

**NIGERIA  
RETURNS TO  
CIVILIAN RULE**

*To my brother*  
*E. O. Macauley O. Ojigbo*

*OKION OJIGBO*

**NIGERIA  
RETURNS TO  
CIVILIAN RULE**

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Lagos – Nigeria*

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Printed and bound by Mladinska knjiga, Ljubljana, Yugoslavia  
Layout by Dušan Osredkar

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Alhaji Shehu Shagari  
President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria

*Author's Notes*

**INTRODUCTION**



## INTRODUCTION

Experiences have shown the paucity of meaningful literature written by our people on issues which are directly relevant to us as a nation. It was in the effort to check this trend that I had started collecting materials for a book on the Administration of the late General Murtala Muhammed, which led to the publication of *200 Days to Eternity: The Administration of General Murtala Muhammed*. I believed (as I still do) that every period of our national history should be documented. Now in retrospect, I am gratified that it was a worthwhile effort of which this essay is a continuation.

I was privileged to have served in the State House, which is the highest office in this nation, during the period which political analysts and social historians already regard as perhaps the most important in the political evolution of Nigeria: first, as the Senior Assistant Secretary under the dynamic and charismatic late General Murtala Ramat Muhammed of blessed memory in whose Administration the most fundamental and important bases for our political stability were laid, and, later, as the Principal Private Secretary to his successor General Olusegun Obasanjo who as Head of State continued the policies of his predecessor through the last stages of the transition period from 13 years of Military rule to a democratically elected civilian government. These policies included, among others, the production of a new Constitution, the registration of voters, the formation of political parties, and the conduction of five elections into the National and State Assemb-

lies as well as of the State Governors and of the first Executive President of Nigeria. This book is about the return to civilian rule.

The first chapter of the present exercise is more of a summary of the earlier book, with a little additional section on the last stages of the transition period under the exiting Nigerian Head of State as the Military was marching back to the Barracks after 13 years. I have done this as a means to provide the reader with the political background which brought the Military into Nigerian politics and the political programmes which the Military Government of General Muhammed mapped out in the preparation for the return to civilian rule; for those who have read the first book, most of this chapter will appear as a repetition.

The excitement of the return to civilian rule, manifested in the initial formation of no less than 50 political associations most of which did not satisfy the "federal character" requirements of the Federal Electoral Commission (FEDECO) — and, hence, failed to qualify as national political parties — is part of the second chapter whose main focus is a discussion of the political profiles of the presidential candidates. One has to understand the reason for the initial emergence of the multiplicity of political groups and their tribal loyalties. The end of 13 years of military rule unleashed a torrent of previously pent-up political aspirations, with the resultant emergence of a multitude of political parties to a degree that baffled even the apolitical observer. Each party sought its strength in its tribal or sectional location, with consequent inter-group rivalries and conflicts. What was basically the cause of all this excitement — even apprehension — was that in a society where the authorities had not permitted political activities and the development of political parties for nearly a decade and a half, the immediate and major basis for the opportunity for political association and political competition when the ban was lifted was therefore localised and not nation-wide. Political activities were thus seen not so much in terms of political competition but more in terms of old tribal or sectional rivalries and hostilities — certainly dif-

ferences — with the glaring fact that regional, sectional or tribal allegiance were the major bases for support as was the case in pre-civil war Nigeria.

The third chapter addresses itself to the elections themselves, particularly the presidential election with its attendant legal interpretation of the meaning of the electoral requirement of “2/3 of 19”. The subsequent verbal wars between the defeated candidates and FEDECO, and in particular the reaction of one of the defeated presidential candidates, are also part of the third chapter. The grievances by the President’s critics seemed to have been over-bloated in the effort to portray him as “slow”. Of course, there were exaggerated expectations, and the subsequent frustrations, by those who expected wonders from the new political system. It was soon obvious, after only a few months, that there was a tendency to confuse the real with the imagined presidency. The fourth chapter is an attempt to shed some light on the Constitution and the Presidency. The chapter is only an introductory attempt; it certainly does not pretend to be any exhaustive or scholarly treatment of this important area of our political system. Nonetheless, this book, hopefully, should have not only factual relevance but also historical permanence. Let me emphasize that the materials researched for and used in this book are *all entirely a matter of public record*, and hence the *raison d’etre* of the footnotes is to excuse the author from being accused of having used any privileged information. The essay is, of course, done in my private capacity and does not reflect the opinion of the Federal Government or of any of its agencies.

I am grateful, first and foremost, to God Almighty for giving me the opportunity to have served in the offices I was privileged to have occupied, and for giving me the strength and endurance to write this book. Of far, far less importance are those who encouraged me in several ways to write the book. These were my friends and family, in particular my children who tolerated me during this hectic period and whom I denied so much in the process of writing this book as well as the earlier one. I also thank the artists

and the several newspapers which granted me permission to reproduce their very humorous cartoons – which are themselves social commentaries on important historical events – which they had published earlier. Similarly, I am grateful to those photographers who produced the photographs I have used. My secretary has been most wonderful; she painstakingly typed and re-typed the several drafts of the manuscript. I also thank those at Mladinska Knjiga who worked so hard to produce this book, in particular the Director of Co-Production, Mr. Ciril Trček.

Of course, it is hardly necessary to add that I, and I only, bear full responsibility for all matters of fact and interpretation contained in this book.

OKION OJIGBO  
*Aladja Nigeria.*

*Chapter One*

**THE NATIONAL POLITICAL  
BACKGROUND**



# THE NATIONAL POLITICAL BACKGROUND

Alhaji Shehu Aliyu Shagari became Nigeria's first executive President after 13 years of military rule on October 1, 1979, when he was formerly sworn in at an impressive ceremony during Nigeria's 19<sup>th</sup> Independence Anniversary at the Tafawa Balewa Square, Lagos. That solemn ceremony at which he received the symbolic document of authority, the Constitution, from his predecessor Head of State, was the end of Nigeria's 13 years of military rule and the beginning of the nation's Second Republic.

## THE FIRST REPUBLIC

Nigeria achieved independence on October 1, 1960, with minimum internal cohesion. The country adopted a Federal constitution by which her leaders hoped they would achieve a viable unification of the various territorial sub-sections and the different peoples which the British colonial power had previously welded together under one administrative umbrella. Post-independence experiences, however, soon demonstrated that more meaningful factors, other than Federalism and the common colonial historical heritage, had to be utilized in the effort to achieve that degree of national cohesion that could assure a politically developed and stable society. It had been a particularly turbulent period. Teething problems of nationhood, mostly revolving round the issue of power-sharing, had brought Nigeria to the brink of fragmentation and disintegration after independence in October 1960. The most pressing issues of nation-building which Nigeria faced were the question of defining the new nation and, the consequent issue of creating an effectively integrated polity. This was because the concept of the *nation* among Nigerians, as in many other Third World countries, was still largely elusive and unconcretized — indeed fragmentary. Professor Rupert Emerson once put this phenomenon quite succinctly when he noted that “An old recipe has it that, to make rabbit pie, you must first catch your rabbit. By the same token, to engage in nation-building you must first find the nation. In the African setting,” he continued, “this is likely to be a more hazardous and uncertain venture than anywhere else.”<sup>1</sup>

This was what a regular columnist in the *Lagos Daily Times*, Stanley Macebuh, also had in mind while commenting on the series of the 1979 elections, when he said that "We have engineered for ourselves elaborate institutions of government and nationhood. But we forgot to invent a nation."<sup>2</sup>

In such a tenuous political unit, such as Nigeria, even minor teething problems of nationhood manifested themselves in political instability of the new nation. Ironically, the collapse of the colonial regime contributed to the phenomenon of political instability and disintegration, particularly with the failure to replace it with one identifiable belief. This was because the struggle for independence in the new nations had been fought largely on one united front, and disagreements among the several disparate nationalist groups were submerged. However, with the collapse of the colonial regime the previously latent disparities emerged in full blossom. The result was exaggerated political competition. The competition intensified even further as a result of the failure of the political leaders in many of the newly independent nations to provide, or even achieve, the almost over-glorified expected fruits of independence. Indeed, the political concept of the "spoils system" made more poignant the understanding of politics as the question of "who gets what?" Not only must the resources be available, they must also be distributed as equitably as possible and, in fact, be seen and be believed to have been shared fairly. Thus, once Nigeria achieved independence, her leaders had to grapple with this important concept. The effort was not made any easier by the concomitant emergence of minority and separatist groups which felt threatened in the new political order. Indeed, this latter phenomenon was a two-edged sword which cut at the already fragile cohesion. For one thing, the less developed areas and minority ethnic groups feared domination — real or imagined — while on the other hand the relatively highly developed groups, as in many other parts of the world, "did not want either their affluence diluted, or their traditional status lowered, through merger with economically depressed and lower status groups."<sup>3</sup>

## *Independence and Nationhood*

What is being emphasized is that nationalist activities during the struggle for independence in Nigeria had blunted, indeed muted, the ethnic rivalry and political factions among the various peoples in the country. No sooner was independence achieved than Nigeria's post-independence political experience became a particularly turbulent one. Several factors contributed to the political instability: a shakey 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. These were the major contributory factors to an unhealthy political development in Nigeria. As long as the country's tripartite arrangement was maintained, Nigeria's federal union was tenuously stable. Attempts by any of the political parties to acquire more political power disequilibrated the tripartite federal structure. For example, when the Action Group Party (AG) sought to extend its political power from its base in the Western Region into other regions in 1959, and actually won 25 seats in the North and 14 in the East, the stability of Nigeria's tripartite federal arrangement was threatened severely. Thus, the teething problems of nationhood, all revolving round the question of power-sharing, soon accentuated the subdued differences within the first few years of the attainment of independence.

Nigeria's major problem was the distribution of political power, a crisis that was aggravated by the presence of several political parties and a multiplicity of ethnic groups. It was not so much that the competitors for power were too many; rather, the bases for the equitable distribution of power were either lacking or ill-defined. The major competitors were the Northern Peoples' Congress (NPC) and Hausa in the North, the Yoruba and Action Group Party (AG) in the West, and, the National Convention of Nigerian Citizens (NCNC) and the Ibo in the East. There were al-

so the virile but “minority” ethnic groups such as the Bini and Urhobo in the Mid-West, the Tiv and Idoma in the Middle Belt, and, others in the Calabar – Ogoja – Rivers (COR) Area. A coalition of the NPC and NCNC formed the government in 1959 (with independence a year later), and the AG, the Opposition. An over-sized Northern Region dominated the tripartite federal matrimony.

Another major constraint on Nigeria’s tripartite federal matrimony closely related to the quest for power was the lack of political consensus or common “ideological” ties among the nation’s political parties and political leaders. Their varied political orientations were immediately evident on the eve of Nigeria’s independence when both the NPC and the NCNC formed a tenuous coalition government after the 1959 federal elections. The election results had precipitated a political stalemate with no single party able to win an overall majority of the 312 seats. A government, therefore; could be formed by coalition of two parties. A coalition of the two Southern-based parties, the NCNC and the AG, with the leader of the NCNC, Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe, to become Prime Minister, was considered. That proposal did not work. The NCNC leadership explained that the proposal failed because of national unity as it was feared that the North might secede from a Nigeria ruled by the Southern-based parties.<sup>4</sup> A coalition government formed by the AG and NCNC parties would have, in fact, included the Northern Elements Progressive Union, NEPU, a Northern-based party which was made up exclusively of Northerners, and which had formed an alliance with the NCNC before the elections. A failure of both the AG and the NCNC to form a coalition government was due more to a lack of common ties and to personality clash than to a fear of Northern secession.

What of an AG-NPC Coalition Government? The two parties also lacked common political ties. Indeed, the AG’s political stance against the NPC during the election campaigns generated severe hostility between both parties, a political animosity that left some painful wounds and strains. These contributed to the failure of a post-election coalition between the AG and the NPC. Poli-

tical manoeuvring and bargaining dragged on for a week and finally resulted in the formation of an NPC-NCNC Federal Coalition Government. The agreement constituting a Federal Coalition Government stipulated that certain offices be allocated to each of the coalition parties, the NPC and the NCNC-NEPU Alliance. Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe, leader of the NCNC, immediately resigned his seat from the House of Representatives and was appointed President of the Upper House or Senate which had then been newly established. He subsequently became a ceremonial Governor-General (without any executive powers) "in accordance with the secret pact", wrote Dr. Kalu Ezera, himself an NCNC member of the Federal Parliament after the 1959 Federal elections, "between the leaders of the NPC and NCNC. Other key ministerial posts had also similarly been assigned to the parties in advance."<sup>5</sup>

Because the parties which formed the federal coalition government did not have political consensus or because they lacked concrete common ideological ties, the new government was one of undue compromise. It was all in the dire attempt to maintain the tripartite federal union and hence, as it were, to force the federal concept to work. Indeed, the political stance of any two members of a coalition government could not be more distant than those of the NCNC and the NPC. For one thing, the NPC supported a federalist programme while the NCNC advocated a unitary constitution. Also, the NCNC strongly advocated a policy of non-alignment with either the Western or Eastern Bloc. With such a position of non-alignment, the NCNC claimed, Nigeria would have the freedom to choose those international policies which would best suit the country's national interests.<sup>6</sup> The NPC as well as the Action Group Party on the other hand were opposed to neutrality and non-alignment. Their preference, as was most strongly expressed by Chief Awolowo in his autobiography, *AWO*, was "unhesitatingly and unequivocally for the Western democracies."<sup>7</sup>

In the meantime, the Action Group Party (AG) formed the Op-

position. Similarly, the lack of political consensus within the Action Group Party created a severe schism within the party itself. AG pragmatists later re-evaluated their position as the party in Opposition and reasoned that only a share of power at the national level, and hence the formation of a National Government, could assure them of participation in the government. Other AG members did not want to compromise what they called their political stand of "Democratic Socialism" by the temptation to be included in a National Government. The concept of "Democratic Socialism" was put forward by the Action Group Party leader, Chief Obafemi Awolowo, as a means, besides nationalization,<sup>8</sup> "to build a democratic socialist society founded on the three principles of national greatness, the well-being of the individual and international brotherhood."<sup>9</sup> The creed produced two immediate results.

First, the socio-economic ideology of the AG intensified the distance between the NPC-NCNC Federal Coalition Government and the Action Group Opposition. This was because the Coalition regarded the Action Group creed of socialism and nationalization as a weapon that could discourage foreign investment and produce economic depression and thus intensify unemployment, a situation which could discredit the government and attract the support of the masses to the Action Group Party resulting in possible victory at the polls for the AG. This threat, the NPC-NCNC Coalition Government reasoned, had to be nipped in the bud. Secondly, Chief Awolowo's ideology also led to immediate intra-party factions within the AG, alienating the conservatives and the traditional rulers – who had long been ardent supporters of the party – from the party's radicals. The former group was headed by the AG Deputy Leader, Chief Samuel Ladoke Akintola, and the latter by Chief Awolowo himself. The increasing widening schism between the two groups erupted into an open conflict during the party's annual conference held in Jos in February 1962. Things took a dramatic turn barely three months later when the crisis was carried into the Western Regional House of Assembly,

where the Action Group formed the Regional Government. The AG, Opposition party at the Federal level, had now played into the hands of the NPC and the NCNC, both of which were eager to exploit the situation in the West to ruin the Action Group Party. Not surprisingly, the NPC-NCNC Federal (Coalition) Government in Lagos, claiming a break down of law and order in the Western Region Legislature, immediately seized the opportunity to declare a State of Emergency in the Western Region, a political ploy which dispassionate observers believed was a strategy the NPC and NCNC were using to destroy the Action Group Party. As one of the national newspapers put it, the decision declaring a State of Emergency in the West "may put the burden on the [Federal] Government to show that its actions are intended for the benefit of Nigeria than the NPC and the NCNC."<sup>10</sup>

That was in May 1962. A subsequent Police investigation revealed that some AG leaders had imported arms illegally to overthrow the legitimate Federal Government. They were tried and jailed. The AG crisis, the subsequent closure of the Western Region Legislature, and the jailing of AG leaders all formed political crisis No. 1. In a brilliant and blunt article analysing the 1979 elections in Nigeria, Nduka Onum in *The Punch* said that the origins of the Nigerian civil war are important only in that we recognize two points one of which, he said, was "the attempt to isolate the Yorubas from political participation as was manifested in the morbid destruction of the Action Group by the NPC-NCNC Government";<sup>11</sup> this, he said, was dysfunctional.

The Action Group Party's concept of "Democratic Socialism" and its concomitant crisis in the Western Region in 1962 resulted in the demise of the Regional Legislature in one leg of Nigeria's tripartite Federal arrangement and thus threatened the tripartite structure and tenuous stability of the country. That was barely two years after independence. There was also the 1963 population census crisis, another post-independence crisis which appeared more as a political exercise than a demographic study because each region unduly falsified and inflated its figures. Similarly,

this problem posed a severe threat to the stability of the country immediately after independence. A repeat exercise the following year was also demographically dismal because of the injection of political implications and decisions into the census count, thereby emphasizing the issue of power-sharing and the question of political security of local elites. (Indeed, a third population census exercise in 1973 was also futile; the figures were declared void in the wake of the change of Government in July 1975). By 1964, political competition had become very severe, and two major alliances of all the political parties contested the federal elections of that year. Electoral fraud was so rampant and so prevalent that the elections were meaningless, the results of the elections ending in a stalemate. A compromise "broad-based" government, which included all the political parties, provided a breathing space. "The events of the 1964 federal elections, serious as they were", wrote Nigeria's former Commissioner for External Affairs, Dr. Okoi Arikpo, "paled beside those which followed during the Western Region election"<sup>12</sup> a year later in 1965 during which the electorate literally poured gasoline on opponents and set them on fire ("*Operation Wet-ie*"). The electorate literally took the laws into its hands. The Police seemed powerless.

Political dissatisfaction, social discontent and more problems soon developed in the Western Region, resulting in the further weakening of the third base and the eventual collapse of Nigeria's tripartite federal matrimony. As Dame Margery Perham observed in her "Reflections on the Nigerian Civil War", "a tripod is neither physically nor politically a very stable basis, and when one leg and then another weakens, collapse is unavoidable."<sup>13</sup>

## 13 YEARS OF MILITARY RULE

The immediate factors responsible for the collapse of the already weak and unstable political order were the Federal elections in 1964 and the Western Regional elections the following year in 1965. The elections were so violent, and the aftermath so inhibitive to political stability that Nigerians believed that the Military was the only institution in the country which could stop the political chaos and restore political order and stability as well as public confidence. In a subsequent military *coup d'état* on January 15, 1966, some prominent Nigerian political leaders as well as some high-ranking military officers were assassinated. These included the Prime Minister of the Federation, Alhaji Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa, and the Premier of the Northern Region, Alhaji Sir Ahmadu Bello (the Sardauna of Sokoto) — both respectively Vice President and President of the NPC. They were both Hausa. The Federal Minister of Finance, Chief Festus Okotie-Eboh (Urhobo-Itsekiri) from the Mid-West Region, was also assassinated; so too was the Premier of the Western Region, Chief Samuel Ladoke Akintola (Yoruba). Significantly, no politician from the East was killed. Besides the assassination of top political figures from the North, West, and Mid-West, the coup plotters also killed high-ranking Army officers from these regions. They included Brigadier A. Maimalari, Col. Kur Mohammed, Lt. Col. Yakubu Pam, and Lt. Col. Largema. They were all from the Northern Region. Others were Brigadier S. A. Ademulegun, Col. S. A. Sodeinde, Major S. Adegoke, and 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt. James Odu, all from the

Western Region. And from the Mid-West was Lt. Col. Arthur Unegbe. Again, no Army officer of Eastern Region origin was killed. When Major Chukwuma Nzeogwu, one of the five officers who planned and executed the military take-over, was interviewed in May 1967, he remarked that the coup was a failure and definitely not a success. To a question on how sectional and tribalistic the January coup was in conception and execution, Nzeogwu said:

"In the, North, no. In the South, yes. We were five in number and initially we knew quite clearly what we wanted to do. We had a short list of people who were either undesirable for the future progress of the country or who by their positions at the time had to be sacrificed for peace and stability. Tribal considerations were completely out of our minds at this stage. But we had a set-back in the execution. Both of us in the North did our best. But the other three who were stationed in the South failed because of incompetence and misguided considerations in the eleventh hour. The most senior among them was in charge of a whole brigade and had all the excuse in the world to mobilize his troops anywhere, anyhow and any time. He did it badly. In Lagos, even allowing for one or two genuine mistakes, the job was badly done. But in the East, our major target, nothing practically was done. He and the others let us down."<sup>14</sup>

Professor Martin Dent in his comment on the sectional nature of the coup victims wrote that "Nzeogwu in Kaduna was genuinely angry at the failure of his co-plotters to take over Lagos or kill Ironsi. For a time", Dent continued, Major Nzeogwu "thought of marching on Lagos and also on Enugu to kill [Dr. Michael] Okpara [who was Premier of the Eastern Region and himself also Ibo like Major-General Ironsi]. After three days he was persuaded to surrender to Ironsi on favourable terms."<sup>15</sup>

The rather sectional assassinations during that coup that was master-minded by young Ibo Army officers raised eye-brows, particularly among those Nigerians whose peoples had been killed. Indeed, the fear of tribal favoritism and sectional interest was aggravated in the manner the new leader, — a military one — Ma-

Major-General Johnson Aguiyi-Ironsi, had sought to legitimize his assumption of office. This notwithstanding, one must emphasize that Nigerians welcomed the coup which put an end to the civilian rule of the country, an administration which had been characterized by political tensions and instability. General Ironsi's challenge was whether or not he could sustain the confidence the nation reposed in the Army take-over. This he could achieve by providing a stable political order. The country needed to see a concrete demonstration of the provisions for political stability, and not just hear the General's mere pledge of a new Constitution for the Federation "prepared in accordance with the wishes of the people."<sup>16</sup> Indeed, Nigerians had not yet then woken up to the realities and implications of the ethnic arithmetic of the assassinations nor even to the manner that General Ironsi had assumed powers after those killings which he described as a mutiny.

