (NAP) led by Dr. Tunji Braithwaite joined the bandwagon of political parties to contest the 1983 elections. The parties all concerned themselves with proposing remedies to the economic problems caused by the shortfall in foreign exchange, and the rise in commodity prices. All parties promised to pursue the possibility of provision of full employment opportunities for the educated classes. They also promised to develop the national industrial infrastructure and to integrate it with a dynamic agricultural policy.

By July 1983, the nation's attention was focussed on the series of executive and legislative elections scheduled for August and September. Judging by the violence and alleged electoral malpractices that had characterised the primary elections there was widespread fear that the August/September elections could be marred by serious violence and extensive rigging.

The outcome of the elections cannot be interpreted as an unchallenged victory for the ruling NPN even though "the party achieved a mighty mandate in both Federal Houses and a majority of the states".<sup>7</sup> The presidential elections which was held on August 6, 1983 indicated that President Shagari had won a landslide victory for another four-year term. The NPN leader, Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe, smarting from the humiliation of the brazen electoral fraud declared he was "supremely confident that God will frustrate their knavery... and consign them to the scrap-heap of forgotten tyrants".<sup>8</sup> Chief Awolowo did not find it necessary to go to court. He simply told his party congress that he would never seek an elected office in Nigeria again and that democracy was dead.

The major power transfers which took place at state level generated a lot of disbelief among political observers. The change in central and northern states was totally predictable - the HNN takeover of Kwara State and the NPN takeover of Gongola State both resulted from public disillusion



with the incumbent regimes. The changeovers in the southern states that drew most expressions of surprise were those from the UPN to the NPN in Oyo state and from the NPP to the NPN in Anambra state. The Akintola/Adelabu factor and the Ikemba factor contributed alot to the NPN victory in Oyo and Anambra states respectively.

The 1983 elections also "brought to the forefront of Nigerian political thought the issue of the growing influence and unity of the so-called power-bloc in the national political equation".<sup>9</sup> This can be viewed in light of the determined effort put by the NPN heirachy in both Cross River and Rivers States to retain the party's supremacy against a strong challenge from the UPN which paid of because pre-election organization was supported by incumbent and wealthy power-brokers.

The 1983 elections was reminiscent of the 1964 general elections. Law and order broke down completely in several states especially Ondo and Oyo States where the official figure of one hundred persons killed is widely believed to be less than a quarter of those who actually died. In Niger State some FEDECO officials were burnt alive. Coupled with the wanton destruction of human lives was the extensive destruction of property in several states of the federation. The civil society it seemed was on the verge of collapse.

#### 4.4 COLLAPSE OF THE SECOND REPUBLIC.

The pre-occupation of the politicians with the electoral battles resulted in a serious deterioration in the economic paralysis that had gripped the nation as early as April, 1982. With significant proportions of available funds at all levels of government devoted to election campaigns, several state government were unable to pay salaries of their employees. In a few states schools were closed for several months. There was virtually no educational or health institution that received adequate funding between 1982 and 1983. In several states these critically important social services were on the verge of collapse.

The problem of moral decadence which President Shagari had openly acknowledged by late 1982 was worsened by the political and economic problems. Corruption was undoubtedly the most visible sign of the moral decadence of the society. The Nigerian society of the second half of 1983 was characterised by "moral decadence, economic paralysis and political decay".<sup>10</sup>

On December 31, 1983 the Nigerian armed forces staged the fourth coup and toppled the government of Alhaji Shagari. Thus ended the Second Republic. By the time the soldiers struck, workers were queuing for essential commodities, teachers were working on credit and the unemployment queue was longer

han ever before.