*Major-General Ironsi:  
Political Incompetence*

General Ironsi's first major political act was maladroit. He named his tribesman, an Ibo civil servant, Francis Nwokedi, as sole commissioner "to inquire into the unification of the regional public services of the Federation". That act, General Ironsi's critics said, was a gross political blunder. The Northern Region in particular regarded the nature of the regional administrations as its main and perhaps only check against Southern domination. Hence the appointment was a bombshell which created serious doubts in Northern minds regarding the purpose and intent of the January coup which eliminated their two main political leaders and top ranking Army Officers. Major-General Ironsi's first political act also received serious and genuine protest from most of the other sectors and sections of the country. The virile and incessant protest that such a critical and crucial issue should not be entrusted to only one man, and a fellow tribesman at that, forced Ge-

neral Ironsi to re-evaluate his act. His remedy was to appoint one additional person, a Mid-Westerner, to assist Mr. Nwokedi. This did not allay the fears which his first political act had sown in the minds of the general public, particularly in the Northern Region. Even Nwokedi's tour of the North raised eyebrows. Northern emirs and Northern senior civil servants complained to the Federal Government that Nwokedi listened but did not hear their own points of view. The Northern complaints and apprehensions were confirmed when Mr. Nwokedi handed General Ironsi a one-man report which was drawn up with apparent disregard of the opinions of Northerners. The seed of doubt which that act sowed germinated, and grew rapidly, in the weeks and months that followed. His administration started off on a bad footing.

The furor had not settled when General Ironsi dropped still another bombshell. Overwhelming public opinion notwithstanding, Major-General Aguiyi-Ironsi announced in a nation-wide radio and television broadcast on May 24, 1966, that Nigeria was no longer a Federal Republic; that the new structure of the nation was a unitary system, and that the regions were abolished. The announcement, embodied in Decree No. 34, meant that not only were the regions abolished but their public services would be unified under a single Public Service Commission. This confirmed the fears of those Nigerians who had expressed the opinion as early as February 1966 that only a federal form of government, and not a unitary one, was suitable for Nigeria. The implication of that announcement was alarming. As the London-based *West Africa* aptly put, "it view of growing suspicion the decrees abolishing regions and instituting a unitary government and a unified civil service were announced in a thoroughly tactless manner, and without the necessary consultations".<sup>17</sup>

That Major-General Aguiyi-Ironsi should have abolished the federal form of government and impose a unitary system on the nation without the knowledge of, for example, the Constitutional Review Panel was indeed peculiar. Ironically, the Panel, which was then working on a new constitution, was specifically charged

to examine and contrast the advantages and disadvantages of unitary and federal systems. The General himself had set up that body which had not completed its work when he announced Decree No. 34. Besides, he had publicly announced several times before that no constitutional changes would be introduced without the fullest consultation with the Nigerian people. General Ironsi had jumped the gun. The announcement embodied in Decree No. 34 lent colour to the January 15, 1966, *coup d'etat* which many Nigerians came to regard as a "clumsily camouflaged" attempt to substitute Ibo domination for Northern domination. Decree No. 34, as Walter Schwarz aptly put it in the *Guardian*, was the second major miscalculation.<sup>18</sup> Similarly, Nduka Onum, himself an Ibo, writing a decade later on the second origin of the Nigerian civil war in his article in *The Punch* referred to earlier, stated that "The attempt to combine bureaucratic and executive-political dominance by the Ibos as was manifest in Decree No. 34 under General Ironsi's regime was [also] dysfunctional."<sup>19</sup>

It seemed that Major-General Aguiyi-Ironsi was bent from the initial stage to introduce a unitary government. Most of the General's commissions, even those composed of Nigerians of other ethnic origins, were instructed to pursue their inquiries with the idea of a unitary government as a deep-seated factor. One commission was set up to explore ways to unify the nation's judicial services. Another commission, on economic planning, entrusted to Chief Simeon Adebó, Nigeria's former Representative at the United Nations, and Dr. Pius Okigbo, former Economic Adviser to the Federal Government, also pointed to unification. General Ironsi himself at a press conference in February 1966 had also noted that "it has become apparent to all Nigerians that rigid adherence to 'regionalism' was the bane of the last regime and one of the main factors which contributed to its down-fall. No doubt the country would welcome a clean break with the deficiencies of the system."<sup>20</sup> Yet, the idea of a unitary government was a highly controversial issue in the country and this notwithstanding, General Ironsi imposed a unitary system. Suspicion of another sectional domi-

nation mounted all over the country. In the North, discontent intensified and anti-government demonstrations and riots broke out in several cities on May 26, 1966, because of the new decree. The Military Governor of the "Northern Provinces", Lt-Colonel Hassan Katsina, imposed a dusk-to-dawn curfew in Kano and Zaria on May 28, and declared the cities "military zones". The riots started off as demonstrations merely to register the rage of the North against General Ironsi's new decree. However, it seemed that some disgruntled Northern civil servants and politicians fanned the flames. Before long the peaceful demonstrations took dramatic turns and twists. Ironically, General Ironsi claimed in a broadcast that the riots in the North were organized "in collusion with certain foreign elements"<sup>21</sup> as "intelligence report" in the North had informed him in Lagos. He ignored the genuine basis for the grievance among Northerners.

While he at this time seemed to demonstrate lack of firm control, the North's Military Governor, Lt-Col. Hassan Katsina, took firm control of the North; his imposition of dusk-to-dawn curfew went a long way to arrest the gravity of the disturbances in the North. His summons of all the Northern emirs to an emergency meeting in Kaduna was another adriot move by the Northern Military, Governor, a meeting which the emirs attended with a demand for one of two things: that General Ironsi should either rescind his decree of a unitary government, or, that the Northern Region would secede from what General Ironsi now called "the Republic of Nigeria", the word "Federation" eliminated. The emirs left with the optimistic feeling that General Ironsi would reconsider his earlier announcement imposing Decree No. 34 on the nation. The Sultan of Sokoto, Alhaji Sir Abubakar III, speaking for the emirs, appealed for calm throughout the Northern Region, and, to give Major-General Ironsi's government "a chance to consider" their recommendations.<sup>22</sup> The Sultan's appeal for calm abated Northern sentiments for a while, and provided General Ironsi and his four Military regional governors a chance to meet in Lagos.

The meeting issued a statement which attempted to reassure the entire nation that Decree No. 34 was "designed to meet the demands of the Military Government under a unified command and to enable it to carry on its day-to-day administration." It went on to stress that Decree No. 34 "in no way affected the territorial divisions of the country."<sup>23</sup> General Ironsi, therefore, in effect retracted the unitary system of government he had imposed a fortnight earlier on May 24, 1966. North's Military Governor, Lt-Col. Hassan Usman Katsina, returned to his region to deliver this important message to Northern emirs at a second meeting. The Sultan of Sokoto, again speaking for all the emirs, announced that they were now "in no doubt that no permanent pattern of government will be imposed on the country without the consent of the people, to be ascertained by a freely conducted referendum" and that they were "satisfied".<sup>24</sup> The retraction of the unitary system and the satisfactory manner with which Northerners received it provided some breathing space. But the dilly-dally posture of Major-General Ironsi and his rather wishy-washy handling of Decree No. 34 now convincingly demonstrated that the General was allowing the reins of office to slip from his control. There were also other problems which plagued his regime. General Ironsi himself did not help matters when he promoted 21 senior military officers, 18 of whom were from his tribe.<sup>25</sup> Even hardcore Nigerian nationalists became apprehensive of the development of events after the January 1966 coup. Indeed, other subsequent political decisions did not discourage suspicions of other Nigerians that the January 1966 coup was not an attempt designed to plant a particular tribe in power.

Major-General Aguiyi-Ironsi's major problem seemed to have been his source of advice, a group of advisers whose sectional considerations thwarted his apparently genuine intension to provide some bases for political stability. The sectional character of subsequent policies amplified the insecurity of elites of other ethnic groups. Major-General Ironsi, who with other members of the Nigerian Armed Forces had done a marvelous job with the United

Nations Emergency Forces in the Congo in 1964 and who represented the symbol of the concerned administrator backed by his own good-will and Nigerians' willingness to be properly governed for a change, became thwarted by his sectional advisers who seemed to be more concerned with their own sectional and tribal interests. Major Nzeogwu, himself an Ibo and hero of the January 1966 coup, remarked that Major-General Ironsi "chose the wrong advisers . . . Most of them were either mediocre or absolutely unintelligent."<sup>26</sup>

In the meantime, sectional favoritism increased. Suspicion mounted proportionately. By June 1966, it was already an open secret, even to Nigerians abroad, that another coup was imminent. What was not clear was when or what group would stage it. While this academic debate was going on, General Ironsi contemplated doing something to re-assure the entire country of the sincere intentions of his regime. He decided to go on a tour of the regions. The General never returned alive from his tour. In a second *coup d'etat* on July 29, 1966, which, unlike the first, took place only within the Military, Major-General Aguiyi-Ironsi as well as the Western Regional Military Governor who was his host, Lt-Colonel Francis Adekunle Fajuyi (Yoruba), were killed. So also were a number of Army officers of Ibo origin. Lt-Colonel Yakubu Gowon, a minority from the Northern Region, became the new Head of the Federal Military Government.

Whatever the intentions of his advisers, General Ironsi's policies had aggravated the problems of Nigeria's political tensions and instability. Northern Regional Military Governor, Lt-Col. Hassan Usman Katsina, spoke for the majority of the nation when he remarked later about General Ironsi's decrees that "unfortunately certain measures advocated by certain sections and which had been the subject of passionate controversy in the past were rapidly put through. The confidence of the majority of people in the Government was shaken by some measures and the way the interests of certain sections of the country were undermined or totally ignored."<sup>27</sup> Or, as the then Lt-Col. Yakubu Gowon

put it, "As a result of the recent event and the other previous similar ones, I have come to strongly believe that we cannot honestly and sincerely continue in this way, as the basis for trust and confidence in our unitary system of government has been unable to stand the test of time."<sup>28</sup>

General Ironsi's policies, which Nigerians believed to be sectional, made those adversely affected to reflect more deeply on the initially popular coup of January 15, 1966. In his nation-wide broadcast on August 1, 1966, Lt. Col. Yakubu Gowon recalled the events of January 15, 1966, and remarked that "the attempt to overthrow the government of the day was made by eliminating political leaders and high-ranking Army officers, a majority of whom came from a particular section of the country. The Prime Minister lost his life during that uprising. But for the outstanding discipline and loyalty of the members of the Army who were most affected and other members of the Armed Forces and the Police," Gowon continued, "the situation could have degenerated into a civil war."<sup>29</sup> Similarly, in his speech to the Northern emirs, Lt-Colonel Hassan Katsina also remarked about the January 1966 *coup* which he said "resulted in the assassination of the most prominent political leaders and high ranking army officers from particular sections of the country. That the mutineers who organized the *coup* should have been persons from a particular area was so singular a coincidence as to cast grave doubts on the objectives of its planners. The event," continued Lt. Col. Katsina, "rocked the very foundations of the continued existence of the nation and it was with utmost difficulty that a general uprising leading to civil war was averted."<sup>30</sup>

Despite the sectional overtones involved in the execution of that January *coup*, Nigerians – including the Hausas who bore the heaviest burdens of that "poorly executed *coup*" – tried to work for a united and "One Nigeria", and Major-General Ironsi's military regime enjoyed country-wide support. "Although the *coup* was masterminded by Ibos", wrote Colin Legum in the *London Observer*, "their ardent supporters included Yorubas and

Hausas.”<sup>31</sup> But, a group of people preferred allegiance to their ethnic group rather than to the nation, and they soon habituated to the perpetuation of their sectional interests. The major significance of Major-General Aguiyi-Ironsi's regime, therefore, was that it was believed to be extremely partisan; this highlighted the feeling of insecurity of other groups. Nationally, the regime created more problems than solved old ones, particularly as other Nigerians saw his policies as tailored to favour a certain group. The increasing inclination on the part of Major-General Ironsi to consult unofficially, and to follow advisers who, however eminent, often failed to understand the national implications of their advice, and all of the same tribe as he, led to severe criticism of the Supreme Commander. No permanent reform could result from this period which ended with the feeling of insecurity of other groups in Nigeria more severe than ever. Major-General Johnson Aguiyi-Ironsi himself may not necessarily have been a tribalist; rather, he failed to see the sectional and clannish implications of events, of policies, and of appointments that were made during his tenure of office.

It seemed that the General had not done a thorough homework, if any, of the Nigerian political situation before he took over power. Therefore, he had not prepared for the task he had ahead. This made General Ironsi appear incompetent and incapable of providing the country with some bases for political stability. He simply had no concept of the management of political issues, certainly not of the politics of this country. Thus, it was not surprising that on July 29, 1966, barely six months after his assumption of office, another coup, which is now widely regarded as retaliatory and apparently executed in order to check the political insecurity the first coup had produced, mortally eliminated Major-General Johnson Aguiyi-Ironsi.

The immediate significance of the second *coup d'etat* was that it forced a return to an ethnic balance within the Army, providing in the process a new spring-board from which Nigeria could attempt to resolve her crisis and embark on the politics of national

development. It is worthy to note that the second coup did not necessarily place a person of any of the other two major ethnic groups, the Hausa and the Yoruba, in power. It would seem that the emergence of either a Hausa or a Yoruba military leader immediately after the second coup could have caused another immediate disaster because it would have been regarded by the other majority ethnic groups as ascension to power at their expense — and hence, their own insecurity. They would have resented this. One needs to bear in mind that the officer next to Major-General Ironsi was Brigadier Ogundipe (Yoruba) who declined the vacant office as Head of the Federal Military Government after the second coup.<sup>32</sup> Instead, when Brigadier Ogundipe was approached to take-over as the Supreme Commander he declined the offer because, he said, after all “an ordinary sergeant” had refused to take an order from him without first consulting his captain, who happened to be a Northerner.<sup>33</sup>

It would seem that the emergence of a Military leader from a minority group, an unknown as it were, and who thus lacked a strong ethnic power base he could rely on, tempered the subsequent events, serious as they were, after the second coup. The emergence of a Lt. Col. Yakubu Gowon, from a minority group, as the new leader after the second coup could therefore be seen as a compromise choice; he thus balanced the tripolar power juggle among the country's three major ethnic groups, namely, the Hausa, the Yoruba, and the Ibo. Further, and perhaps even more importantly, the emergence of a minority leader helped to heal the wounds and bitterness among the various ethnic groups and to restore confidence among individuals within the Nigerian Military which is perhaps the single institution in the country which maintains an enviable oneness. Thus the major task of Lt. Col. Yakubu Gowon after the second coup as the new Head of State was to restore confidence immediately and then sustain that confidence by providing the bases for political stability.

*Major-Gen. Yakubu Gowon:  
Reconciliatory Politics.*

Because the second coup was retaliatory, the sector that felt it had lost its power as a result was disgruntled. Thus, the political development of Nigeria after July 29, 1966, was accentuated even more by the fact that the Eastern Region immediately threatened secession, a tactic which was not new in Nigeria; it had been employed before by other sections of the Federation as a weapon for achieving demands and political dividends. Thus, when the Eastern Region — for the third consecutive time — threatened secession if certain grievances and demands which it believed would guarantee the security of its people were not met, it was up to the Federal Military Government to meet — or not to meet — those demands in its effort to maintain the unity of the nation. The immediate concern of the Federal Military Government under the leadership of Major-General Yakubu Gowon, therefore, was for it to find ways to appease the East so long as such concessions were within the framework of "One Nigeria." Indeed, political critics had wondered whether Gowon, though a minority and a Christian, was not a continuation of Northern hegemony and another form of "Northern domination." Yet, it is also true that that same Gowon eased that fear and silenced the critics, some ob-states, to make a total of 12 states, was one major achievement of federal Humpty-Dumpty. That removed, or at least weakened, the so-called threat of Northern domination. His creation of new States, to make a total of 12 states, was one major achievement of the new Military leader after the forced exit of his predecessor.

The agitation for the creation of more regions or states has been a crucial issue in Nigeria's political development for a long time, even long before the achievement of independence. This is because the creation of more states has always been believed as the one way to remove the fear of domination: either of one region or tribe over another, or, of a section of a region or section of a tribe over another section or area within the same region or within the same

ethnic group. This fear of domination was most lucidly expressed by the claims of oppression and neglect by the several minorities in the respective regions, a fear which resulted in the appointment by the British Colonial Government of the Willink's Minority Commission in 1958 to examine the claims of such fears in order to determine whether or not more regions should be created. (This fear has again been expressed repeatedly by the flood of petitions to the several Governments since independence in 1960, even after the creation of a total of 19 states in 1976). In its instructions to the Willink's Commission, the British Colonial Government asked that the Commission should not recommend the creation of more regions unless as a very last resort. The Minorities Commission Report, in its recommendations, gave one sticky condition for the creation of more states: if more states were to be created, the report said, Independence for Nigeria should be delayed for two years to give the states time to settle down. Nigeria chose independence. Independence *per se* did not alleviate the crisis.

Now in retrospect, one can argue that, assuming good faith on the part of the Colonial Government, Nigeria would have been better off if more states had been created at that time — even if it meant that independence was delayed for two years for the new states to settle down as the Willink's Commission had recommended. But the greed for power by the leaders of the three major political parties and the three major ethnic groups, who all feared that the creation of more states would thus weaken their bases of support, preferred independence rather than face political realities and provide the basis for a healthy political development of the nation. As we have all seen in the course of the political evolution of this nation since independence, independence *per se* did not alleviate the crisis of the fear of domination. The continuous claim of discriminatory attitude against them made minority peoples ask more fervently for their own states which they believed would be free from domination by any of the majority groups, their own states where they could benefit from the social rewards of their governments. The strong agitation for their own states

where minority peoples would feel secure thus stemmed largely from bad government. As the late Commander-in-Chief stated in his historic speech of February 3, 1976, when announcing the creation of more states: "It was clear to the Supreme Military Council, from the findings in the Irikefe Panel's Report, that part of the agitation for the creation of states was a result of bad government especially at the State level."<sup>34</sup>

Despite the fervent and consistent agitation for the creation of more states, none was created – because the agitators, "minority" peoples and Southern politicians, lacked the political power. Thus, at the time of independence in 1960, Nigeria was still a tripartite Federal arrangement. This changed two years later. In 1962, the Action Group party in the Western Region had a severe crisis which led to the cleavage of the party, and, the declaration of a state of emergency in the West. What remained of the AG was virtually politically powerless, even in the West. Both the NPC and NCNC saw the AG crisis in the West as an opportunity to weaken the party further, if not indeed a chance to destroy it, by breaking up its base into more regions. The period was thus opportune for a Mid-West State to be carved from the West. A referendum conducted in the Mid-West Area in July 1963 showed nearly 90% "yes" vote (the Constitution then required 60% "yes" vote) in favour of the creation of a Mid-West Region; it was the only additional state, to make a total of four regions, created before the entry of the Military into Nigerian politics following the coup of January 1966. The North and East, the bases of the NPC and NCNC, respectively, continued to oppose the creation of more states from their own regions. Despite their objections, discontent in their own minority areas grew stronger.

With the death of the First Republic on January 15, 1966, Nigerians fervently hoped that the yearn for the creation of more states would be fulfilled. Instead, Major-General Ironsi promulgated Decree No. 34 which imposed a unitary system of government, contrary to the aspirations of Nigerians and contrary to what the planners of the coup of January 15, 1966 claimed they had in

mind. Major Nzeogwu, one of the five who planned and executed the *coup d'état*, had remarked that Decree No. 34 was "unnecessary, even silly."<sup>35</sup> He stressed that "Major-General Ironsi's unitary government had not been in our minds; we wanted to see a strong centre. We wanted to cut the country into small pieces, making the centre inevitably strong. We did not want to toy with power which was what Ironsi did."<sup>36</sup> The pre-January 15, 1966, federal system of government had resulted in dispersed power and a weak central government in Lagos; the federal government was left with the shadow of authority but real power rested with the regions. It became more and more obvious that for the basis of national reconstruction and stable political order and government in a post *coup d'état* Nigeria, the country needed to be restructured. The discontent leading to the military take-over had resulted from the imbalance of power. But Major-General Ironsi's henchmen advised him against the creation of more states. A change of mind and attitude was needed. After the second coup on July 29, 1966, Lt. Col. Yakubu Gowon as the new leader set up the Ad Hoc Constitutional Review Conference to examine the Constitution of the country and the question of the creation of more states. Gowon himself opened the Conference which met from 12–20<sup>th</sup> September 1966, at which he submitted four alternatives as guidelines for the new Constitution and political structure of the country, namely,

- a) "a federal system with a strong central government; or
- b) conversely, a federal system with a weak central government; or
- c) that Nigeria should become a confederation; or
- d) an entirely new arrangement which may be peculiar to Nigeria and which has not yet found it was into any political dictionary."<sup>37</sup>

It was *only* the Mid-West Region which favoured and argued for the continuation of the nation as one united Federal whole. All

the other regions – the North, East and West (including Lagos) – were not only opposed to the continuation of the Federation but also actually argued for what amounted to a break-up of the nation into several independent nations.

The Western and Lagos delegations, speaking virtually with one voice, proposed that what they called a “true federation” should be produced according to a formula which would have resulted in the creation of 18 states; if such a so-called “true federation” did not delegate the control of the Armed Forces to the states, they further said, then, there should be a “Commonwealth of Nigeria” consisting of the four regions – North, East, Mid-West and Western Regions (with Lagos to be merged with the West). The Western-Lagos proposal went on to stress that the government of each state within the “Commonwealth of Nigeria” should be sovereign in all matters except in a few common services, and, operate its own Armed Forces and Police. It added that each state should have the right to secede unilaterally from the proposed commonwealth at any time of its own choice. Similarly, the two regions which had been consistently vehement against their “dismemberment”, the North and East, both began by proposing “a loose association” of the existing regions which should be sovereign. The North even contemplated secession, and insisted that any member state in the proposed “loose association” of autonomous regions should reserve the right, like the Lagos-West proposal, to secede completely and unilaterally if it so desired. It offered the East African Common Services Organisation as a model, a memorandum about which it appended to its proposals to the Ad Hoc Constitutional Review Conference. Still emphasizing its idea of “a loose association” of autonomous states, the North also proposed that each member nation should have its own Army, its own Air force, and its own Police. Not surprisingly, it proposed that there should be a common Navy! The Eastern delegation made propositions similar to those of the North, except that it added that each Region should in addition (unlike the North) also have its own Navy, and that each Region should issue its own

currency notes and coins. Because of the oil in the COR Area of the Region, the Eastern delegation also proposed that each Region should keep its revenue and finance the central authority of the "loose association" by equal contributions. Thus the three regions – North, East and West – were opposed to the continuation of the nation as one unified nation. Only the Mid-West stood for the unity of the country.