In the take over broadcast, Brigadier Sani Abacha declared that:

"We have become a debtor and beggar-nation ...health services are in shambles as our hospitals are reduced to mere consulting clinics.. yet our leaders revel in squandermania, corruption and indiscipline; continue to proliferate public appointments in complete disregard of our stark economic realities".<sup>11</sup>

In the maiden speech of Major-General Muhammadu Buhari, he said "we have dutifully intervened to save this nation from imminent collapse".<sup>12</sup>

FOOT NOTES

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CHAPTER FIVE5.1 ROLE OF THE MILITARY IN POLITICAL INSTABILITY

Much as the civilians have fluffed their chances of properly administering the country their military counterparts are not entirely without blemish. A discussion on the issue of political instability in Nigeria would surely implicate the military in the inability of the nation to evolve a durable political system. The military is not a monolithic class because within the institution there are reflective and representative elements of all aspects of the local society. This is both the strength and weakness of the military in government. The military is both separate from and susceptible to the demands and fallacies that motivate expectations in the society because "the officer group as well as the rank and file have been drawn...from the indiscriminate mass of the people".<sup>1</sup>

Lindsay Barrett believes that the thirteen years of military rule from 1966 to 1979 coincided with an unprecedented bout of economic good fortune in terms of the upward mobility of revenue earned from oil.<sup>2</sup> However, the economic attitudes of supply-contractor-mentality and the consequent expansion of government subsidised services meant that the cost of operation of Nigerian Society had become absolutely prohibitive by the time the military

relinquished power in 1979.

Official greed which became notorious among political actors in the Second Republic had its foundations laid even before 1979. The inter-twined relationships between high officials and major contracting companies became an increasingly public tradition, often denied but openly practised, under successive military regimes as soon as they consolidated power. The contemporary circumstances that governs military intervention into the political leadership of Nigeria demands, therefore, that a truly corrective posture on their past will include the correction as well of errors which stemmed from previous military involvement in government.

The economic expansion of credit and service industries developed by the Obasanjo regime prior to handing over to the civilians planted a time bomb under which the succeeding civilian regime found it extremely difficult to fuse. Obasanjo's regime speeded up and even expanded the road construction programmes which had begun under Gowon. Abacha modified, expanded and consolidated a massive telecommunications scheme in the few months of his leadership. Obasanjo's regime kept it intact and even modified provisions to enlarge its effectiveness nationwide.

The steel development projects signed by Obasanjo also created a heavy foreign credit liability for the country's future likewise the agricultural sector where Obasanjo laid emphasis on large scale farm development. The civilian Government took over not only a large cash reserve but huge pre-set commitments as well.

## 6.2 LESSONS OF THE SECOND REPUBLIC

As the country is now in a transition period preparatory to the Third Republic, we must reflect on the mistake of the second Republic and suggest ways of avoiding them, otherwise the next civilian era might be doomed from the onset. The present administration has so far taken measures to avert another political disaster.

The Political Bureau was set up in January, 1986 to collate the views of Nigerians and articulate a transition from political instability to a stable democracy. Though the government was impressed by its recommendations it rejected the adoption of socialism as a national ideology. The Constitution Review Committee and the Constituent Assembly which recently submitted its report are indications of the government's desire to have a durable third Republic. However, the happenings at the Constituent Assembly rekindled memories of the previous one in 1978 when members formed themselves into political groupings.

The ban on politicians with an accompanying decree to enforce stiff penalties has also generated a lot of debate nationwide while newbreed politicians are enthusiastic over the ban the old brigade reject whatever might be the merits of the government action. The government, however, ought to have a re-think on the issue because certain elder politicians and public officers have gone through without blemish. There is also the danger of the old politicians sponsoring the newbreed with a view to manipulating their actions.

The funding of political parties by government is also a step in the right direction compared to what prevailed during the Second Republic. A number of state chief executives in the Second Republic were gaoled for funding parties with state contingency funds. But the question is whether government can adequately fund the parties. The recent lifting of ban on politics also brought back memories of 1978 when over fifty political groups emerged. At present no fewer than twenty political parties have emerged out of which only two would be registered. Government ought to approve only those that are truly national especially in the wake of religious tension that has engulfed the nation these past years as well as the north - south dichotomy that has prevailed since independence.

The reduction of the number of senators and special



Advisers to the President as well as part-time legislation will go a long way in minimising costs in the Third Republic. The newly approved constitution, if strictly adhered to by its operators, will certainly stand the test of time and the issue of political instability laid to rest.

FOOT NOTES

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