Lt. Col. David Ejoor, then the Military Governor of the Mid-West Region, had been very emphatic in his instructions to the Mid-West delegation to the Constitutional Review Conference that it should pursue a federal union with a strong centre as the basis for the political stability of Nigeria. Not only did the Mid-West delegation propose that the form of association best suited for Nigeria was one which must provide for the continuance of the Federation but, above all, that the new constitution being contemplated must provide expressly that "there shall be *no* right of secession by any Region." As the Mid-West Military Governor, Lt. Col. David Ejoor, put it in an address to the Mid-West Leaders-of-Thought meeting a month after the first session of the meeting of the Ad-Hoc Constitutional Conference,

The Mid-West delegation stood unequivocally for federation, and proposed that the form of association best suited for Nigeria was one which must provide for the continuance of the Federation; for a correction of past injustices; for the lowering of present tensions; for the resolution of basic conflicts; the resolution of the basic interests and the provision of the basic needs of the various communities in the country; and for the assurance of democratic liberties to the people; above all, that the new constitution must provide expressly that there shall be *no* right of secession by any Region.<sup>38</sup>

Col. David Ejoor was very emphatic in his instructions to the Mid-West delegation to the Conference. Further, while Col. Ejoor was convincing his military colleagues, particularly those of Northern and Eastern origins, of the wisdom to maintain the corporate

existence of Nigeria as one unified Federation with a strong centre, his civilian emissaries were also pushing the same objective among the civilians and politicians. The Mid-West Region with her newly found wealth in petroleum as well as her agricultural resources, port facilities and her enviable man-power, as they all knew, had nothing to lose economically (nor even as a political unit) should the federation break up; yet, the Mid-West pursued the objectives of a larger political whole as being best on the long run for everybody. Major-General Ejoor was particularly successful among his Northern colleagues and the minorities in the Northern Region who soon started to press that more states should be created in the North to ease their own fear of "Hausa domination". The late Senator J. S. Tarka from Benue State was very dynamic and persuasive among the minorities of the Northern Region in persuading the dominant groups there of the wisdom and need to pursue not only the unity of the country but also the creation of more states. Not surprisingly, the North's earlier proposal was short-lived. The North abandoned its previous condition that the right of member states to secede unilaterally be written into the document providing for what it called a "loose association". It now offered "an immediate agreement in principle on the creation of more states" that would provide for a strong central government. Gowon was now about to achieve his first major political success.

The nation was grateful to Gowon's own minority status as his objectives — in creating more states to provide for a unified nation with a strong central authority — were therefore not seen as necessarily representing the imposition on the rest of the country of the interests of any of the country's three major ethnic groups. But even more so, Gowon and the nation were grateful to the unflinching stand of Lt. Col. David Ejoor and the Mid-West Region for the continuance of the Federation as one unified entity.<sup>39</sup> As the mid-West Military Governor, who later became Nigeria's Chief of Army Staff, described the role of the Mid-West throughout that period of crisis after the July 29, 1966 coup,

"I think that my other colleagues in the Supreme Military Council, including the Supreme Commander himself [Gowon] will bear me out when I say that, without the fervent intervention by the Mid-West, the country would have remained without a central government much longer than it did after the mutiny in the Army in July [1966]. The ensuing confusion would have been much greater and the first hopeful strides then taken towards a return to normalcy would have been impossible. When the Supreme Commander subsequently decided to set up an *ad hoc* committee for the purpose [of constitution-making], the committee's terms of reference as outlined by him in his opening address on 12<sup>th</sup> September 1966 turned out to be substantially the same as had been foreshadowed in my statement of 3<sup>rd</sup> August [1966, giving support to the new regime after the July coup] . . .

The Mid-West has taken the steps described above, as well as others which need not be recounted here, for the sole purpose of helping to ensure that the crisis in the country is not permitted to get out of hand and that passions are not unduly inflamed. Whatever our detractors may think or say, I honestly believe that the Mid-West is pursuing the correct policies in connection with the crisis, in conformity with its consistent policy of advocating what is right for Nigeria . . .

I believe that both on the question of the survival of the Federation and on the issue of the creation of new Regions, the stand of the Mid-West delegation has been realistic and objective. The Mid-West does not seek special credit for its contributions to the solution of the country's problems, but I am certain that when the full story of the Conference, or when the full story of these anxious times can be told, we will have no cause to regret the part which the Mid-West has played in the whole episode"<sup>40</sup>

Before the exercise of creating new states could be carried to its logical conclusion for it to materialise, the slender confidence that remained between the Ibo and the Hausa, the principal actors in the two coups, had been stretched to its limit by political and social tensions immediately after the second coup. Two subsequent waves of riots in the Northern Region in May and in September/October 1966 worsened the already deteriorating political in-

stability of the country. The several post-coup peace efforts did not achieve the desired result, particularly among a group of adamant secessionist hawks who rejected one peace move after another. The several peace efforts and attempts at reconciliation included the Aburi Peace Conference at which, among other things, Gowon insisted on the continuation of the unity of the country and also firmly opposed splitting up the Army as the East insisted. He stressed that it would be “wrong for us now to decide to start going back at this stage, whilst a lot of people have started to build up into one whole. I think,” Colonel Gowon continued, “we should try to keep what we have got, with realistic modifications where necessary. We should keep the Army’s oneness as much as possible.”<sup>41</sup>

The significance of the Aburi Conference became more glaring on the return home of the leaders when officials of the Federal side and the potential secessionists interpreted the Aburi peace document, to which their leaders were signatories, in different ways. The pursuit of peace, however, continued. For example, another of Gowon’s peace effort was contained in Decree No. 8 which decentralized the Federal Government to such an extent that the Regions were virtually autonomous units in each of which each Regional Military Governor had executive powers. The provisions of Decree No. 8 made Nigeria anything but a Federation. It gave the Eastern Region all that the Aburi Peace Agreement provided for. It is also now history that the East rejected the provisions of Decree No. 8. The subsequent pronouncement of Chief Awolowo, in his letter of resignation from a Yoruba “Leaders-of-Thought” meeting in Ibadan, which was preparing for the next peace effort, seemed to have encouraged the potential secessionists when he, Chief Awolowo, said that should the East secede the West would “feel free to follow suit.”<sup>42</sup> In the meantime, Northern leaders in their own “Leaders-of-Thought” meeting decided that the North was “irrevocably committed to the creation of more states — whether or not they are created elsewhere — as the basis of stability in the North and also in the entire Federation, and

urged the Federal Government to take immediate steps to set in motion the machinery for the creation of these states."<sup>43</sup> The nation was pleasantly stunned.

Nothing could be more pleasing to the ears of the Federal Government, except for the Eastern Region to have announced that it was back into the fold of *one* Nigerian entity. Indeed, it is fair to suggest that the Nigerian civil war could have been avoided if Ojukwu and the secessionist hawks had agreed to the Northern declaration for the creation of more states. The Northern decision was a pleasant surprise to most of the nation, particularly the "minority" peoples of the North and those of the Calabar-Ogoja-River (COR) Area which the secessionists would later claim as part of their secessionist state. The decision sewed up the Federal side. Lagos now heaved a deep sigh of relief that it had been given a new lease of life. The desire to keep the Nigerian Federation as one entity was revitalized. Chief Obafemi Awolowo, who had been one of the ardent advocates of the creation of more states, felt pleasantly flabbergasted by this new Northern move. Not only did he now throw his support behind the nationalists, he also became the Federal Commissioner for Finance and Deputy Chairman of the Federal Executive Council, the Federal Executive branch of Government having been reorganized to include military men as well as civilians.

Now revitalized, the Federal Government was ready for a showdown with the authorities in the East. But there were still some more peace moves which the East Regional Government rejected, in an uncompromising attitude which bordered on arrogance. The last major peace effort by Lt. Col. Yakubu Gowon in the effort to placate the East and prevent the Nigerian balloon from bursting was the National Reconciliation Committee, a peace delegation of prominent Nigerians which listened to and took the secessionist leader's demands to Gowon in Lagos. The secessionist leader, Chukwuemeka Ojukwu, demanded that the Federal Government should end its economic sanctions against the East, and that all Nigerian soldiers should be posted to their Re-

gion of origin; by inference troops of Northern origin who "occupied" the West should be pulled out and posted to the North. Security in Lagos, the Federal Capital, he continued, should rest with the Commander-in-Chief but in consultation with *all* the Military Governors, again, with the implication that any of the Regional Governors could veto any measures that such governor believed would be to his Region's detriment. The Eastern Region, on its part, would revoke its revenue edict of March 31, 1967. Gowon assured the National Reconciliation Committee that he would impliment the East's requests. He made an announcement to that effect on May 20, 1967, and immediately lifted the economic blockade against the East. The Northern Military Governor, Lt. Col. Hassan Katsina, flew from his headquarters in Kaduna to Ibadan, Headquarters of the Western Region, to personally inform troops of Northern origin that they would all be moved back to the Northern Region. Nigerians were optimistic that peace was at last at hand.

The hopes of peace were shattered by the Eastern Region's response to the announcement Gowon made. The East's Director of Information, the novelist Cyprian Ekwensi, said that the Eastern Region had received the Federal revocation of sanctions against the East with "contempt, levity, and apathy".<sup>44</sup> Not surprisingly, the Eastern Regional Government on May 23, 1967, officially rejected the peace effort of the National Reconciliation Committee. A few days later, on May 26, 1967, Ojukwu addressed the East's Consultative Assembly, which, for what ever it was worth, gave him the powers and urged him to declare "at an early practicable date Eastern Nigeria as a free, sovereign and independent state by the name and title of the Republic of Biafra".

The authorities in Lagos had anticipated that move and had prepared for it. That same night Gowon declared a state of emergency for the entire nation and announced that he had assumed "full powers for the short period necessary to carry out the measures which are now urgently required."<sup>45</sup> He re-activated the blockade against the East. Decree No. 8 which was promulgated

deliberately to appease the East was nullified. More was still to come. He announced that Nigeria was divided into more states, twelve in all.<sup>46</sup> Nigerians were jubilant, particularly the confidence of the federalists was now strengthened and the "minority areas" felt secure and out of domination by the majority peoples within the former regions. The Northern Region was broken into six states, thereby cracking its monolithic posture. The East was broken into three, with the Ibo people having their own state and the non-Ibo "minority" peoples in the East two of their own states. The Mid-West remained as it was. Some part was carved from the Western Region and merged with the Federal Territory of Lagos to form Lagos State. What remained of the Western Region became Western State. Gowon had won his first major success by his creation of more states, 12 in all.

For the secessionist hawks, the creation of more states was a bombshell, a political reality which they refused to accept or even believe. Apprehensive Ibo leaders, who perhaps either feared recriminations they believed they would face if they re-united with the rest of the nation or who hoped for the rewards and political appointments they would reap from their so-called new "nation", began to speed up the secession of the Eastern Region which would include, according to them, the two new states of the "minority" peoples in that part of Nigeria. On May 30, 1967, rebel secessionist leader Ojukwu proclaimed that "the territory and Region known as Eastern Nigeria, together with her continental shelves and territorial waters, shall henceforth be an independent sovereign state of the name and title The Republic of Biafra." A new flag was hoisted in public buildings in the East, and the Police and the Army appeared in different uniforms. A national anthem which sounded like Sibelius's *Finlandia* and which Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe later claimed was plagiarised from his poem, "Ode to Onitsha", was broadcast. These "national" symbols, as Nigeria's then Federal Commissioner for Information and Labour, Chief Anthony Enahoro, pointed out at a press conference in London on July 17, 1967, must have taken months to prepare. This, in-

deed, would seem to imply that the East was perhaps already committed to secession long before and hence it rejected one peace move after another.

While nothing particularly dramatic happened for the next thirty days, the atmosphere was tense. On June 30, 1967, Ojukwu accentuated the charged atmosphere when he announced that he would wage war against the rest of Nigeria. A poor militarily-equipped Nigeria was now being cajoled and coaxed into war with one of its own units. On July 6, 1967, Federal troops marched against secessionist so-called "Biafra" from two fronts. Nigerian politics of national unity had now turned into the "brothers' war". One cannot ignore Professor S. Aluko's remarks, who himself was Professor of Economics at the then Eastern Nigerian-owned university at Nsukka just before the outbreak of the war, that

"We all tried to prevent a shooting war. At least, some of us could claim that while it was possible, we did our best as others did, but failed . . . In the last attempt by the National Reconciliation Committee, some of us made it clear that if the East spurned the Committee totally, the whole of Nigeria, outside the East, would be ranged against the East. It has happened. The Federal Military Government has not been without blames, particularly because of its tardiness after Aburi. But in fairness to the Government, everything possible was done by it to prevent the Nigerian balloon from bursting and to appease the East to the extent that many Nigerians were doubting whether the Federal Government was not a jelly fish, unable to bark or bite. Many Easterners even believed not only that the Federal Government would not fight if the East seceded, but that it could not fight. They also have been proved wrong."<sup>47</sup>

Nigeria mounted what she initially called a "Police action" to arrest the secession. But events soon showed that it was much more serious than that. The result was a civil war which ended in January 1970 when a crippled and defeated so-called "Biafra" unconditionally surrendered and declared the secession ended. As Professor A. Aluko had written in *West Africa*,

"We should no longer delude ourselves. The East must recognize the ultimate superiority of the whole Federation. Seven million Ibos cannot expect to hold the other forty-nine million Nigerians to ransom."<sup>48</sup>

A young Nigerian military leader, Lt. Col. Yakubu Gowon, "a compromise choice", had succeeded in maintaining Nigerian unity, the main objective of the war, as well as in directing the reconciliation and re-absorption of the Ibo into the mainstream of Nigerian life peacefully and without vendetta. Victorious Nigerians themselves have been magnanimous. The nation's attempt to pick-up the pieces and re-absorb the defeated secessionists into one political entity after the civil war was a major lesson in human tolerance and political integration, particularly in view of the magnanimity of the victorious federalists. It is this conciliatory politics and the efforts at national re-unification in the genuine African spirit of brotherhood that underlined the speech of Major-General Indarjit Rikhye, President of the International Peace Academy, when he declared at the Peace Academy's Seminar held at the Lagos International Trade Fair Complex from April 9-12, 1979, the first to be held on the African Continent, that "The tragic [Nigerian] civil war ended with exemplary magnanimity on the part of the victorious Federal Government."<sup>49</sup> Similarly, as John de St. Jorre who covered the war for the *London Observer* wrote, "In the history of warfare, there can rarely have been such a bloodless end and such a merciful aftermath." Unquestionably, reconciliation in Nigeria has been a flattering human and political phenomenon, and Nigerians deserve to be proud and jubilant in their attempt to re-define their new political order in a successful atmosphere of peace and political stability.

Nigeria emerged from the civil war politically unified and with an extremely boisterous economy, largely from petroleum. But Gowon was now faced with other problems which included such issues as a new Constitution, eradication of bribery and corruption, and the disturbing experience of a gagged press. There was

also no concrete political programme for an orderly return to civilian rule. Indeed, Gowon achieved nothing substantial or particularly flattering in his 9-point programme which he himself listed; these included:

1. Reorganization of the Armed Forces;
2. Implementation of the National Development Plan and repair of war damages;
3. Introduction of a new Revenue Allocation Formula;
4. Eradication of bribery and corruption from the national life;
5. Settlement of the question of the creation of more states;
6. Conduction of a population census;
7. Preparation and adoption of a new Constitution;
8. Organization of genuinely national political parties; and
9. Organization of elections of popularly elected government in the States and at the Federal level at the centre.

These political issues needed a new strategy and a different approach in order to provide for a viable and sustained political stability. As Nigeria's post-war Head of State, Gowon lacked the necessary political and leadership qualities which were different from those the war years from 1967-70 demanded. Thereafter, he demonstrated political incompetence, an obtuse and undefined leadership too weak to direct the political affairs as well as manage the economy of the country after the war when Nigeria began to drift aimlessly. Series of problems, largely political and economic, developed. For example, he changed the date for a return to civilian rule. The all important census exercise in 1973 under a retired Chief Justice Sir Adetokunboh Ademola was a disaster, and census officials were re-examining the figures in the attempt to have something salvageable. Nor did he, it seems, seriously discuss the question of creating more states even though some members of his Cabinet publicly agitated that new states be created; indeed, the

creation of more states as shown above had been one of his regime's nine-point programme. He did nothing. Gowon was now like a captain without a compass, piloting a rudderless vessel in mid-sea. As Professor Opeyemi Ola wrote in the *Sunday Times*, "for every one good Gowon had done, he did 10 bad ones."<sup>50</sup> Thus, his civil war achievements notwithstanding, Gowon became unpopular towards the end of his regime. Nigerians yearned for a change of leadership.

His mistake, some critics said, was that he stayed too long on a job that he was capable of or at least did not seem to have demonstrated capability for. An African proverb states that the best masquerade wisely departs the village square at the height of the applause from the crowd and does not remain a moment longer. The then Nigerian leader, Yakubu Gowon, having won the political and military victory of re-unifying the country chose to remain on the Nigerian political platform after the civil war. Other critics said that as the Head of State — and a military one at that — Gowon lacked firmness, that he was too weak and that he listened to too many advisers many of whom were syncophants (not that he had to accept their advice).

The major significance of Yakubu Gowon's leadership in the nation's political history, according to some observers, is perhaps the preservation of the unity of the country. He was effective in his reconciliatory approach, and he gained immense credit for re-unifying the country and for the non-vindictive embrace of the defeated secessionists. This particular aspect of the political history of this nation was so impressive and overwhelming that Gowon's name initially became literally a household word. Indeed, the slogan of "One Nigeria" during the civil war was coined from his name: G-O-W-O-N, "Go On With One Nigeria." And it is for this important legacy of maintaining the unity of the nation that the Military Administration of General Muhammed, which toppled General Gowon, credited and retired him with full benefits befitting a former Head of State. As Gen. Murtala Muhammed himself said, among other things, in his inaugural address to the

nation, the Federal Military Government retired General Yakubu Gowon as the Head of State of the nation and from the Armed Forces "in his present rank of General with full benefits in recognition of his past services to the Nation."<sup>51</sup>

Gowon had earned the praise because of his effort to maintain the unity of the country when the secessionist hawks attempted to break away from the rest of the country. Once the civil war ended, the political tensions and issues demanding the basis for a stable political order were so overwhelming that the respect the nation had in that regime began to wane and erode, particularly in the three years between 1972-75 when the society came to be identified with corruption, lethargy and decadence. The same Nigerian public that had cheered, chanted and sang praise of Gowon became the same disgruntled people who hooted at him when he drove past in his motorcade. It then appeared that his regime could not meet the nation's expectations of the provisions for a politically stable society in its post-war era. On July 29, 1975, the Military toppled that Government through a bloodless coup. General Murtala Ramat Muhammed came to power.

Nigerians hailed the change. So did the major national newspapers. In its front page comment, titled "TIMELY INTERVENTION", the *Daily Times*, after listing the failures of Gowon, concluded that "All in all General Gowon's Government had lost all the moral authority to continue to govern since January [1975], and the end was just as it should be."<sup>52</sup> Similarly, the *New Nigerian* editorial on the ouster of that regime, while praising Gowon "for contributing his best to preserve the unity of the country",<sup>53</sup> stated that "in the last few years of [Gowon's regime], Nigeria's affairs [were] characterized by 'indecisions and indiscipline', and a progressive drift. The congestion at the ports and the unsightly queues at the filling stations", the paper continued, "were perhaps the most obvious results of the drift."<sup>54</sup> Also, the *Tribune*, which said that Gowon's overthrow "could not have come as a surprise to any experienced and informed observer of the Nigerian scene,"<sup>55</sup> was quite emphatic that Gowon "rightly deser-

ved the overthrow. The surprise", the *Tribune* continued, "is that it did not come sooner."<sup>56</sup> The paper, which praised Gowon that "the greatest achievement for which he will be remembered is the creation of twelve states in the Federation", an exercise which it described as a "courageous act",<sup>57</sup> listed the reasons why Gowon fell and concluded that "Gowon's Government fell because he had overstayed his welcome."<sup>58</sup>

Not only were Nigerians jubilant over the overthrow of Gowon's regime of drift and decadence, they were also happy and flabbergasted with the new leadership. With business-like fashion and with military precision, Gen. Muhammed and his colleagues of the Supreme Military Council, the highest of the new 3-tier power structure during the Military's 13 years rule, mapped out a series of concrete political programmes for the return to civilian rule in October 1979.

### *Gen. Murtala Muhammed: Purposeful Leadership.*

Immediately he became Head of State, General Muhammed set up several programmes that were to define the new and stable political order. The three major bases for political stability were an acceptable population census, the creation of more states, and the provision of a new constitution. The first provision for a stable political order which General Muhammed tackled was the question of an acceptable population census. The nation had conducted in 1973, under the previous regime, a population census exercise whose result the then government said was "provisional". Gowon himself said that "the figures are very provisional but I can say that the 1973 count was probably the most thorough headcount of human beings by human beings anywhere in the world."<sup>59</sup> There were two types of reactions: those who thought the figures were the most accurate, while another group was appalled. Majority of Nigerians were, of course, indifferent.

The response of the critics to the official so-called "provisional figures" was catastrophic for the nation. As the *Daily Times* editorial of June 8, 1974 emphasized, "the very survival of this nation hangs on an acceptable census results."<sup>60</sup> Indeed, as the *Daily Sketch* editorial of May 19, 1974 had asked, "How provisional is 'provisional'? According to experts", the paper continued, "provisional figures are never too far from the final ones. The margin of error is always confined to one or two per cent either way. In fact, should the final figures prove to be significantly different from the provisional ones it would be a complete admission of incompetence of the census board. Moreover, the board would not have ventured out with the provisional figure if it had genuine doubts about it." That was the *Daily Sketch*.<sup>61</sup> The reaction from the public was equally devastating. Whatever the merits and demerits of the 1973 census exercise, the country realized that it was a very important issue to the future of Nigeria's stability. As the *Nigerian Herald* editorial of April 19, 1974, stated, "the 1973 census is so crucial that it could not be taken as an ordinary political fun."<sup>62</sup> It was quite a serious issue, and equally important was the fact that Nigerians did not believe the figures to be accurate. One could not but agree with the *Daily Times* editorial of June 8, 1974, that "A census exercise whose outcome does not enjoy public confidence is a wasted effort." Or, as the *Nigerian Chronicle* put it in its editorial of May 20, 1974, "there is no gainsaying the fact that headcount is a national and touchy affair and to pretend that it is like the Olympic Games result is self-deception."

Census officials were reportedly re-examining the so-called "provisional figures" in order to have something salvageable. That in itself seemed to aggravate the census crisis. It seemed that no matter how genuinely accurate any new final figures were, Nigerians would still not believe them to be accurate. The provisional census figures though officially announced were not acceptable to the majority of Nigerians; nor were they rejected by the Federal Government before the change in Government on July 29, 1975, when Gowon was overthrown in a bloodless coup. In his

maiden speech on July 30, 1975, the new Head of State and Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces, General Murtala Ramat Muhammed, told the nation that "with regard to the 1973 population census, it is now clear that whatever results are announced will not command general acceptance throughout the country. It has therefore been decided to cancel the 1973 population count."<sup>63</sup> Nigerians heaved a deep sigh of relief. For planning purposes, the late Head of State concluded, "the 1963 census figures shall continue to be used."<sup>64</sup> That apparently simple action was very important. The decision to cancel the 1973 population census figures was a historical mark of the Administration of General Murtala Ramat Muhammed. It went a long way in providing an acceptable basis for political stability.

Then, there was the question of the creation of more states. The 12-state structure, created in 1967 in the heat of the now defunct Biafran secessionist attempt, had been an important one, successfully executed largely because the then leader was riding on the coat-tails of the popular nationalist effort to thwart the Biafran secessionist intent. In other words, the exercise was more an attempt to pre-empt the secessionists' bid to opt out of Nigeria with the eastern minority area – the Calabar-Ogoja-River (COR) Area in particular. That was in 1967. No more states were created thereafter. Yet the demand for the creation of more states which Nigerians believed would safeguard their interests, their security and resolve the issue of power-sharing – and hence the basis for national political stability – was very intense, particularly after the war years. Nigeria's 12-state structure was an interim, though important, stabilizing factor in the country's political development. The exercise contributed in unifying the nation during the tempestuous period when Nigeria was on the brink of fragmentation. That was because the creation of more states in 1967 generated confidence in both the minorities and the federalists, a confidence which the government needed in order to carry out its objective of unifying the country successfully. It also decentralized development. However, what happened in some of the 12 states after the

end of the civil war was a tendency towards "selective development". This posed a threat to some groups. It caused genuine fear of insecurity and of domination — real and imagined; the latter does not make the fear any less genuine.

Consequently, there emerged new minority and separatist groups within areas some of which were themselves once minority areas. Thus, soon after the war years, prevailing conditions emphasized that the 12-state structure had served its main usefulness as an important unifying factor, and that a more effective and, hopefully, permanent arrangement for continuous development and sustained stability was necessary. Pursuing policies that would ensure political stability and sustained national development, particularly in an atmosphere of Nigeria's affluence in her new found wealth, became Gowon's main challenge. The creation of more states would have been a major contribution to providing political stability. Gowon did nothing about this important national issue, even though several members of his own Cabinet and people from all walks of life in the country emphasized the need to create more states.

One did not need a crystal ball to know that Gowon's failure to create more states was another major reason for the final demise of his 9-year-old regime. General Murtala Ramat Muhammed, unlike his predecessor, felt the pulse of the nation. He immediately appointed a committee under Mr. Justice Ayo Irikefe, a very distinguished Justice of the Supreme Court, to examine the question of the creation of more states. That was barely a month, in September 1975, after General Muhammed came to power. The panel did a fine job as stated by the Head of State in his February 3, 1976, speech creating more states and that the Panel deserved the nation's gratitude for the excellent work it did. Re-iterating the Panel's observation that the agitation for the creation of more states was a result of bad government, General Muhammed promised that his Administration was determined to entrench good and purposeful Government; that the old and new states must henceforth promote even development within their res-

pective states and allay the fears of minorities through fairness and justice in all government matters; that the state Governments would distribute all resources equitably at the divisional level and that the more backward areas would receive the greater attention of all the State Governments. The Panel recommended that the creation of new states would emphasize Nigeria's future political stability, a recommendation General Muhammed's Supreme Military Council accepted. In his speech on February 3, 1976, announcing the creation of new states, the late Head of State remarked that "the issue of the creation of new states has generated so much excitement and interest that the Government is fully aware that its decision cannot please all those affected. What we have done after our long deliberations is in the interest of the future stability of this country."<sup>65</sup>

Rightly anticipating that the creation of new states could cause jubilation in some areas and dissent in others, both of which could cause unrest and civil disorder, General Muhammed sounded "a note of serious warning against anybody who may wish to use this exercise for fomenting trouble;"<sup>66</sup> that his Government would not tolerate any threat to law and order. Neither would the Government "condone any emotional outburst or provocative demonstrations and celebrations by any individual or group in support or against creation of new states in any part of the country."<sup>67</sup> He added that "the new states and indeed the Federation should be given the right atmosphere to settle down in peace and harmony."<sup>68</sup> General Murtala Muhammed created a total of 19 states. Seven of the previous 12 states remained unchanged, except for minor boundary adjustments.

The exercise, besides providing political stability, also brought Government nearer to the people. The creation of more states thus further de-centralized the several administrative machinery. The 19 States are small enough as to make the rural areas be within the easy reach of the seat of authority. Yet they are large enough to make the new state administrative machinery more efficient. Indeed, the 19-state structure de-centralized the pre-

viously rather obtuse and flabby administration to a point of enhancing efficiency. This has made the execution of national policies more purposeful, more functional, more efficient. There are also other advantages. For example, the creation of more states has given rise to state-consciousness. This phenomenon has not been detrimental to the suzerainty of the nation, nor has it diluted the Nigerianness of the individual. Instead, the division of the former states into 19 in 1976 genuinely strengthened the central authority, far much more so than the 12-states structure did. Also, it has created an atmosphere of healthy competition. This phenomenon has enhanced the realization of a more widespread development throughout the country. Previously, development was tripolar – centered around mostly the former regional capitals. The creation of new states has “de-centralized” the former regions and states, thus making development multi-directional. This opted well for the development not only of more areas but also of areas peripheral to the former regional capitals – Kaduna in the Northern Region, Ibadan in the West, and Enugu in the East. Thus Sokoto has become a centre for development. So are Minna, Kano and Maiduguri. And Calabar and Benin City as well as Markurdi and Yola; nor does Ilorin have to depend on the benevolence of the authorities in the former Northern regional capital.

The decentralization of the development syndrome has been particularly true of minority areas in the former regions. The creation of more states, greatly oiled along by the affluence from “black-gold” (petroleum), made it possible for the previous minority areas to have some semblance of development – indeed, to a degree that has pleasantly astonished those affected. The rural areas are now within an appreciable nearness to the new state capitals. Not only has the 19-state structure thus provided for a further enhanced healthy competition, it has also achieved a widespread development which now extends to the periphery. The nation as a whole has thus benefited from, and continue to enjoy, the ripple-effect of development. Also, the creation of more states was one sure way to at least minimize further the practice

of selective and discriminatory development. But, as General Muhammed stated, it was also necessary "to avoid in the process a proliferation of states which will make nonsense of the whole exercise since our recent experience has shown that the more states we create, the more we highlight the problem of minorities."<sup>69</sup> As he advised, "the only permanent safeguard against the problem of minorities is for all of us to learn to live together as Nigerians and treat the states as centres for local and even development."<sup>70</sup>

The third accomplishment by General Murtala Muhammed in his bid to provide the bases for political stability was the issue of a new Constitution. He set up in October 1975 a Constitution Drafting Committee (CDC), under the chairmanship of Chief F. R. A. Williams, a distinguished Nigerian lawyer and a Senior Advocate of the country (SAN), to draw up a new Constitution for the country, a constitutional charter that would take into consideration the past political experiences in the effort to provide a new basis for a stable political order. It was because of the need to provide a unified and viable nation that General Muhammed said in his 1976 New Year Message that "Our effort at development may not be maximized unless there is political stability. It is in view of this", he continued, "that the Federal Military Government set up the Constitution Drafting Committee to examine and draft the constitutional charter that can provide for peace and stability, and above all the security of the individual."<sup>71</sup> Providing for a new Constitution, that is, by appointing the Constitution Drafting Committee, was an extremely important achievement of the Administration of General Murtala Ramat Muhammed. One could not but agree with him when he told members of the Constitution Drafting Committee at their inaugural meeting on October 18, 1975, that they "are at the bar of history."<sup>72</sup> Continuing, he said that their

"deliberations during the forthcoming months will be crucial as to whether or not we can create a political arrangement which

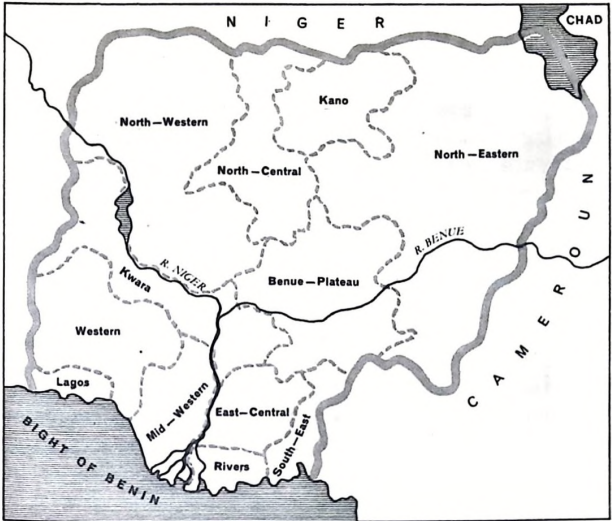
will be viable and which will sustain us for many years to come. Nigerians everywhere will be looking up to you for a sound and enduring Constitution. Whatever Constitution you draft, it must be workable and acceptable to the majority of our people. For our part, the Federal Military Government is committed to ensuring the smooth implementation of its political programme, and I trust that you realise that your assignment is central to the programme."<sup>73</sup>

By providing the nation with a new Constitution, by providing an acceptable population census figures (merely by cancelling the controversial figures of the 1973 population count), and, by the creation of more states in 1976, General Muhammed bequeathed to the nation three important bases for a stable political order. His actions showed that he, unlike General Ironsi or Gowon, had done his homework — and thoroughly too. It was in view of the need to provide the bases for peace and political stability that General Muhammed mapped out a 5-stage return to civilian rule, prominent aspects of which included: the creation of states; the establishment of Local Government Councils; the appointment of the Constitution Drafting Committee; a democratically elected Constituent Assembly which later debated the Draft Constitution from which the new Constitution has emerged with some amendments by the Supreme Military Council; and, lastly, lifting the ban on politics and then the elections to elect a civilian government, which were effected by his successor. By initiating these political programmes and policies, General Muhammed provided the major bases for political stability, achievements which contributed tremendously to the smooth return to civilian rule.

Not only did General Muhammed map out and initiate these policies and the programmes that made the transition from Military government to civilian rule in October 1979 smooth and wholesome, but also the way and manner in which he accomplished the policies providing for a stable political order were equally fascinating. His precision in action and his clinical thoroughness in the national interest, rather than compromise na-

tional objectives for the benefit of interest groups, were very impressive. For example, by appointing a Constitution Drafting Committee immediately he came to power, General Murtala Muhammed achieved in barely four weeks what the previous regime did not even attempt in nine years. The same thing was also true of the creation of more states in that no more states were created from 1967-75, a period of 8 years in contrast to the fact that General Murtala Muhammed accomplished that same exercise in barely six months; indeed, he set up the machinery for the exercise barely six weeks after coming to power. Similarly, providing an acceptable population census was one of the 9-point programme of the preceding military regime. Here too, that Administration failed the nation. The result of the 1973 population census exercise which was announced in 1974 was disastrous for political stability. General Murtala Muhammed immediately cancelled the census figures in his maiden speech on July 30, 1975. That was on the second day in office of the new Federal Military Government. That quick and decisive action removed one of the basic issues inhibitive to political stability and national integration in Nigeria. These three acts, accomplished in such a short period and as simple as General Muhammed made them appear, went a long way in establishing public confidence in the Government where none had existed.

One could argue that these areas are of concern to the intelligentsia of the society, and therefore would tend to undermine the claim that General Muhammed's Administration enjoyed country-wide support, a support that cut across all social classes. While it is true that the general public may not be fully aware of the ramifications and political prerequisites for a stable society, it is fair to suggest that General Muhammed had won the hearts of all social classes in the nation not only by his prescription for a stable polity but also by his examination of those social issues which hotbed the public generally. For example, Nigerians were also pleased that General Murtala Muhammed, unlike his predecessor, made efforts to fight inflation by flooding the market with essen-



Map of Nigeria showing the 12 states created in May 1967.

Map of Nigeria showing the 19 states created in February 1976.



tial food items and thereby brought down the cost of living. These items included salt, milk, sugar, and meat — what the public popularly nick-named “Murtala Meat”. There was also the question of fuel shortage, which he also tackled. Other social benefits of the new Military Government included the question of abandoned properties in the then three (now four) eastern states; so also was the question of a new Federal Capital at Abuja while Lagos, the present Federal Capital, will remain one of the major commercial nerve centres of the nation. There were also new health projects, and reforms in the judiciary.

Similarly, General Muhammed combated corruption, a cancerous ailment that had eaten deep into the Nigerian society. There were some attempts in the past to arrest bribery and corruption. These included the Foster-Sutton Tribunal into the allegation of improper conduct of the then Premier of the Eastern Region in the affairs of the African Continental Bank, the probes in the West in 1962, and later the Nigeria Railway Corporation and the Nigerian Ports Authority in 1966. The political content of the earlier probes seemed to have been more pertinent and hence undermined any cleansing intensions, while the second coup on July 29, 1966, and the subsequent unsuccessful “Biafran” secessionist war so occupied the mind of the nation that nothing substantial came out of the last two probes and other reports of 1966. Indeed the war years had so exacerbated the twin evils of bribery and corruption that the previous regime listed their eradication as one of its 9-point programme in post-civil war Nigeria. Not only did it fail to combat corruption, it seemingly, latently, though inadvertently, encouraged it by exonerating allegedly corrupt public officials against whom sworn-affidavits had been lodged. “Supply and Removal” contractors, outright thievery of public funds and, the twin-evils of bribery and corruption ate deep into the Nigerian society and became the norm rather than the exception. Then came General Murtala Muhammed and his team of dedicated colleagues. They were determined to fight corruption.

Their first efforts in this direction were the several probes into

various agencies of the Federal Military and State Governments. These included the "Cement Affair" and FESTAC. The revelations at the probes were shocking, substantial amount of public funds having gone down the drain. The country in the previous 9-year period lost an impressive sum of money through bribery and corruption, a substantial amount that could have provided more and improved social services and jobs. The probes the Administration of General Murtala Muhammed set up and their subsequent releases have produced some check – deterrence – against corruption. That the new Government in addition seized some of the illegal acquisitions from the culprits was also a positive sign of the things to come, particularly as the seized properties were returned either to the respective states or to the Federal Government. The nation was now being steered from lethargy and decadence by the new Administration. General Muhammed thus infused a sense of discipline into the society. From this emerged the important emphasis on the concept of "public accountability" contained in the instructions which General Murtala Muhammed gave the Constitution Drafting Committee. Thus, the Constitution in the Fifth Schedule provides for a Code of Conduct for anyone who holds public office; it states in its Section 1 that "A public officer shall not put himself in a position where his personal interest conflicts with his duties and responsibilities," and hence officers who hold public office are required to declare their assets before their appointments and at the expiration of such appointments. Thus, the Fifth Schedule at Section 11 (1) provides that

"Every public officer shall within three months after coming into force of this Code of Conduct or immediately after taking office and thereafter –

- (a) at the end of every four years; and
- (b) at the end of his term of office,

submit to the Code of Conduct Bureau a written declaration of all his properties, assets and liabilities and those of his spouse, or unmarried children under the age of 21 years."

To the international community, General Murtala Muhammed is perhaps best remembered for his dynamic foreign policy which placed Nigeria in its proper place in international diplomacy. The new foreign policy, which General Muhammed initiated and vigorously pursued, has Africa as its central focus. As Nigeria's *News Focus* put it, "The centre-piece of Nigeria's foreign policy is Africa. If the centre-piece fails to hold, the foreign image of the nation will be in jeopardy. This means", the release continued, "that just as much as the independence, freedom, dignity, and economic progress of Africa are Nigeria's paramount interests so too are the peace, security and stability of the continent. For it is a self-evident truth that without peace and stability African development will be seriously hampered if not totally aborted."<sup>74</sup> In its commitment to Africa as the centre-piece of Nigeria's new foreign policy, General Muhammed's Federal Military Government assisted morally and financially those objectives that would guarantee peace, security and stability of the continent; so too has Nigeria identified with those countries throughout the world which have shown understanding, sympathy, appreciation and support for those policies and actions which will guarantee her objectives of achieving peace and stability in the continent.

General Murtala Muhammed had the dynamic and charismatic appeal of Major-General Joseph Nanven Garba as his Commissioner for External Affairs (Foreign Minister). An articulate and lucid military officer/diplomat who learnt fast on-the-job, General Garba successfully projected Nigeria's new foreign policy, resulting in the independence of Angola and the after-effects in Mozambique, the intensification of the revolution in Rhodesia, and the ripple effects in Namibia and South Africa. The nation was proud of the new leadership role in African affairs and gratified for the domestic policies of General Muhammed for a stable political order, particularly in preparation for the return to a civilian administration.

The several policies and actions were of profound importance to the nation – and to the Military Administration because they

created confidence in the general public; that confidence was sustained by the successful execution of the several political programme which General Muhammed mapped out when he came to power on July 29, 1975. The various policies that provided for a smooth transition into a civilian Administration are even more impressive when viewed against the background of the political development of the country from the time Nigeria achieved independence on October 1, 1960, through the time of the collapse of the preceding Military regime. It was a period that was characterised by political turmoil due to the sensitive issue of power-sharing among the three members of the tripartite regional structure of the country's federal matrimony at the time of independence, and, continued political tensions and social decadence after the civil war. Nigerians were gratified that they had a dynamic and purposeful leadership. Then one day, Friday, February 13, 1976, the nation was stunned by an incoherent radio broadcast from a Lt. Col. Bukar Sukar Dimka who said that he and his group of what he called "young revolutionaries" had assassinated the Head of State, General Muhammed, and that they had seized power through another coup. The abortive coup attempt was crushed within a few hours by loyal troops. The plotters were rounded up and after what Nigerians and Nigerian newspaper editorials believed to be thorough and fair trial, those found guilty were executed by firing squad and in some cases sentenced to serve severe prison terms.

The then newly appointed Chief of Staff, Supreme Headquarters (SHQ), after the assassination of General Muhammed, Major-General Shehu Musa Yar'Adua, told the nation in a television broadcast on March 11, 1976, that the board which investigated those involved in the coup attempt "went into detailed investigation of each case in order to establish preliminary cases against the persons accused."<sup>75</sup> He emphasized that "standard military and civil legal processes were adopted to adduce evidence. Witnesses were freely called upon and each defendant was given ample opportunity to call in any witness or refute any evidence

against him."<sup>76</sup> In cases where guilt was established, he also said, legal personnel then drew up charges which were then passed to a Military Tribunal for trial of the charged persons. Each of the bodies, the Chief of Staff (SHQ), stated, "worked intensively since that tragic Friday, most of the time working eighteen hours a day in order to arrive at some conclusion. This explains the apparent delay in announcing verdict on the guilty persons", the Chief of Staff added.<sup>77</sup> Major-General Shehu Musa Yar'Adua, in the short television broadcast on March 11, 1975, also stated that the Supreme Military Council had confirmed the sentences the Military Tribunal passed on those who were involved in the attempted coup. The Supreme Military Council, after confirming the sentences, directed that the execution by a firing squad should be carried out immediately.<sup>78</sup> Niyi Alonge gave a vivid and dramatic description of the moment of punishment in the *Daily Times* of March 12, 1976, in his article, captioned "The Great Bar Beach Show" (titled after a popular musical entertainment programme then on Lagos TV).

After the public execution on March 11, 1976, nothing dramatic happened for a while. The Federal Military Government was seeking the return of Yakubu Gowon to come home to answer the allegations of his involvement in the coup plot, as some of the culprits had implicated him. There were messages back and forth between the Nigerian Federal Military Government and the British Government on the question of the latter helping to make sure that Gowon came home. This made the clean-up drag on. As the *Daily Times* editorial of May 18, 1976, put it, "there is no doubt that the time lag between the first execution on March 11 and those of last Saturday inevitably encroached on other important matters competing for government's attention."<sup>79</sup> Round Two came on that Saturday when seven more persons found to be involved in the coup were executed by a firing squad at the Kirikiri Prisons. Two of the seven people were the co-ordinators of the February 13 abortive coup attempt, Lt. Col. Bukar Sukar Dimka, and, Joseph D. Gomwalk, Military Governor of Benue-

Plateau State in the Gowon regime. *Daily Times* reporters Willy Bozimo and Oje Oriere on May 18, 1976 reported on the few minutes before Dimka was tied to the stakes, according to them, "to face the music he had started on February 13, 1976." Five others joined them at the stakes, while 11 others were jailed for life. A total of 219 military personnel and civilians had been arrested after the coup attempt, out of whom the Board of Inquiry recommended 130 for trial. The Military Tribunal discharged 56.

The successor Head of State and Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces, General Olusegun Obasanjo, in a nation-wide television and radio broadcast on May 15, 1976, assured the nation that "throughout the investigation, scrupulous efforts were made to ensure that all those accused were fully heard and given a fair trial. Indeed, it was because of our desire to be meticulous in the pursuit of justice", he further said, "that it took this long to put the issues resulting from the abortive coup behind us."<sup>80</sup> The Nigerian public was satisfied with the way the Federal Military Government disposed of those found guilty in their role in the attempted coup of February 13, 1976. A sample of public opinion in the *New Nigerian* showed that the Federal Military Government had nation-wide support over the execution of the coup plotters. Like the general public, the Nigerian press also hailed the Federal Military Government's execution of the coup plotters and the jailing of their accomplices. A man in Kano, the home of the assassinated Head of State, was more philosophical in his support of the execution of the coup plotters. He told the *New Nigerian* that "coup plot has two facts: it either fails or succeeds. Those who threaten the security of this country must be paid in their own coins".<sup>81</sup> He, however, cautioned that "it is high time our Armed Forces leave us alone. Human life is too valuable to be gambled with."<sup>82</sup>

Yakubu Gowon, in the meantime, refused to come back home to face the charges against him. The Federal Military Government on its part refused to try him *in absentia* because of its "belief that he should be given a chance to be fully heard and fairly

tried.”<sup>83</sup> The British Government in the week of May 10, 1976, informed the Nigerian Government that it would not grant Nigeria’s request that it should facilitate Gowon’s return to Nigeria. The Supreme Military Council dismissed Yakubu Gowon from the Nigerian Army. The Head of State said that Gowon “will from now on be treated as a wanted person to face the allegations against him any time he sets foot on Nigerian soil.”<sup>84</sup> Dauda Usman and Clement Yildar, two other escapees wanted for their part in the February 13 coup attempt, were also similarly dismissed from the Nigerian Army. The Head of State warned that the Government “has made it clear to the British Government that any country which harbours Yakubu Gowon, or for that matter Dauda Usman or Clement Yildar, is committing an unfriendly act towards the Government and people of Nigeria.”<sup>85</sup>

The change that had come under the dynamic and charismatic leadership of General Murtala Muhammed, after nine years of the previous regime that was characterized by what Nigerians believed to be inertia, lethargy, corruption and decadence, was welcome. Not only because of its freshness; but more so because of its purposefulness, for its clarity, and because of its precision in action. Above all, Nigeria’s turbulent and stormy political experiences found the antidote in General Murtala Ramat Muhammed because he provided the bases for a stable political order and laid down the programme for the smooth 5-stage return to a civilian government after 13 years of military rule. His dedication to this nation, his efficiency in his endeavours, and his sheer guts in boldly mapping out a concrete political programme for this country not only provided for a stable and unified nation, but also infused a sense of discipline into the society. Consequently, his care for his fellow man gave Nigerians a sense of belonging. He taught them the lesson of sacrifice. His leadership gave us hope. His guts gave us strength. His dedication gave us inspiration. That experience was too brief; yet so overwhelming in its totality, in its sense of discipline, in its thoroughness and in its efficiency that it seemed too good to be true. Too beautiful to last. General Murtala

Ramat Muhammed entered and departed from the national as well as the international scene like a star in a twinkling. Too brief. Yet, it seems eternal because of the magnanimous legacy he left behind for posterity in that short period; the impact of his unprecedented leadership permeated every facet of the Nigerian society for which he sacrificed his life.

For Nigeria, indeed for the entire continent of Africa, General Muhammed had been the welcome "crisis leader". While one could not really isolate the leader's autonomy from the environmental context in which he led the affairs of Nigeria, one may tend to agree with De Gaulle's assertion that "History in its great moments tolerates in position of authority only those men capable of directing their own course."<sup>86</sup> Thus, General Muhammed, like other "crisis leaders" such as Ghandi and Churchill, could not be adequately understood by looking at the mere embodiments of the social issues of his time. The social issues and environmental forces may be relevant; but it was his actions that shaped the Nigerian political environment rather than that General Muhammed was molded by it. Of course, there are critics of this academic argument who would emphasize that the leadership of General Muhammed should be seen more as a function of the Nigerian political environment. Hence the comments of an American scholar who compares a leader to a bus driver may be relevant in the case of General Muhammed's predecessor. Professor Herbert Simon once argued that a leader is but "a bus driver whose passengers will leave him unless he takes them in the direction in which they wish to go. They leave him only minor discretion as to the road to be followed."<sup>87</sup> Whatever the case, it was clear that Nigerians were not satisfied with the path along which the previous regime led them once the civil war ended. General Muhammed, on the other hand, provided new hope. His dynamism and commitment to the public good — and above all, the security of the individual — in part explains why Nigerians, whose country had found political stability so elusive, were overwhelmingly saddened by the brutal assassination of General Muhammed.

The tremendous and magnanimous impact the late Head of State left behind, particularly in such a brief period, was bound to arouse scepticism and apprehension among Nigerians about his successor, no matter who that person was. Could a successor match the dynamism of General Muhammed? Could he "deliver the goods"? Could the public even trust him? Where does the country go from here? These were some of the questions of pain and anxiety Nigerians were grappling with. It is in this context that one must understand the dilemma of the leadership role that was thrust on General Muhammed's successor. For a nation that had yearned for a dynamic and purposeful leadership, a leader whom the overwhelming majority of Nigerians could and did believe in and to whom they willingly entrusted their fate and destiny, the tragic experience of February 13, 1976, Nigerians believed, was irreparable and irreplaceable. No less a person than General Obasanjo himself captured the mood and the thought of the nation at that moment of anxiety, that moment of doubt, when he said in his inaugural address to the nation, in his very opening statement, that "We are again passing through a critical period in the history of this country."<sup>88</sup> Eulogising his slain predecessor, General Obasanjo said that he had no doubt that "the late General Muhammed gave this country a unique sense of direction and purpose," and that "we all mourn the passing away of one of the greatest sons of Nigeria."<sup>89</sup>

Could the successor also provide the "unique sense of direction and purpose", and continue the dynamic policies of his predecessor? Or, was the tragic death of General Muhammed, which was a brutal blow to the sense of hope Nigerians had come to cherish, a relapse and slip back into the decadence Nigerians had known? What we were confronted with, therefore, was the society's general tendency to compare the exceptional effectiveness of General Muhammed with that of whoever aspired to succeed him, or, with that of whom the peculiar and unfortunate incidence of February 13, 1976, as it were, forced on the nation. It was not just the rather simplistic definition of leadership in contemporary social science

literature as "influence of authority, power and control over others" but an emphasis on the effectiveness or performance of the leadership. This is what Professor Lewis Edinger refers to as "what leaders do and how they do it. 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>90</sup>

For the Nigerian public, General Muhammed was a *great leader* because he provided hope at the time of despair and because he introduced major innovations into the political process, policies which were directed towards achieving a politically stable nation — and above all, the security of the individual. This made it appear rather descriptive, that is, the ability of General Muhammed to guide and structure the collective pattern of behaviour of the members of the society. The leadership of the late Head of State, as Professor Edinger describes that of a "crisis leader," was "at all times relational, interpersonal, and based upon inequality of influence between the leader as the influencing agent and the followers as the objects on his efforts to cue their behaviour so that it will conform with his personal objectives."<sup>91</sup> In a similar way, General Muhammed produced effective mass mobilization. But in another sense, General Muhammed's leadership was more in keeping with Professor E. Victor Wolfenstein's concept of psychodynamic aspects of the pattern of behaviour of the leader. This means, he wrote, that "the personality characteristic of the leader expresses his inner needs through a style of performance which is congruent with the role expectations and emotional predispositions of the masses the leader mobilizes behind him."<sup>92</sup> This was very important in the Nigerian situation. Indeed, in Nigeria, as in many other nations, one of the greatest needs in creating the new polity is to find ways to mobilize the population effectively in order to achieve national objectives. Nigeria found the answer in the personality and leadership of General Muhammed. Was it possible that the Nigerian polity could also enjoy this cherished need of effectively mobilizing the population for the achievement of na-

tional objectives under the successor's leadership — and beyond?

The hope of the Nigerian public was to wish, perhaps naively, that the heroic leadership of General Muhammed could be transformed wholesale into a genuine and lasting stable political order. The public expected that even if the political system itself could not institutionalize that transformation, the successor at least could. The country had been through the trauma of leadership crisis through each "leadership period" since the country achieved independence. The one successful leadership period in the history of the country had been too brief. The nation was definitely not prepared for the abrupt and brutal end of that leadership. And worse still, no one, it seems, had prepared (or had been prepared within the Supreme Military Council) for the routinization of that successful leadership. Thus the double tragedy for the Nigerian political system. Fortunately, the nation found a new leader, for the transition period, in General Olusegun Obasanjo who also believed in the policies of General Murtala Ramat Muhammed. I have attempted in more detail to capture the dynamic and purposeful 6-month administration of General Murtala Ramat Muhammed as well as the preceding military periods of Major-General Aguiyi-Ironsi and Gowon, and, the turbulent and stormy experiences in pre-military Nigerian politics of the First Republic in another effort, *200 DAYS TO ETERNITY*, which has been described as a very well-researched book that will remain valid for all time as an authoritative and well-documented study of this important period in the political evolution of Nigeria.

*General Olusegun Obasanjo:  
The Policy Continues*

Once the abortive coup attempt was crushed, the Supreme Military Council unanimously chose General Olusegun Obasanjo, who as the former Chief of Staff (Supreme Headquarters) was the deputy to General Murtala Muhammed, to succeed his assassinated boss as the new Head of the Federal Military Government,

Commander-in-Chief of the nation's Armed Forces. He vowed to continue the policies of his predecessor. Indeed, as he said in his inaugural broadcast to the nation after that tragic event, the greatest tribute the Military Government could pay to General Murtala Muhammed, whom General Obasanjo described as "one of the greatest sons of Nigeria,"<sup>93</sup> was to continue the late Head of State's policies. General Obasanjo said that he had no doubt in his mind that "the late General Muhammed gave this country a unique sense of purpose and direction. We are all now obliged," he further said, "to continue with these policies laid down by the Supreme Military Council under the dynamic leadership of General Muhammed."<sup>94</sup> Continuing, General Obasanjo said that he knew that "General Murtala Muhammed would have wished that somebody should continue the task of nation-building from where the late Head of State left off. I have worked very closely with him", General Obasanjo further said, "and have shared his beliefs and commitments to the Federal Military Government's policies and action. I believe and feel strongly committed to all we have been doing and I can pay him no better tribute than to continue in the spirit with which he led this country: that of complete dedication."<sup>95</sup> Re-assuring the nation in his maiden speech after the tragic assassination of General Muhammed, General Obasanjo emphasized that "All policies of the Federal Military Government continue as before and all Ministries should continue their normal duties."<sup>96</sup>

Not only did General Obasanjo continue with the policies laid down by his predecessor, he also made sure that they came off as had been planned. But his style was different. He lacked the charisma, the flair and the much needed aggressive dynamism of General Murtala Muhammed, which the times demanded. The apprehension of the Nigerian public about *any* successor leadership after the tragic assassination of General Muhammed was soon confirmed by the sense of an all-pervading slump in national affairs and a tendency of inadvertent flirtation to return to the old order of apathy, drift, indifference and indiscipline.

General Murtala Muhammed in his 1976 New Year Message had told the nation that our New Year Resolution should be "dedication to duty and responsibility with courage and sacrifice: responsibility to do what is expected of us; courage to do that which is right; sacrifice in order to shun greed, and God's guidance that the fruits of our efforts may multiply a thousandfold."<sup>97</sup> The sense of commitment to duty and responsibility which Nigerians demonstrated after the "public purge" tended to give way to what General Olusegun Obasanjo himself in 1977 regarded as indiscipline.<sup>98</sup> At his historic "Jaji Declaration," during which he appealed to all Nigerians to wage war against indiscipline and to evolve "a disciplined, fair, just and humane African society," General Obasanjo said that "It is a matter for regret that most public servants tend to subdue their political discipline in the face of personal aggrandisement."<sup>99</sup> Continuing, he asked: "What greater mockery can there be of official policy than government functionaries, including officials, entertaining their private guests with champagne when that drink has been banned in this country?"<sup>100</sup> A year later, General Olusegun Obasanjo himself, in an address to public servants in September 1978, again called the trend of apathy and indiscipline "outright disinterestedness", an attitude which he said "is condemnable and only tantamount to disloyalty".<sup>101</sup> 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."

The traumatic experience of the national tragedy of the assassination of General Muhammed had left Nigerians in a kind of daze. Naturally, the Nigerian public tended to operate in a kind of inertia, unconsciously wishing for the new leadership to jolt it from its stupor. Perhaps realising that he did not have the style of his predecessor, the successor, nevertheless, was determined to continue the policies of General Muhammed with vigour, howbeit, in his own style. He succeeded, and ended as a distinguished statesman. In the effort to continue the political pro-



**General Olusegun Obasanjo in a short speech after receiving the Draft Constitution from the Chairman of the Constitution Drafting Committee, chief F. Rotimi Williams.**

gramme and policies of his predecessor, General Olusegun Obasanjo took pains to ensure that the 19-state structure which General Muhammed had created a week before his assassination operated efficiently. Similarly, General Obasanjo's Administration reformed the local government councils – under the creditable supervision of his deputy, Major-General Shehu Musa Yar'Adua, Chief of Staff (Supreme Headquarters), who created a uniform system out of the old muddle and multiplicity of local governments. Further, the Constitution, though drawn up under the guidelines which General Murtala Muhammed had given to the Constitution Drafting Committee (CDC), was produced under the leadership of General Obasanjo.

The CDC submitted the Draft Constitution promptly in September 1976 to Lt-Gen. Olusegun Obasanjo. The Draft Constitution was then open to public debate in the national press and elsewhere for a year before it was submitted to the Constituent Assembly. In opening the Constituent Assembly, democratically chosen by the electorate in their respective constituencies, General Obasanjo said that "the Assembly probably is the most important body that has been convened over a decade, definitely the most historic gathering in terms of Constitution making in the country."<sup>102</sup> He referred briefly to the days of the First Republic "with its anxious moments, self-inflicted wounds and the chaos and disorder which brought about its demise. These unfortunate characteristics", General Obasanjo continued, "spilled over into the Second Republic, and later came to assume even more sinister forms which threatened the very existence of our nation."<sup>103</sup> Reminding the members of the Constituent Assembly that they had a unique and golden opportunity to lay the foundations for the nation's future, General Obasanjo told them that from the Draft they were to provide the nation with a Constitution that can serve our overall Social Order. The Supreme Military Council, the General continued, was particularly concerned that due regard should be given "to cover every aspect of the national life and that all shades of opinion" should be brought to bear on their delibe-

rations.<sup>104</sup> The issues at stake were clearly defined and established in the Draft Constitution, and the Constituent Assembly's task was to give the country a new Constitution by deliberating on the Draft before passing it on to the Supreme Military Council for promulgation into law.<sup>105</sup> That was on October 6, 1977. The Constituent Assembly had a year to complete its task.

It was indeed a unique day in the history of this nation, another milestone on the path to political stability. Perhaps, the mood of the nation was best expressed by the Hon. Sir Justice Udo Udoma, a member of the Supreme Court and the Chairman of the Constituent Assembly which debated the Draft Constitution, while giving his "Vote of Thanks" to General Obasanjo who as Head of State declared open the first session of the Constituent Assembly. Dr. Udo Udoma rightly said that "This is a unique and historic occasion in the history of this our great country and, indeed, in the life of each and everyone of us in this Assembly. This is the first time in the history of this nation," he continued, "when its citizens who have been freely elected in their respective constituencies in orderly but fiercely contested elections have assembled as representatives of their people solely for the purpose of deciding on the form of legitimate government in terms of constitutional contrivance that would best cater for the needs, progress and aspiration of their people, and also enable this country to take its rightful place and play its part as an adult in the comity of nations."<sup>106</sup>

As was anticipated, the debates generated a lot of excitement, particularly over the "Sharia issue" during which members of the Constituent Assembly almost brought the nation into another chaos. The "pro-Sharia Group" had even walked out of the Assembly, dissociating themselves from its proceedings and from the Assembly's consensus over that issue. For the first and only time the Head of State had to step in to sound a cautionary note. General Obasanjo on April 19, 1978 told members of the Constituent Assembly in a special session that "The Supreme Military Council has watched with increasing concern the recent events in the

Constituent Assembly which had slowed down the progress and marred the cordial atmosphere of understanding and tolerance which earlier characterized the work of the Assembly."<sup>107</sup> He reminded members that their "actions and utterances in this Assembly have direct effect on our people all over the country for good or for ill in our most arduous task of our national integration and national unity. The experiences of the last civil war", he continued, "and, perhaps more, the heartaches and tragic incidences that preceded that holocaust, particularly the sweat and deaths it has cost to have gone so far, is I think, a sufficient reminder."<sup>108</sup> The actions, attitudes and utterances of some members of the Assembly, the Head of State also said, were eroding the trust and confidence the people reposed in them because the members had "either failed to sufficiently appreciate the consequences of promoting divisions in this country or [that they] lack the will, the experience, and wherewithal of a good statesman rather than a politician."<sup>109</sup>

The speech of General Obasanjo, conciliatory yet firm, made concrete impression on members of the Constituent Assembly particularly when he appealed to them that they "could not afford to allow the present golden opportunity for laying a good foundation for the political future of our country to slip. Therefore," he pleaded and warned, "in the name of Nigeria and all Nigerians who love peace and love this country, in the name of what is dearest to each and everyone of you, and in the name of God, I appeal to all of you to continue your deliberations on the Draft Constitution in the atmosphere of harmony and concord and in the spirit of love, tolerance, and understanding."<sup>110</sup> The appeal had its effect, and Nigerians heaved a deep sigh of relief and gratitude to General Obasanjo for successfully averting the looming and ominous crisis. The Constituent Assembly submitted the new Constitution on schedule. It was later examined by the Supreme Military Council which made some amendments and, then, promulgated into law. The Constitution became operational on October 1, 1979, on the return to civilian rule. The highlights of the new Con-

stitution under our executive presidential system are examined later in chapter four.

Besides concluding the activities involved in the production of a new constitution which General Muhammed initiated, General Obasanjo also pursued other national policies which included his imposition of import restrictions in the effort to curtail excessive luxuries and thereby conserve the nation's foreign exchange holdings to meet industrialization objectives, such as the Aladja Steel Plant. He also, like General Muhammed, vigorously pursued international affairs with Africa as its centrepiece. So did Major-General Garba as Commissioner for External Affairs vigorously pursue his diplomatic shuttles in pursuit of international peace. A diplomatic career which won him high and enviable international respect, Nigeria's almost legendary Foreign Minister was later replaced, at the beginning of the Military disengagement exercise preparatory to the return to civilian rule, by the suave of Major-General (Dr.) Henry E. O. Adefope whose major achievement in foreign diplomacy was at the Commonwealth Prime Ministers' Conference in Zambia in 1979. The Conference resulted in the Lancaster peace talks and the subsequent independence of Zimbabwe in early 1980. One need not belabour the point that Nigeria's new foreign policy benefited tremendously from the foresight of the country's last two Heads of State, ably supported by their Foreign Ministers and by the soft demure and finesse of Major-General S. M. Yar'Adua who, as Chief of Staff (Supreme Headquarters), was not only General Obasanjo's very able deputy but who also pursued peace in Africa, South America, Asia and China. His last major diplomatic peace mission concerned Nigeria's peace efforts to resolve the Chadian crisis and end that country's 15-year old civil war. That effort resulted in the Kano Accord which was concluded in March 1979, followed by the Lagos Peace Agreement in August 1979.

In the meantime, the national excitement focused on the return to civilian rule. In a series of addresses to different groups and bodies in the country, General Obasanjo attempted to prepare the

nation for the return to civilian rule and the responsibilities of the various groups, institutions and individuals within the new, political system of the Second Republic. His first audience were Traditional Rulers representing the 19 states of the Federation, whom he welcomed in recognition of the crucial role, he said, they "are expected to play, especially during this delicate period of transition from Military to Civil rule, not only to ensure a smooth transfer of power from the Military to the elected representatives of Government but also to ensure moral regeneration, peace and stability thereafter."<sup>111</sup> Continuing, General Obasanjo told them that "As Traditional and Community leaders, it is your duty to bring the full weight of your moral authority to bear on the people of this country — a country that has had more than its fair share of difficulties since our independence."<sup>112</sup> The former Head of State blamed those Traditional Rulers who behaved during the First Republic, he said, "as though they were not responsible to God or man: rather than seek to exercise a moderating influence, some of [them] plunged headlong into the affray. It must now be accepted that if *all* our traditional leaders had lived up to their responsibilities as leaders, the country would probably have avoided most of the turbulence and destruction of the past."<sup>113</sup> He appealed to them to avoid mistakes of the past, and to use their full weight of their traditional "authority to bring the people to reason whenever they tend to go astray."<sup>114</sup> Continuing, General Obasanjo reminded the Traditional Rulers that it is their duty "to devise means of promoting unity and solidarity amongst the various national groups that constitute our great country by deliberately playing down differences that tend to divide us while at the same time exploiting to the fullest those national attributes that enhance cohesion and integration in the full realisation that the various components of the nation are dependent on one another."<sup>115</sup> He appealed to them that their fatherly role and responsibility should be non-partisan and should not be parochial, but to embrace the well-being of all Nigerians.<sup>116</sup>

General Obasanjo's address to the second group, Nigeria's re-

ligious leaders, was also meant to remind them of their responsibilities in the Second Republic. He called on them, "as spiritual leaders and custodians of our faith to join hands with the Government and all well-meaning Nigerians to ensure a peaceful and painless transition, and help to maintain henceforth a united, stable and peaceful nation."<sup>117</sup> Reminding them that "the circumstances which brought this country under Military rule could have been avoided if our political elites had put the fear of God and the love of their fellowmen into consideration,"<sup>118</sup> General Obasanjo blamed religious leaders because they "failed in their duty to God and the nation to call a stop to these excesses" in the pursuit by the politicians of "world power and material hegemony,"<sup>119</sup> with what he called "fratricidal recklessness."<sup>120</sup> Some religious leaders, the former Head of State said, "even openly encouraged the politicians who sowed the seeds of problems of the First Republic, the ultimate result of which," he added, "was the Military entering into politics and a situation which soon degenerated into a civil war."<sup>121</sup> General Obasanjo said that "we cannot allow a relapse into the ways of past politics or retrogression in our national life. Preaching will not be enough; your regular prayers are important. You should also be vigilant to ensure that your places of worship and prayers are not turned into dens of political meetings and evil machinations."<sup>122</sup> Continuing, he said: "Whatever may be our faith, we need spiritual re-awakening and regeneration in the months and years ahead. And nobody is better placed to bring these about amongst our people than our religious leaders. Let our religious leaders constantly endeavour to spread and apply nation-wide the teaching of love, brotherhood, unity and selfless sacrifice which our major religions in this country stand for."<sup>123</sup>

General Obasanjo also told public servants of their responsibilities in the transition period and in the Second Republic. Emphasizing that it was necessary to awaken their "minds to the peculiarities of these times, which if glossed over can do considerable damage to the Service and the nation as a whole," General Oba-

sanjo stated that "the Public Service is everywhere a powerful instrument of development. To actualise this," he continued, "the Service in Nigeria requires individual commitment to duty, and general patriotism among its men and women. The Civil Service in particular should be the reservoir of vision and dynamism in its outlook towards the future; a future of national greatness, peace, unity and stability."<sup>124</sup> It was in view of all these that General Obasanjo, during the transition period, appealed to civil servants to appreciate their responsibility, particularly in the new political system that Nigeria was going to adopt. Hence, indeed, he could say that the advisory role of the civil servant "must therefore be identifiable with national goals and he must know that the realities of national development have no room for selfishness, pride, indiscipline and dishonesty. The Public Service," he further told them, "must be a fountain of courage, vision, knowledge, commitment, justice and uprightness."<sup>125</sup>

To representatives of the mass media, he stressed the role of a responsible press which, he said, acts "as part of the conscience of the nation."<sup>126</sup> He appealed to them "that rather than seek to besmirch, divide and destroy,"<sup>127</sup> the overall interest of the nation should be the deciding factor of what they print and what comes out of the electronic media.<sup>128</sup> Continuing, he said that "The respect which your profession of journalism will continue to enjoy among the rest of Nigerians will depend to a large extent on the quality of journalists and practitioners of the mass media."<sup>129</sup> He concluded:

By all means let us have informed, dispassionate, courageous and constructive comments, debates, discussions and criticism. There should, however, be no room for shallow, narrow-minded, jaundiced, self-opinionated, ill-informed, self-centred destructive comments and criticism. They do not elevate the individuals, the media or the profession . . .

Let your guiding principle be: publish to build and strengthen the nation, and not, publish to destroy or be damned."<sup>130</sup>

Besides these addresses to various bodies in the country, there were the various last stages of the political programme in the transition from Military rule to a democratically elected civilian government. These included: the registration of voters, the formation of political parties, and the conduction of five elections into the National and State Assemblies as well as of the State Governors and of the President which were all very commendable. Thus, General Obasanjo continued the policies which General Murtala Muhammed had mapped out, through to October 1979 when he handed over power to a democratically elected civilian government – as General Muhammed had promised when he came to power on July 29, 1975.

What all these policies have produced are positive fundamental changes which include a greater sense of identity with and loyalty to the nation, and, in the process have created a sense of nationhood. These changes have also reduced regional hostilities, tribal tensions, the tendency towards autonomy of the regions, and conferred more powers on the centre. If the civilian administration operates the new political system with tolerance, restraint and efficiency, it could thus prevent the re-entry of the Military into the political scene to assume the administration of this nation a second time. Perhaps no better tribute can be paid to the phenomenon than that by President-elect Alhaji Shehu Shagari at a banquet given in his honour by General Obasanjo on the eve of the handing-over ceremony. He said that "It is rare in the history of developing countries for those in power to organize their own retirement from Government, and to welcome, indeed entertain, their successors. In similar situations elsewhere", he continued, "the outgoing Government would be scheming and plotting for excuses to disown their promises to hand over power. It is, therefore, a matter for legitimate pride for the Nigerian Armed Forces that despite all the temptations to cling to power they, under the able and exemplary leadership of General Olusegun Obasanjo, have valiantly kept the word of their beloved compatriot, General Murtala Muhammed of blessed memory."<sup>131</sup> Indeed, as Pre-

sident Julius Nyerere of Tanzania had commented to General Obasanjo in 1977, "No Military government has worked so hard to get itself out of power":

Paying tribute to the Nigerian Armed Forces in general, the president-elect, Alhaji Shehu Shagari, further said:

"By handing over power peacefully and in a thoroughly organized manner to a democratic government on the 19<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Nigeria's independence, the Federal Military Government has responded to popular will and has thus carved its name in gold in the annals of Nigerian history and has left its footprints on the sands of time.

Distinguished ladies and gentlemen, I would like to take this opportunity to salute them on your behalf and on behalf of the entire nation.

Of course, for their exemplary conduct no tribute can adequately reflect our gratitude. All we can do is to assure the nation that the new Government will continue with the efforts to unify the country and build on the foundations which have been laid."<sup>132</sup>

History, indeed, has a way of repeating itself. A hardcore group of secessionist hawks had dragged Nigeria into a civil war in their effort to create their own nation independent of Nigeria, a tragic experience which came to an end when a crippled and defeated so-called "Biafra" declared the secessionist attempt ended in January 1970. Nigerian federalists and the Nigerian Military had done a marvellous job of fighting a successful war to end the secession and unify the country. Thanks to those Military men and women and the civilian federalists and nationalists — dead and living — who paddled Nigeria through the rough seas during the civil war and irksome political period of turbulence and fragility. But it was the General Officer Commanding Nigeria's 3<sup>rd</sup> Infantry Division, and who himself commanded the Third Marines Commando of the Nigerian Army towards the end of the civil war, who received the legal documents of surrender from the defeated seces-

sionist hawks. That man was one Colonel Olusegun Obasanjo. Nearly a decade later, after his predecessor had laid the bases for political stability, that same person successfully carried through the programmes to their logical conclusions and handed a re-united and a politically stable Nigeria back to a democratically elected civilian government on October 1, 1979. General Obasanjo thus not only legally ended the civil war but also ended the country's 13 years of Military Rule.

After the historic and impressive swearing-in ceremony of Alhaji Shehu Shagari as the new Head of State, General Olusegun Obasanjo handed to his successor a copy of the new Nigerian Constitution, took one brief step backwards, and, at full attention, the General himself acknowledged the new leadership when he gave that memorable salute to Nigeria's First Executive President. As both of them later rode together around the courtyard of the Tafawa Balewa Square in an open ceremonial Military landrover, the President acknowledged the cheers and applause of welcome to the Presidency from an appreciative multitudinous crowd and the entire nation to whom General Olusegun Obasanjo, on his part, bade farewell as Head of State and Commander-in-Chief of the nation's Armed Forces. It was magnificent, and an important legacy for Nigeria's future political leadership.



*Chapter Two*

**PROFILES OF THE  
PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATES**



## PROFILES OF THE PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATES

It had been some 15 years that the Nigerian electorate had exercised any direct participation in the selection of the government of the nation. The Military Administration of General Murtala Muhammed had done a marvellous job by mapping out a concrete and very satisfactory political programme and time-table for the handing-over of the government to civilians on October 1, 1979, a programme which the Military, even after his death, adhered to meticulously. The Military was now bequeathing to the nation solid bases for political stability and national unification on which the civilians could build. As the transition drew nearer to the end, there was obvious political excitement. First, there was the sheer huge number of the political parties.

### *Political Excitement*

The political excitement had led to a massive proliferation of political parties when the ban imposed on politics in January 1966 was lifted in September 1978. There were over 50 self-acclaimed political parties and the Federal Electoral Commission (FEDECO), under the chairmanship of Chief Michael Ani, had to take quick action to decide which of the candidates and parties satisfied the requirements of the 1977 Electoral Decree to contest the elections. One requirement was evidence of the payment of annual taxes by the candidates. Individuals who had never bothe-

red to pay their annual taxes found the lure of politics so strong that they quickly ran to their respective tax offices to pay, retroactively, their taxes which they had conveniently and deliberately forgotten or refused to pay in previous years; all of a sudden they remembered one of their basic civic responsibilities! Not surprisingly, over one thousand prospective political candidates for one or the other of the several elections were disqualified for non-payment of their taxes. Even two of the presidential candidates had to seek court ruling to ensure that their tax payments were in order so that they would be able to contest the elections.

Similarly, some of the initial political groups appeared as mere fancies with obviously limited and localised appeals — certainly with no serious national following. Thus, for example, the political association whose leaders named “I Chop, You Chop Party” was more of a political caricature than a real political party which could withstand the strains of serious election campaigns and criticisms. Indeed, observers believed that that political association was obviously going to wallow in corruption; that it would form a government whose main and major objective would be gross corruption should it, by some extremely remote possibility, have national support and win the elections. Similarly, Afro-Beat King musician Fela Anikulapo-Kuti led another initial political group, Movement of the People (MOP), which among other issues advocated respect for old people, and, above all, legalization of the smoking of the weed, marijuana. Fela added fanfare and theatrics to his campaign gatherings with his musical group and with the presence of his 27 wives at his party’s political rallies.

Each day virtually witnessed the birth and launching of new political parties, most with bizzare promises which they claimed would eradicate all the human and natural problems of Nigeria and Nigerians all over the country. Many of them were false campaign promises, a situation which prompted the outgoing Head of State, General Olusegun Obasanjo, to warn that “We must subjugate our passion, emotion and greed to wisdom and reason”.<sup>1</sup> Continuing, he warned that the politicians and the political par-

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ties must not embark on the politics of deceit, false hopes, empty promises and unattainable goals which will eventually lead to unrealistic expectations, bitterness, discontent, and the unhappiness of the electorate.<sup>2</sup> Gen. Obasanjo's plea and warning were very appropriate and necessary because of those politicians who wanted to be voted into office by any means they could muster, fairly if possible, and unfairly if necessary. The promises of the political groups ranged from what appeared to be jokes and obvious under-rating of the intelligence of the electorate, to serious national issues such as the laudable promises of viable political integration and national unification, pressing social issues such as education, housing and the environment, and, promises of economic development, agrarian reforms, and the claims to reduce inflation. While some of the promises sounded genuine and feasible, there were others which were impossible dreams. Perhaps the mood and promises of the political parties was best caught by "Candido", a columnist in a Nigerian newspaper, the *New Nigerian*, when he announced to

"The general public and my hordes of well-wishers, admirers, bootlickers, hangers-on and just plain parasitical nuisances that I, Comrade Chief (Dr.) Alhaji Candido will officially launch my own party on November 26. In taking this momentous step, I assure our poor, down-trodden maltreated, exploited, etc., etc., suffering masses that as soon as I am firmly installed as Mr. President, all your sufferings will be immediately wiped out, finished, kaput."<sup>3</sup>

It was obvious that some of the political parties would wither and die natural death as the campaigns became more serious and the election dates drew nearer. Nonetheless, it was also necessary to reduce their numbers to a more manageable scale as soon as possible, if only in the effort to maintain some sanity and not make a mockery of the democratic process with the return to civilian rule. Besides, a reduced number of political parties could mean relatively more campaign funds from the Military Government for

each of the political parties that was able to satisfy the electoral requirements. The Federal Electoral Commission (FEDECO) had issued a statement in March 1979 which confirmed that the Federal Government would disburse a block grant to the registered political parties in two instalments.<sup>4</sup> The statement revealed that the Commission would share 50 % of the grant equally among all the political parties that had candidates for election in not less than 20 % of the constituencies for a particular election. The remaining 50 % of the block grant from the Federal Military Government, the statement further said, would be shared among the political parties after the results of the elections in the proportion of the number of seats won by each party into the Senate and into the House of Representatives.<sup>5</sup> Thus, for example, a party that would secure 10 per cent of the seats into both Houses of the National Assembly would get 10 per cent of the grants, and so forth. It was therefore necessary for those political aberrations such as the "I Chop, You Chop" groups to convince not so much the electorate but the Federal Electoral Commission, under the chairmanship of Chief Michael A. Ani, that they were viable political organisations whose interests and objectives transcended tribal frontiers and parochial and sectional limitations. But could such parties satisfy the requirements? Not surprisingly, the "federal character" hammer of FEDECO fell on them and similar political groups when they were found, during the screening exercise, not to have satisfied the requirements that they should have members on their executive committees from at least two-thirds of the 19 states and, branch offices in at least equal number of states.

Five political parties satisfied the electoral requirements. These included the Unity Party of Nigeria (UPN) led by Chief Obafemi Awolowo as its presidential candidate and Philip Umeadi as his running mate. Another successful political party was the Peoples' Redemption Party (PRP) which fielded Alhaji Aminu Kano and Sam Ikoku as its presidential and vice-presidential candidates, respectively. The Great Nigeria People's Party (GNPP) which was led by Alhaji Waziri Ibrahim as its presidential candidate and

Dr. Ben Nzeribe as his running mate also satisfied the electoral requirements. Alhaji Waziri's GNPP was the "parent" group from which the fourth political party, the Nigerian Peoples' Party (NPP), split. The NPP fielded Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe as its presidential candidate and Professor Ishaya Audu, the retired Vice-Chancellor of Nigeria's Ahmadu Bello University, as Dr. Azikiwe's running mate. The fifth party which passed FEDECO's screening test was 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. These five parties – the UPN, PRP, GNPP, NPP and the NPN – were the only political parties which were allowed to contest the elections because they were the ones which satisfied the requirements of the 1977 Electoral Decree.

TABLE I: *Presidential & Vice Presidential Candidates:  
Tribe and State of Origin*

Party	Presidential Candidates			Vice-Presidential Candidates		
	Name	State of Origin	Tribe	Name	State of Origin	Tribe
1. GNPP	Waziri	Borno	Kanuri	Nzeribe	Imo	Ibo
2. NPN	Shagari	Sokoto	Fulani	Ekwueme	Anambra	Ibo
3. NPP	Azikiwe	Anambra	Ibo	Audu	Kaduna	Hausa
4. PRP	Aminu	Kano	Hausa	Ikoku	Imo	Ibo
5. UPN	Awolowo	Ogun	Yoruba	Umeadi	Anambra	Ibo

The campaign was not fought on ideological differences among the political parties. Indeed, there was not much difference among the programmes and promises of the five political parties which finally contested the elections; if there was any difference it was the question of degree and emphasis on particular issues. For example, all political parties believed in education as a social priority for the development and economic transformation of the na-

Josy Ajiboye



**HYPOCRITES.... ALL NA FOR BREAD!**

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tion. But it was the UPN which campaigned that it would introduce free education at all levels, a campaign promise which the other parties criticized on the ground that what was needed was "quality education". Some observers even maintained that both primary and university education were by then virtually free in Nigeria while school fees at secondary school level had been pegged by the Military Government already — even before the UPN promise. Apart from the rather controversial campaign issue of free education at all levels, there was not much difference in the political orientations of the various political parties, even among those which claimed to be socialist oriented.

They all talked of a viable economic future and how to manage the petroleum resources of the country for the benefit of all Nigerians irrespective of place of origin. All welcomed foreign investment but it was the NPN, which many people believed to be the party of the rich and the affluent, which was most lucid in its stress on foreign investment on a partnership basis in the national economy. On the other hand, the Peoples' Redemption Party (PRP), perhaps the only political party to give some serious analysis of the changes which the economic policies of the Military Government brought to the national economy — and the effects such policies were leaving behind — which emphasized greater involvement of the State in the economic development and industrial projects of the national economy. In its socialist manifesto, the Peoples' Redemption Party (PRP) suggested that the state should "take control of the commanding heights of the economy, particularly banking, insurance and heavy industry."<sup>6</sup>

This "socialist" manifesto was essentially capitalist-orientated and should not be confused with Marxist theories for the economic development of the nation. As a member of the Peoples' Redemption Party (PRP) in the National Assembly representing North-West Constituency in Kano State, Dr. Junaid Mohammed, who is also the PRP's Chief Whip in the National Assembly put it, all the five parties have socialists and conservatives, "including the PRP. There is", the PRP member further said, "what Mallam

Aminu Kano [the PRP leader and presidential candidate] himself calls the capitalist wing of the PRP."<sup>7</sup> These people, Dr. Mohammed continued, contributed tremendously to the success of his party, such as by providing money.<sup>8</sup> He described such capitalists within the Peoples' Redemption Party as "idealistic capitalists who realize that those who make peaceful changes in a society impossible are making violent changes inevitable."<sup>9</sup> Emphasizing the presence of both capitalists and socialists in each of the five political parties, the PRP Chief Whip further said that each party had "capitalists who are clothing their parties with socialist programmes and vice versa. You find that in all the five parties now,"<sup>10</sup> he continued, "there are groups one might boldly term as progressive and there are a bunch of high-minded and high-handed reactionaries who would like to go backwards."<sup>11</sup>

Thus, the elections were neither fought, nor even won nor lost, on ideological basis nor on their respective proposals and prospects for the development of the society. Several other factors interlocked in various ways to produce an intricate mesh. Regional or state origin interlocking with tribal allegiance was certainly a factor that sustained the political campaigns of some of the candidates. The personalities of the candidates was another factor. Thus, for example, Dr. Junaid Mohammed, the PRP member in the National Assembly mentioned earlier, attributed the victory of his Peoples' Redemption Party (PRP) in Kano State "to the personal popularity of Mallam Aminu Kano,"<sup>12</sup> the leader and presidential candidate of the PRP. Dr. Mohammed admitted in an interview that the "victory at the polls was not due to the effectiveness of the campaigns" but that the elections were "more of personalities than issues,"<sup>13</sup> what he called "a clash of personalities and, of course, group interests rather than straight forward politics, which I must admit," he added, "is most unfortunate."<sup>14</sup> He therefore suggested that he "would like all the parties, including the PRP, depersonalized."<sup>15</sup> Similarly, the related factor, that is, the past record and conduct of the candidates in national issues cannot be ignored; nor, indeed, the organizational structure-

res of the banned political parties. Again, Dr. Mohammed admitted that the PRP "cashed in on the old organizational structure of the old NEPU."<sup>16</sup> So also did the NPP benefit from the organizational structure of the banned NCNC, and the UPN from that of the AG. Financial rewards at the polls for the voter for casting his vote for a particular candidate seemed less important phenomenon this time than in the pre-civil war period; yet, one must also admit that there were those voters who were willing to cast their votes in exchange for what they considered fair monetary or adequate material rewards.

## PROFILES OF THE PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATES

The campaigns were quite theatric, and thanks to the Military Government which had imposed a ban on political thuggery. The ban prevented the campaign activities from developing into free-for-all fracas. This was even more so because there were no clues at the beginning to indicate the potential victor at the polls. The five political parties which emerged had chosen presidential candidates who seemed evenly matched at the beginning. One of these presidential candidates was Alhaji Waziri Ibrahim of the Great Nigeria People's Party (GNPP). Born the fourth of six children in 1926 in Yerwa Town, now Maiduguri, capital of Borno State, Alhaji Waziri Ibrahim had risen to be a successful managerial staff of the United Africa Company of Nigeria Ltd. (UAC) where he worked for 11 years.<sup>17</sup> His work took him literally to all parts of the then Northern Region as well as to the U. K. where he also attended courses in managerial studies.

The lure of politics, which he believed was the chance for him to put into practice his personal social ideas for the benefit of humanity, made him resign his job from the UAC to contest the 1959 pre-independence Federal Elections on the ticket of the Northern People's Congress (NPC). He won his candidacy and was appointed Federal Minister of Health by the late Prime Minister, Alhaji Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa. In the Cabinet re-shuffle in 1960, he was appointed the Federal Minister of Economic Development. He held that post until the Military take-over on January 15, 1966, when all the then political parties were proscribed and

a ban imposed on political activities. He thereafter went into private business. His major achievement as the Minister of Economic Development was the preparation of the First National Development Plan which was supervised by his Ministry, an exercise in which he tirelessly personally participated. In his capacity as Minister of Economic Development, Alhaji Waziri Ibrahim also participated in negotiations with foreign governments and international financiers for loans to finance Government development projects. It was his Ministry which also handled the controversial 1962 population census exercise, a topic to which we will return shortly. With the outbreak of the Nigerian civil war, and Nigeria's need to procure arms from foreign nations, the Arms Procurement Committee, headed by Alhaji Aminu Kano, found the experiences and credentials of Alhaji Waziri Ibrahim with foreign governments and the international market impressive. The Committee appointed him, and some other people, to procure arms for the nation for the successful execution of the Nigerian civil war.

Alhaji Waziri Ibrahim's private business, like many other businesses in Nigeria, benefitted from the period of reconstruction after the civil war. A successful importer and distributor of frozen fish, sugar and cement, Alhaji Waziri Ibrahim expanded his business to include transportation, an insurance firm, a shipping and clearing company, a tin mining venture in Jos in Plateau State, a corn flour mill as well as soap factory both in Maiduguri. Others included a joint Hospital in Kano, a pharmaceutical company, and, some other businesses which the GNPP presidential candidate said at an interview that he "cannot now remember."<sup>18</sup> By any standard, Alhaji Waziri Ibrahim is certainly a very rich man, a factor which unquestionably helped him as well as members of the "Club 19" group and the "Lagos Progressives" to form the initial Nigerian Peoples' Party (NPP) when the ban on politics was lifted in September 1978. The initial NPP soon disintegrated, because of the refusal of some of its members to accept Alhaji Waziri Ibrahim as both the Party's Chairman and as its presidential candidate. His critics within the party said that he was being "greedy



Alhaji Waziri Ibrahim, GNPP presidential candidate.

for power", while his supporters pointed to a similar situation within the Unity Party of Nigeria (UPN) and the Peoples' Redemption Party (PRP) which did not differ from what Alhaji Waziri Ibrahim was attempting within his own party. His critics were particularly incensed because he refused any negotiations which would compromise his ambition for the dual positions. Thus, for example, when he was asked why he refused to be a running mate to Dr. Azikiwe, Alhaji Waziri Ibrahim replied that "the idea of me becoming a running mate to anybody has never occurred to me."<sup>19</sup> Continuing, Alhaji Waziri said that

"The thought of forming, leading and managing a political party came to me years ago. So when the NPP was formed, I had thought of being the Chairman and presidential candidate of the party. I wanted anybody who thought he was competent enough to contest with me. I never thought of being a running mate to anybody. Why should I be a running mate to Zik? I believe I am more competent and qualified to contest the Presidency."<sup>20</sup>

The minority faction of the two groups followed Alhaji Waziri Ibrahim to form the Great Nigeria People's Party (GNPP) in December 1978, while the other group, the Nigerian Peoples' Party (NPP), followed Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe, the Owelle of Onitsha. In sympathizing with Alhaji Waziri Ibrahim several people, particularly non-party members, attributed the fissure of the original NPP to the late entry of Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe into the presidential campaign race, arguing that the dual leadership of the initial NPP by Alhaji Waziri Ibrahim would not have been challenged if Dr. Azikiwe had kept to his original promise that he would not participate in partisan politics but that he would prefer the non-partisan leadership role as an elder statesman and "father of the nation." Alhaji Waziri Ibrahim showed profound magnanimity and he won nationwide praise for the gentlemanly manner he took the experience of his own party break-up. He coined the Hausa phrase "*Siyasa bada gaba ba*," meaning, "politics without bitterness." It was widely claimed that the late entry of Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe

into the race robbed Alhaji Waziri Ibrahim of some major political following and support when his initial NPP split into two. The subsequent serious political drawbacks which Alhaji Waziri Ibrahim suffered from the break-up of the initial NPP were to benefit the other three political parties, namely, the National Party of Nigeria (NPN), the Unity Party of Nigeria (UPN) and, the Peoples' Redemption Party (PRP). This was so because the split of the initial NPP into the GNPP and the new NPP meant that the support the party could have enjoyed as a single entity was split and in the process it posed less threat to its opponents.

Alhaji Waziri Ibrahim's wealth seemed to have been very handy for the political activities of the GNPP and, there were allegations that the millionaire candidate was duped by many people whose support he thought he had wrapped up. A classic example of that allegation was in Oyo State where one of the party members was alleged to have been involved in some fraudulent mismanagement of Alhaji Ibrahim's money for campaign activities.

Alhaji Waziri Ibrahim was not a member of any of the Military Governments; his major experience in public office in the pre-civil war civilian Administration was his cabinet ministerial appointment as the Minister of Economic Development under the late Prime Minister, Alhaji Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa. His Ministry was responsible, among other things, for the controversial and eventually cancelled population census figures in 1962. That population census exercise was not so much a demographic study but a crucial and sensitive political issue which was entrusted to the Ministry headed by a man who now aspired to be the executive president of the nation. To appreciate whether or not Alhaji Waziri Ibrahim would be an effective president, political observers had to look at his previous record — if there was any — and see how he managed, or mismanaged, national issues which confronted him before. A look at the 1962 population census exercise was one way to judge how Alhaji Waziri Ibrahim could handle sensitive national issues as president, particularly as that issue de-

monstrated the threat of domination and security of the individual.

The fear of domination in Nigeria has been centred round the question of population of the different ethnic groups and, more importantly, on the sizes of the regions. Political decisions were therefore immensely influenced by the population strength of each region. And, conversely, population census exercises in Nigeria had been influenced by politics. One could suggest that the single most important factor that was at the root of the Nigerian pre-civil war crises-ridden tripartite federal union was the question of power which was measured by the population size of the tribe or region in control. The most immediate exercises then were the 1962 and 1963 population counts into which politics were injected. The previous census count in 1952-53 had been "a group count" in which the colonial authorities noted the names of family heads or heads of compounds, together with an estimated size of each family or compound. Unlike the 1952-53 census count, the 1962 exercise was the first comprehensive count. That in itself created problems for the census officials, because politicians turned the census count into a political exercise.

Because Nigerian political parties were regionally based, the largest region, the North, could always dominate the Federal Government. This explains why the Nigerian Population Census of 1962 was very important and significant to all political parties. This further explains why it was not too surprising that politics and the census figures became mixed, or rather that politics was injected into the latter. For example, some politicians told their constituencies that the census exercise was meant to provide equitable social amenities such as pipe-borne water, electricity, hospitals, schools and industries. They used these claims as baits to woe their fellow tribesmen living in other parts of Nigeria to return to their villages and communities so that they could be counted there. The result was special migrations of people returning to their regions of origin, away from their places of work and resi-

dence. For example, it was reported that one clan union whose members were either unwilling or unable to return home to their place of origin sent a union official back to the village with a list of members!<sup>21</sup> The local census enumerator duly copied the names into his census count.<sup>22</sup> There were also other forms of deliberate falsification of the census figures. New cities, previously non-existent, mushroomed overnight. In one Region, a "new" city with a population of several thousands and whose existence had not been known previously even to the Regional Government, was "discovered".<sup>23</sup> For example, an administrative officer in the Eastern Region triumphantly announced the discovery of a village of 20,000 people "which had neither been registered for parliamentary elections, nor represented in any of the Nigerian legislatures".<sup>24</sup> There were other newly "discovered" villages and cities. Undoubtedly, there were undue inflations and falsifications of the census figures in *all* the regions throughout the country.

When the population census figures were finally released, *unofficially*, the results were not pleasant to some political parties, depending on their own degree of falsifications *vis-a-vis* the magnitude of cheating by other parties and regions. The London *Economist*<sup>25</sup> as well as the Lagos *Daily Express*<sup>26</sup> published unofficial figures of: Northern Region, 11 million; Eastern Region 10.5 million; Western Region, 8.5 million; and, the Federal Territory of Lagos, 0.6 million. From these *unofficial* results it became obvious that the Northern Region's domination of the rest of the country was ended. The anxiety of Northern politicians was probably best expressed by Alhaji Waziri Ibrahim (a member of the NPC) who as Federal Minister of Economic Development was also in charge of the Population Census. On the floor of the Federal Parliament, he denied the authenticity of the released figures. He further accused the Eastern Region of deliberately falsifying and inflating its population. Easterners replied with an equally violent attack. Members of both the NCNC and the Action Group Party in protest walked out *en-masse* from the Federal Parliament. The NCNC Parliamentary Party later passed a "vote of no confiden-

ce" on Alhaji Waziri Ibrahim. Further, the Party demanded that the expatriate Chief Census Officer be dismissed. Tension was high. The unity of the nation was threatened by the possibility of a part of the country attempting to secede, as some NCNC leaders and the Eastern Region had actually already intimated. Fortunately, the Prime Minister, the late Alhaji Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa, intervened and criticised Alhaji Waziri Ibrahim for the way he handled the Census issue. The Prime Minister assured the nation that he himself would look into the matter and would then consult all the Regional Premiers. This provided a solution and a breathing space for Nigerian political leaders to examine the major problems in that exercise in the new preparation for another population census count the following year.

Unquestionably that exercise in 1962 under the supervision of the Minister of Economic Development, Alhaji Waziri Ibrahim, was a failure. It seemed, however, that not too many people associated Alhaji Waziri Ibrahim during the 1979 campaigns with those discredited census figures of 1962. Even then, a GNPP political supplement said that "Alhaji Waziri Ibrahim was not to blame at all for the failure of the head-count. It was not him", the statement continued, "but Mr. Warren, a Briton, who supervised the census. Alhaji Waziri Ibrahim," the statement further said, "rejected the figures on the grounds that they were inflated."<sup>27</sup> That seemed like passing the buck. The GNPP presidential candidate's observations during the 1979 election campaigns about the "lack of ethics" among some newsmen as well as his further comments that there was great room for improvement in the quality of news reporting by many Nigerian journalists and the news media in general,<sup>28</sup> seemed to have been shared by a lot of people. Similarly, political observers gave him credit for the firm manner he handled erring subordinate electoral candidates, a good example being a GNPP gubernatorial candidate in Anambra State who wrote letters to some British companies operating business in Nigeria that they should donate to his political campaign funds.<sup>29</sup> The economic dividends which such foreign-

owned companies could reap from such "investments" need not be dealt with here. Alhaji Waziri Ibrahim asked the candidate "to retire honourably," which the latter did.<sup>30</sup>

Besides these two issues on which he commented during an interview with the *Lagos Daily Times* when the GNPP presidential candidate expatiated on how he expected to run the country as Nigeria's president, Alhaji Waziri Ibrahim did not seem to demonstrate much else in terms of political issues or of economic programmes and policies for the development of the nation. An example was his definition of what he called "mixed economy". "I believe in mixed economy", Alhaji Waziri Ibrahim said. "This simply means," he continued, "the control of production and distribution; the control both by the State or individual and the private sector. [This is] my own definition," he said.<sup>31</sup> He went further to elaborate on the advantages of his thesis, advantages which he said included "control of the private organizations, one way of controlling inflation, one way of discouraging demand for wage increases."<sup>32</sup> Economic theorists as well as economic practitioners and realists did not seem to understand — certainly, they were not convinced about — the strategy which Alhaji Waziri Ibrahim would utilize to achieve his objectives and advantages of his concept of "mixed economy". Similarly, the rest of the interview was bald, giving one the impression that the GNPP presidential candidate either did not understand the issues at stake or was not competent enough to give meaningful answers. His ideas about international political issues, particularly those which confront Africa and the Organization of African Unity (OAU), seemed more as a demonstration of incompetence than of a candidate who was dodging touchy issues by couching his response in rhetoric. If that interview was an indication of what his performance as executive president of this nation, not of a banana state, would be, then, Alhaji Waziri Ibrahim would perform poorly. Indeed, some political observers believed that it was his poor political performance within the initial Nigerian Peoples' Party (NPP) which had caused the split within the party when he sought to combine the

two posts of the party chairman and the party's presidential candidate.

The political tolerance and national status of the GNPP presidential candidate, who had coined the popular phrase of "politics without bitterness", however, later lost much of their respect when Alhaji Waziri Ibrahim appeared to be preaching the politics of hatred. The "alliance of the progressives" which he formed mid-way through the elections with the UPN and the NPP later made it appear that Alhaji Waziri Ibrahim was no longer interested in winning his presidential candidacy but in stopping the NPN from winning. He started to lose many of his supporters who liked to vote for a candidate who wanted to win. Some of his campaign speeches, which included his assertion that he had already won the 1979 elections and that he was looking forward to 1983, as well as naming his ministers even before the elections, some critics said, did not seem to show political maturity. To a question by the *New Times Magazine* whether he was confident he would win the presidential elections, Alhaji Waziri Ibrahim replied that not only was he "confident more than ever", but that he was also "confident that the GNPP will hold power for a minimum of 24 years",<sup>33</sup> obviously because of his belief of his party's alleged popularity with an electorate that would repeatedly vote it into power! A wealthy millionaire whom political observers believed lacked in political experience and expediency what his bank accounts could support, Alhaji Waziri Ibrahim also lacked the theatrics of seasoned politicians like the presidential candidate of his rival NPP faction, Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe.

A veteran politician, Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe, born in Zungeru in the old Northern Region, was the oldest presidential candidate at 75. Perhaps the living Nigerian with the longest participation in active Nigerian politics, Dr. Azikiwe's immense political wealth and experience in Nigerian political issues go far back to the days of Nigerian nationalism when he was a protege of the doyen of Nigerian nationalism, the late Herbert Macaulay (1864 - 1946). A graduate in Political Science and Philosophy in the United States



Dr Nnamdi Azikiwe, NPP presidential candidate.

of America in the 1930's, Dr. Azikiwe returned to Nigeria in 1937 after a 3-year sojourn in the then Gold Coast (now Ghana) where he founded and edited the *African Morning Post*. He returned to Nigeria as Nigerian nationalism was gaining momentum. It was in this sphere that he made his impact with his newspaper.

One factor which encouraged the growth of nationalism was the development of indigenous newspapers. Foremost of the papers, as from 1937 onwards, were the Lagos *West African Pilot* established in 1937 by the American-educated Nnamdi Azikiwe and, the *Service* under the editorship of Ernest Ikoli; the latter paper was published by the Nigerian Youth Movement the following year. With him as editor of the *West African Pilot*, Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe ("Zik") used the paper as an effective means of reaching the masses, using it to expose injustices of the colonial system. And in public lectures, Zik ingeniously laded and beautifully adorned his speeches with "-isms" and other jaw-breaking, high-sounding words which delighted the Nigerian of the day even though the latter for most of the time did not understand what the words meant. "African irridentism, political risorgimento and economic determinism" formed part of Zik's political and economic language that defined his philosophy which was determined, in his words, to "throw off the shackles of imperialism". This was what a biographer of Dr. Azikiwe referred to as "the lavish use of long, technical, unusual and foreign-sounding words, calculated to dazzle the wholly unsophisticated audiences."<sup>34</sup> This brand of language was quite an effective banner under which the masses rallied. To them, the language was a symbol of a learned man, the claim of the type of man who understood the language of the colonials and hence the type of man who could successfully argue their case before the colonial authority.

The importance of Dr. Azikiwe's *West African Pilot* and other papers lies in the fact that they provided not only a political forum through which nationalists could express their dissatisfaction with colonial rule but also as a recruiting ground for more nationalists. As education spread, and more and more Nigerians learnt

to read and write, nationalists turned to the newspapers for information and messages from the nationalist leaders. This was where Dr. Azikiwe carved a name for himself because not only did he use his paper, the *West African Pilot*, to foster the nationalist cause but also used it to enhance his own prestige — and hence his nationalist and political fame. His newspaper, we are told, was “the first paper to appeal to the growing class of clerks and artisans, students and teachers and, in general to the young — mirroring its aspirations and formulating its ideas.”<sup>35</sup>

As the newspapers were championing the nationalist cause so also were political parties which were largely based in Lagos. One of these was the Nigerian Youth Movement (NYM) which split in 1941 largely along tribal lines. Scholars of Nigerian nationalism, such as Professor Michael Crowder, ascribed this split as well as the subsequent tribalist flavour of Nigerian nationalist movements to Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe. Crowder cites the example in which the NYM, a predominately Yoruba party, put up Ernest Ikoli, an Efik-speaking from non-Ibo Eastern Nigeria, to contest for a vacant seat in the Lagos Legislative Council in 1941. Because of what was said to be his own personal grudges against Ikoli and largely because of his alleged intent to amplify intra-tribal rivalry among the Yoruba while at the same time solidifying the unity of his own Ibo tribe, Crowder said that Dr. Azikiwe counter-proposed Samuel Akinsanya, an Ijebu Yoruba, for the same seat. When the Party put up Ikoli instead of Akinsanya, Azikiwe publicly claimed that it was because Akinsanya was an Ijebu.<sup>36</sup> “Unfortunately for the future of Nigerian nationalism,” concluded Crowder, “this introduced an element of tribalism that had been largely subdued till then. Since Zik had all the Ibo solidly behind him this led to a tribal rift in the party.”<sup>37</sup> Efforts of some Yorubas to rebuild the party failed. In 1944, Zik formed a new party, the National Congress of Nigeria and the Cameroons (NCNC), of which he was Secretary and the ageing Herbert Macaulay its President. Professor James Coleman noted in his classic book on Nigerian nationalism that the NCNC was not a political

party in the ordinary sense but a conglomeration of trade unions, tribal groups, smaller parties, literary guilds and other associations.<sup>38</sup> Indeed, the Pan-Ibo Federal Union formed in 1944 was one of the foundation pillars of the NCNC.

The NCNC made its first mark in the nationalist struggle by virulently attacking the Richard's Constitution, introduced in 1946, whose objectives were threefold: "to promote the unity of Nigeria, to provide adequately within that unity for the diverse elements which make up the country, and to secure greater participation by Africans in the discussions of their own affairs." The Nigerian membership of the Legislative Council in Lagos was increased. And more importantly, the North was included in the Legislature, an act which furthered Nigerian unity. The constitution also provided for regional councils. Advocates of Nigerian unity have held the last provision of the Richard Constitution as being largely responsible for Nigeria's disunity, at least for her fragility. Professor K.O. Dike, for example, observed that "undoubtedly the Richards Constitution is a dividing line in Nigerian constitutional development. Before it the keynote in Nigerian politics was unification towards a centralized state and the realization of a common nationality . . . But with the Richard's Constitution the tendency towards unification was on the whole arrested."<sup>39</sup> There was general criticism of the Constitution throughout the country. Foremost of the critics was the NCNC. Not only did it criticize the constitution because it was introduced without prior popular discussion and consultation but also for its contents; the NCNC said that the constitution did not delegate powers to the regional assemblies, a provision, ironically enough, which would have made for greater decentralization and a greater tendency towards disintegration. But far more disturbing for Nigerian nationalists, the new Constitution was silent on the crucial issue of self-government. Herbert Macaulay and Azikiwe led a successful country-wide tour to arouse anti-colonial sentiments against the Constitution and to raise funds with which to send a protest delegation to the Secretary of States for the Colonies in London. The Richard's Consti-

tution did not last the life of 9 years it was initially recommended to last. In 1951 a new Constitution was adopted, which provided for greatly increased autonomy at the regional level, wide powers in the Regional Houses and in the Legislative Council at the centre. It also provided Nigerians with fuller share in government policy-making and in the activities of the government. The NCNC had made its mark. So did Nnamdi Azikiwe.

At the death of Herbert Macaulay in 1946, Nnamdi Azikiwe became the leader of the NCNC party – initially called National Congress (and later, Council) of Nigeria and the Cameroons (and later still, National Convention of Nigerian Citizens). When he was defeated in his attempt to win a Lagos seat into the Federal House of Representatives in 1952, Dr. Azikiwe became the leader of Opposition in the Western Region. (At that time, legislators at the centre were chosen from those in the Regions; further, Lagos was at that time part of the Western Region). It has been said that Dr. Azikiwe's "absence from both the Federal centre and his own Eastern Region threw the NCNC into disarray."<sup>40</sup> Realizing that Nigerian politics were now obviously tribal and regional, Dr. Azikiwe, like the other party leaders, shifted his base to his own state of origin, the Eastern Region. The revision of the 1951 Constitution in 1957 provided the Western and Eastern Regions with self-government; he remained the Premier of the East. Two years later, in 1959, the Northern Region achieved the same status. Then on October 1, 1960, Nigeria non-violently gained independence with a Federal Constitution.

Scholars of Nigerian nationalism unquestionably credit Dr. Azikiwe with vision and his hard work in building a strong base for Nigerian nationalism and the attendant political consciousness and aspirations of Nigerians. However, they are also concerned that Dr. Azikiwe, one of those who could have used his paper and penmanship to dissuade tribal loyalties, failed to do so. Instead his *West African Pilot* tended to champion the cause of the Ibo, his critics said, and that he himself was too sectional and partisan. The *West African Pilot* was the first paper, we are told, "to

appeal specifically to the Ibo, hitherto a neglected and 'backward' tribe in relation to the Yoruba. In this Ibo appeal", continued Walter Schwarz in his study of Dr. Azikiwe's rise as a nationalist, "lay the germs of later conflicts. For all of Zik's universality of spirit, he was self-consciously Ibo, complete with the characteristic chip on the shoulder of a member of an underprivileged group who had made good."<sup>41</sup> Further, not only was Zik president of his Ibo union and that of the NCNC after the death of Herbert Macaulay, he also became more and more sectional and tribal, and consequently antagonized other ethnic groups with his statements such as that "the God of Africa had created the Ibo nation to lead the children of Africa from the bondage of the ages".<sup>42</sup> Statements like this were certainly sectional and divisive, and many Nigerians began to doubt the sincerity of Dr. Azikiwe as a true nationalist devoid of tribal loyalties. Among these was Chief Obafemi Awolowo, a Yoruba British-trained lawyer who later wrote that "it was clear from some of Azikiwe's statements and from the general political and journalistic manoeuvres of Dr. Azikiwe over the years that his great objective was to set himself up as dictator over Nigeria and to make the Ibo nation the master race".<sup>43</sup> Chief Awolowo was claimed to have "complained on one occasion that the [*West African*] *Pilot* even distorted its football reporting to favour the Ibo."<sup>44</sup> The only obstacle to Dr. Azikiwe's scheme, Chief Awolowo further wrote, was the Yoruba intelligentsia whom he believed Dr. Azikiwe wanted removed at all costs.<sup>45</sup>

Chief Awolowo prepared for that challenge: he formed his own party, to be described later, which also had tribal loyalties. So too did a party with sectional and tribal loyalties later develop in the Northern Region. Thus, Nigeria's nationalist political movements and organizations – which had operated under one united banner under the leadership of the earlier nationalists, such as Jackson, Vaughan and others who were based in Lagos and neighbouring Yoruba towns such as Abeokuta – became rigidly tripartite in structure. The three major parties – the NCNC oriented towards the Ibo people and Eastern Nigeria, the Action Group

and the Yoruba in the West, and, the Northern People's Congress (NPC) and the Hausa in the North — were all tribal in character, and hence Nigerian nationalism was not truly national and unified but obtuse, multi-directional and diversified in nature. Indeed, it was this divisive character that made Nigerian political leaders at the several London Constitutional Conferences to ask, not with one united voice but with many voices, for several conflicting proposals for independence. Thus, for example, when Chief Anthony Enahoro of the Action Group Party tabled a motion in 1953 calling on the Federal House of Representatives to accept "as a primary political objective the attainment of self-government for Nigeria in 1956",<sup>46</sup> the leader of the NPC put a counter-motion and substituted the phrase "as soon as practicable"<sup>47</sup> for the date 1956. It is now history that the regions attained self-government on different dates.

The diffused and diversified nature of Nigerian nationalism was further exemplified by the way the major ethnic groups treated the smaller ones. Thus, for example, the tribal self-interest of the three major ethnic groups so threatened the insecurity of the minorities, generating loud claims of oppression by the three major groups, that the minority areas asked for the creation of their own states. The British Colonial Government subsequently appointed the Willink's Minority Commission to examine the claims of the minority peoples.

The point of emphasis is that the emergence of Nigerian political parties — and their development — had tribal origins and so also were they sustained by tribal loyalties. One major architect of that characteristic was Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe as several scholars, political scientists and historians have pointed out. Tribalism, unfortunately, has continued to be an important factor in Nigerian politics. Not surprisingly, there were those who saw the 1979 elections in terms of "tribal politics" and tribal allegiance and, therefore, argued that the Ibo as a people needed a leader under whom they could rally on a national basis. If there was no one acceptable Ibo leadership on a national basis, they maintained, at least Dr.

Azikiwe was a known person. The UPN Director of Publicity, Chief M. C. K. Ajuluchukwu, himself an Ibo from the heart of Ibo country, said that "whether we like it or not", Dr. Azikiwe

"is very acceptable in the Eastern parts of the country especially among the Ibos. When he came out the people rallied round him. The Ibos were looking for a leader and no leader appeared to be emerging. Then suddenly Zik decided to come back into politics after he had said he wouldn't come back. The people rallied round him and gave him their votes."<sup>48</sup>

It was fortunate for the NPP, and particularly for Dr. Azikiwe personally, that his people still regarded him as their leader. However, he appeared to Nigerians generally as a candidate for the Ibos and not for the nation. This worked against him – the Owelle of Onitsha.

That was the profile of Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe as a nationalist, the presidential candidate who is credited as one of those Nigerian nationalists who fought for the independence of this nation. The pre-independence election results in 1959 had precipitated a political stalemate with no single party able to win an overall majority of the 312 seats. A government, therefore, could be formed by a coalition of two parties. The coalition of the two Southern-based parties, the NCNC and the AG, with Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe to become Prime Minister, was considered. It did not work, the NCNC leadership claimed, because of national unity as it was allegedly feared that the North might secede from a Nigeria ruled by the Southern-based parties.<sup>49</sup> A coalition government formed by the AG and NCNC parties would have included the Northern Elements Progressive Union, NEPU, a Northern-based party which was made up of Northerners and which had formed an alliance with the NCNC before the elections. A failure of both the AG and the NCNC to form a coalition government was due more to a lack of common ties and to personality clash than to a fear of Northern secession. The NCNC National President, Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe, himself made this clear during the negotiations in 1959. In his address to the meeting of the National Executive

Committee of the NCNC in Lagos on December 22, 1959, on why the NCNC did not form a coalition with the Action Group Party, Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe stated that

"The final factors which outweighed all other considerations were analyzed and embarrassing questions were asked: Was it the NPC or the Action Group which confiscated the landed property of the National President of the NCNC [Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe himself] and refused to pay him compensation on the pretext that a third party claimed the land, whilst in fact twelve parcels of land, formerly belonging to nine owners, were involved? Was it the NPC or the AG who financed the lawyers who represented Mr. E. O. Eyo during the Foster-Sutton tribunal? [Which investigated the allegation that Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe had misappropriated the public funds of the Eastern Regional Government African Continental Bank, when he was Premier of the Eastern Region]. Was it the NPC or the AG who financed the lawyers who, when they advocated for the C-O-R State before the Minorities Commission insulted the Ibo peoples? [Azikiwe's tribe]"<sup>50</sup>.

These were the NCNC leader's reasons against a coalition with the Action Group Party despite his deep-seated conviction that coalition with the AG "would no doubt produce an efficient Government."<sup>51</sup> Thus by his own admission, Dr. Azikiwe subdued national efficiency for his own tribal and personal wishes. An NPC-AG proposed alliance also did not work. Negotiations dragged on for a week and finally resulted in the formation of an NPC-NCNC Federal Coalition Government. Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe, who had left the Premiership of the Eastern Region to contest the Federal elections, immediately resigned his seat from the House of Representatives and was appointed the President of the Upper House or Senate which had then been newly established. He subsequently became a ceremonial Governor-General (without any executive powers).<sup>52</sup>

Dr. Azikiwe had become a ceremonial Governor-General having no executive powers as such powers were conferred on the Head of Government, the Prime Minister. He had handed the leadership of the NCNC party to another Ibo successor, Dr. Michael

Okpara, when he went to the centre in Lagos to become President of the Nigerian Senate, later Governor-General and subsequently the President of the country when Nigeria attained Republican status in October 1963. By 1964 when there was a federal election, the first after independence, the various political parties in the country formed two grand alliances which contested the Federal elections of that year. One of these was the Nigerian National Alliance (NNA) made up of the Northern People's Congress (NPC), the Nigerian National Democratic Party (NNDP), the Mid-West Democratic Front (MDF), and the Delta People's Congress (DPC). The other major alliance was the United Progressive Grand Alliance (UPGA) which was made up of the National Convention of Nigerian Citizens (NCNC), the Action Group (AG), and the Nigerian (formerly Northern) Elements Progressive Union (NEPU). Member parties of each of the alliances agreed to field joint candidates for the elections. That election was besieged with several problems – particularly intimidation, vandalism and thuggery – as a result of which the UPGA, fearing defeat, asked that the elections be postponed. The NNA refused.

The role of Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe as a non-partisan Head of State during the crisis, observers believed, was not particularly commendable because he misinterpreted the old Constitution, during the political crisis resulting from the UPGA-NNA election debacle in 1964, in the support of one group at the expense of the other. Others warned against any effort to abuse the Constitution. In view of the conflicting claims of executive powers which Dr. Azikiwe claimed the 1963 Republican Constitution conferred on him even as a ceremonial Head of State, his official Legal Secretary, "after consultation with several lawyers of repute," advised that the Federal Attorney-General should be summoned for official advice.<sup>53</sup> Accordingly, Dr. Azikiwe invited the Federal Attorney General, Dr. T. O. Elias, to advise him on his constitutional powers as Head of State under that situation. The Attorney-General advised that sections 84 and 95 of the old Constitution did not necessarily confer absolute executive powers on the Head of

State and that the 1963 Republican Constitution did not give the President and Governors such executive powers.<sup>54</sup> Further, he stressed that Dr. Azikiwe as President lacked the power

“to form an interim or provisional government or to assume powers of the Parliament or of the Cabinet. As a matter of fact, in accordance with the drafting instructions given to the Law Officers at the Jos Premiers’ Conference of 1963, it was the wish of the Premiers that to avoid any doubts the President and the Governors should not be given any executive powers.

It is also on record that, when there was doubt about the deliberations of the Premiers’ Conference in this respect, the Chief Secretary [Chief J. Udoji] to the Premier declared that he was directed to emphasize that the Heads of State at the Federal and Regional levels should *not* be vested with executive powers.”<sup>55</sup>

The Solicitor-General of the Eastern Region, the late Mr. Justice Dan C. Ibekwe, at the invitation of the President, also conferred with the President and confirmed Dr. Elias’ interpretation of the Constitution and the statement about the drafting instructions issued at the Premiers’ Conference at Jos. The President asked Mr. Justice Ibekwe to make further research and report to him at his earliest convenience. Justice Ibekwe again conferred with the President, for the second time, on December 20, 1964, during which he re-confirmed that “after extensive research he was satisfied that the President could *not* assume powers under the Constitution and could *not* form an interim or provisional government.”<sup>56</sup> Indeed, observers believed that Dr. Azikiwe is a well-read man who ought to know the limits of his powers as a ceremonial president under the parliamentary system of government, and that his claim was merely an attempt to use his office to support the aspirations of the UPGA which was predominantly made up of Ibos. Not surprisingly, even after the Federal Attorney-General, Dr. T. O. Elias, and the late Mr. Justice D. O. Ibekwe as the Solicitor-General of the Eastern Region – both at the invitation of Dr. Azikiwe – as well as other legal luminaries and lawyers of repute advised him that he did not have the executive powers he claimed to have, Dr. Azikiwe still vacillated on and even shied

away from what he should do. He had been advised that he lacked the executive powers he claimed he had under the Republican Constitution "to form an interim or provisional government or to assume powers of the Parliament or of the Cabinet" as he had contemplated. Indeed, Dr. Azikiwe had also contemplated on the use of force, the Military, but Major-General Welby-Everard, the then British head of the Nigerian Army, and his colleagues, after legal counsel, told Dr. Azikiwe that they would take their orders only from the Prime Minister as the Executive Head of the Government and not from him a ceremonial president.<sup>57</sup>

The legal advice of the Attorney-General, which was again confirmed by the Chief Justice of the Federation, Sir Adetokunboh Ademola, and by the then Chief Justice of the then Eastern Region, the late Sir Louis Mbanefo, made it categorically clear that Dr. Azikiwe as president could not cancel or postpone the 1964 Federal elections or assume undue executive powers. The election took place as scheduled. The UPGA, fearing defeat, boycotted the elections as a protest measure. Not surprising, it won only 35 seats as against the NNA's 174. UPGA leaders, such as Mr. F. S. McEwen, National Secretary of the NCNC, and even Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe himself, admitted after the 1964 elections that the UPGA's boycott of the elections was "an error of judgement."<sup>58</sup> Not only was the decision a serious tactical blunder but also, as Dr. Okoi Arikpo wrote, it was "a red herring drawn across the prospect of inevitable defeat and the dismissal of UPGA ministers from the Federal Cabinet."<sup>59</sup> Had the UPGA not boycotted the elections, it would certainly have been defeated. The defeat would have automatically resulted in the NCNC (member of the out-going NPC-NCNC Coalition Government) not to return to form the Federal Government. The elected NCNC and other members of UPGA would have returned to the Federal Parliament as members of the Opposition. The other political effects of the boycott were more devastating for the UPGA, particularly the NCNC.

In the meantime, the NNA Prime Minister-elect, Alhaji Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa then called on Dr. Azikiwe in the ex-

pectation that he would be confirmed in office and his victorious NNA would form the new Government. But Dr. Azikiwe, having lost what executive powers he claimed he had (either by stopping the elections constitutionally or by the application of force through the Army) and the UPGA's meaningless and ineffective boycott of the elections, employed yet another strategy to disallow the elections: stalemate. He informed the Prime Minister-elect that "it was not the President's wish to appoint a person to form a government, and the Head of State would rather resign."

One has to understand what political observers believed was the rationale for Dr. Azikiwe's unwillingness — even as a non-partisan Head of State — to appoint the Prime Minister-elect as the Head of the new Government despite the results of the elections. As already pointed out, the defeated NCNC and his Ibo people would not have been in the new Government. It was obvious that Dr. Azikiwe wanted the UPGA to be in the government, even if it had been defeated at the elections. Therefore, a stalemate could lead to negotiations which would include defeated politicians from his area of the country. This was the ploy of the 6-point basis for "a broad-based government" following the intervention by Justices Adetokunboh Ademola and Louis Mbanefo. Indeed, the overwhelming victory of the NNA (174 seats) against the UPGA (35 seats) meant that Dr. Azikiwe personally had lost his base of support in the Electoral College, and hence his own unlikely continuation as President; the NPC-NCNC coalition having been broken, it was obvious that the NPC was not under any obligation to retain Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe as President of the nation, so also was it obvious that Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe would have been defeated in the Electoral College should the NPC put up another candidate.

Thus, his declaration that "it was not the President's wish to appoint a person to form a government, and that the Head of State would rather resign," was a masterly political bluff which unquestionably paid off for his people and for himself personally. (Observers also pointed out a similar situation in the "alliance"

between the NPN and the NPP under Dr. Azikiwe after the 1979 elections.)

The pending political disaster was averted by the successful intervention of Justices Ademola and Mbanefo. The acceptance in January 1965 of their 6-point proposals for a "broad-based" national government provided a breathing space. Alhaji Abubakar Tafawa Balewa remained as Prime Minister; so did Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe remain as President. That political experience was not to the credit of Dr. Azikiwe because his action had not respected the Constitution. Could he as president at the end of the 13 years of Military Rule again attempt to disrespect the Constitution?

A year after the settlement of the election crisis, the organizers of the January 1966 coup assassinated the Prime Minister and other political heavyweights from the North, West and Mid-West, as well as Military Officers from those regions while Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe was out of the country reportedly convalescing. Many dispassionate observers believed that Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe, by commission or omission, was partly to blame for the series of political crises this nation went through from the period when Nigeria achieved independence in 1960 to the eventual collapse of the civilian government following the *coup d'etat* of January 15, 1966. Dr. Azikiwe had again emerged as one of the politicians in the forefront of Nigerian politics as a presidential candidate as the Military was preparing to return to the Barracks. He appeared discredited for several reasons. Having played a prominent role in the First Republic which collapsed, observers wondered about what he did not do then for the country that he could now do for the Second Republic, particularly as he was believed to have mismanaged the chance he had, as President, in the pre-civil war civilian government. Besides, he himself had said repeatedly that he would not participate in any political party activities but would prefer the role of "Father of the Nation". Later, he declared himself a presidential candidate, arguing that he had been approached by several people. He even likened himself to a "young bride" being pursued by many suitors.

**JOSY AJIBOYE ON SUNDAY**



**BRIDE OF THE YEAR**

Many dispassionate political observers likened him not to a young bride but to a "spent strumpet", while some others said it was political prostitution. In a front-page editorial titled "Zik Flatters", the *New Nigerian* of Thursday, November 23, 1978, in its comments on the NPP leader's abandonment of his earlier declared role of "Father of the Nation" and, later, his pursuit of partisan politics, stated that Dr. Azikiwe, in the paper's opinion, was "not a good father of the nation." Some political observers said that Dr. Azikiwe, by his action, was merely showing himself for what he really is. For example, a regular newspaper columnist, Mohammed Haruna, called him "Tricky Zik,"<sup>60</sup> while another commentator, "Candido," a day later in the same paper, in his words, bid "good-bye to the Father of the Nation, and welcome to [Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe] the Politician, the cunning man."

Further, Dr. Azikiwe's track record during the Nigerian civil war had not been particularly remarkable, nor was it flattering. Nigerian nationalists believed that he is a sleek politician whose word could not be trusted because of his ambivalent and vacillating support for Nigeria on the one hand and for secessionist Biafra on the other hand. His supporters argued that Dr. Azikiwe was only being a political realist, supporting Biafra because he, like other Biafrans, believed that secession to form an independent state was their surest way to guarantee their survival and security as a people; he later changed sides and supported Nigeria, the supporters further claimed, because Dr. Azikiwe realized that the fall of Biafra was not only inevitable but was actually necessary because the safety of the Ibo people would be best guaranteed if the secessionist region remained with Nigeria. They said that this was why the Owelle of Onitsha later de-camped from the secessionists and proclaimed his support for Nigerian unity. It is interesting to note that his Ibo critics also used the same point to discredit him.

Dr. Azikiwe also had another problem. While submitting names of those presidential candidates for whom security protection should be provided, the Federal Electoral Commission (FEDECO) conspicuously omitted the name of Dr. Nnamdi Azi-

kiwe – as well as that of another candidate, Alhaji Aminu Kano of the PRP – because it seemed, FEDECO claimed, that Dr. Azikiwe had not fully complied with the law when he paid his annual income taxes. This allegation rocked the NPP campaign trail. Its presidential candidate took firm control of the situation – and spared the nation the anxiety and his party the embarrassment of seeking a new candidate at that late hour – when he sought court action in his home state of Anambra. The court saved the situation when it ruled in Dr. Azikiwe's favour. But the embarrassment had already been caused. Observant members of the electorate could not therefore quickly and easily not discredit the NPP presidential candidate as a tax evader, an experience which reminded the public of an earlier issue in 1956 during the Foster-Sutton Inquiry. That inquiry found that Dr. Azikiwe's conduct as Premier of the Eastern Region in the affairs of the Eastern Regional Government-owned African Continental Bank, in the words of the Foster-Sutton Tribunal, "had fallen short of the expectations of honest, reasonable people."<sup>61</sup> That was the profile of the NPP presidential candidate, Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe, whom a scholar of Nigerian politics, Walter Schwarz, once summed up as "the 'local Ibo boy made good', returning from America laden with degrees, author, newspaper magnate, pan-Africanist, [and] was a brilliant figure. Yet, for all his vision, in the end Nnamdi Azikiwe lacked the political common sense to remain a national leader."<sup>62</sup>

One of Dr. Azikiwe's greatest rivals was an equally dedicated nationalist, who again emerged as one of his rivals in the 1979 presidential elections. That man was Chief Obafemi Awolowo. Orphaned at an early age in life, the 70 year old presidential candidate of the Unity Party of Nigeria (UPN), Chief Obafemi Awolowo, graduated in Law in England at his own expense. He came into the limelight of Nigerian politics just at about the time that Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe was making his name as a Nigerian nationalist. Returning from abroad to Nigeria after Dr. Azikiwe had already firmly established himself as a nationalist and editor of the influential *West African Pilot*, Chief Obafemi Awolowo, like

other sensitive Nigerians, began to question the validity of the nationalist claims of Dr. Azikiwe and his party. The NCNC, as Professor Robert I. Rotberg notes, was a party which "catered — or seemed to cater — more and more to the Ibo-and Ibibio- speaking peoples of the Eastern Region and, as a result, had begun to lose the support of a number of educated Yoruba and Hausa-speaking Nigerians."<sup>63</sup> As it has already been pointed out, even the *West African Pilot* had a special appeal to the Ibo people. Chief Obafemi Awolowo, who had been the editor of the *Nigerian Worker* and Secretary of the Ibaden Branch of the Nigerian Youth Movement (NYM), and who was at this time a law student in London, resolved that before he would again enter into politics he would "see to it that the Yorubas evolved an ethnic solidarity among themselves just as the Ibibios and the Ibos had done, in order to ensure a strong and harmonious federal union among the peoples of Nigeria."<sup>64</sup> Thus, Chief Awolowo, while a student in London, was already preparing for what he and other Yorubas regarded as the "Ibo challenge".

In 1945, a year after the formation of the Ibo-dominated NCNC party, Yoruba students in London formed the Egbe Omo Oduduwa, a cultural organization of the descendants of Oduduwa, the ancestral founder of Yorubaland. Though a cultural group, the Egbe Omo Oduduwa had a political flavour. At its inaugural conference in Ile-Ife, its president, Sir Adeyemo Alakija, stated that one of the objectives of the society was to "create and actively foster the idea of a single nationalism throughout Yurubaland," thereby emphasizing its tribal nature. Yet, it also had nationalist intentions: the President had also stated that the society would "co-operate with existing ethnical and regional associations and such as may exist hereafter, in matters of common interest to all Nigerians, so as thereby to attain to Unity in Federation."<sup>65</sup> Awolowo used this cultural group as the basis of the Yoruba-dominated Action Group Party; he also drew on some members of the Nigerian Youth Movement who did not go with Azikiwe to form the latter's NCNC party. Unquestionably, Chief Obafemi Awolowo, li-



Chief Obafemi Awolowo, UPN presidential candidate.

ke Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe and others, is one of the great politicians in this country. He fought valiantly during the nationalist struggles and at the several Constitutional Conferences in London. As early as 1953 he, as leader of the Action Group, went to the London Constitutional Conference in an alliance with the NCNC to ask for self-government for the country in 1956 (failing which, certainly, for the South at least) and that Nigeria should be a federation. The subsequent political activities of Chief Awolowo as well as of others did much for the attainment of independence for the country. He is a well-known politician whose political activities politicized his people and the traditional rulers as well as other Nigerians into national consciousness.

The Action Group (AG) Party was based in Western Nigeria, with Chief Awolowo as Premier. In 1959, he moved to the centre with the hope that his Action Group Party would win the elections and he would become the Prime Minister of the country. As mentioned earlier, the Action Group Party not only lost the elections but also failed to form a coalition with either the NCNC or the NPC, both of which formed a coalition government in Lagos. Chief Awolowo became the Leader of Opposition in the Federal House of Representatives in Lagos. Shortly thereafter, there were the Action Group Party crises in the Western Region and the subsequent split of that party into two factions, one (the AG) under him and the other, the United Progressive Party (UPP), under his deputy and Premier of the Western Region, Chief Samuel Ladoke Akintola. The crisis resulted in the declaration of a State of Emergency by the Federal Government in the Western Region. Things really got messy for the Action Group Party leader when he was accused of treasonable felony, tried, found guilty, and was subsequently jailed for 10 years in 1963. To the political observer, it seemed that the whole exercise was orchestrated by the NPC-NCNC coalition government as a means to destroy the Action Group party, or at least that they were exploiting the crisis in the West to ruin the Action Group party. Indeed, as was already pointed out, one of the papers had said that "the decision declaring a state

of emergency in the West may put the burden on the [Federal] Government to show that its actions are intended for the benefit of Nigeria than the NPC and the NCNC."<sup>66</sup> Or, as stated in the blunt and brilliant article by Nduka Onum in *The Punch* earlier referred to, "the attempt to isolate the Yorubas from political participation as was manifested in the morbid destruction of the AG by the NPC-NCNC Government was dysfunctional."<sup>67</sup>

The State of Emergency which the NPC-NCNC Federal Government declared in the Western Region tended to confirm what Chief Awolowo had reportedly told the Federal Executive Council of his Action Group Party in September 1960 on the eve of independence. He said that he had heard rumours that once independence was achieved the NPC-NCNC Federal Government would "look for a pretext to dissolve the Western Regional Government and impose a caretaker regime in its place in order to destroy the institutional foundations of the Action Group."<sup>68</sup> Subsequent events, particularly during the period of a state of emergency, tended to reinforce this opinion when Dr. M. A. Majekodunmi, a distinguished gynaecologist, a Senator and Federal Minister of Health and himself a Yoruba from the Western Region, was appointed the sole Administrator of the West. Even the subsequent legal battles whether or not there was the justification for a declaration of a state of emergency seemed to show that the courts and the Federal Government were supporting one of the two factions of the Action Group party. "This unfortunate episode," wrote Dr. Kalu Ezera, a member of the NPC-NCNC Federal Government, "constituted the gravest test of the durability of parliamentary democracy in Nigeria. It marked the beginning of a whole chain of unpleasant events which engulfed the Region for the next two years and raised several intricate constitutional questions which seriously tested the independence and impartiality of the judiciary."<sup>69</sup> Thus, the pre-civil war civilian government had been oppressive against Chief Obafemi Awolowo. He was still in prison when the January 15, 1966 coup in which several prominent Nigerian political heavyweights were assassinated.

minated, occurred.

Released after the so-called retaliatory coup of July 1966, Chief Awolowo became the first "prison graduate" to be made a Federal Commissioner for Finance and Vice Chairman of the Federal Executive Council of former General Yakubu Gowon. A believer in the Federation and national unification, particularly during the days of nationalism and the struggle for independence, Chief Awolowo during the period immediately before the civil war seemed to encourage the fragmentation of the nation. For example, the Western Region/Lagos proposals about a "loose association" to the Ad Hoc Constitutional Conference in September 1966 did not seem to encourage the unity of the nation. Not only did he seem to encourage the East to break away — and hence break up the country — but he also said that the West would feel free to follow suit if the East seceded. However, once the civil war started, Chief Obafemi Awolowo pursued objectives, like any true nationalist, that would maintain the corporate existence of the nation as a single entity. His efforts were laudable. Soon after the civil war ended, Chief Awolowo resigned his appointment as Federal Commissioner for Finance and became a private man. In Gen. Murtala Muhammed's effort to draw up a new Constitution, Chief Obafemi Awolowo was one of the 50 eminent Nigerians he appointed to draft the new constitutional charter for post-military Nigeria. Chief Awolowo refused to serve in the Constitution Drafting Committee (CDC) because, it was alleged, he was not formally informed of his appointment but that he first heard of the announcement over the news media — like most of the other 49 members of the CDC also did. Some people suggested that Chief Awolowo did not want to serve under any person. Others alleged that Chief Awolowo wanted enough time at his disposal to prepare himself and his supporters for the organization of a political party once the ban on politics was lifted.

One of the early organizers of a political party, Chief Awolowo became the leader of the Unity Party of Nigeria (UPN) when the ban on politics was lifted in 1978, and the presidential candidate

of his political party for the 1979 elections. Articulate and the candidate with the seemingly best organized political machinery, political observers nonetheless believed that there were several factors working against Chief Awolowo. If nothing else, his socialist claims and his promises should he win the presidential candidacy seemed rather exaggerated. For example, he promised free education at all levels. His critics were quick to point out that the UPN presidential candidate was not telling the nation the whole truth. They said that Primary education had been free since September 1976; institutions of technology and teacher training colleges were not only tuition free but were also lodging and boarding free; similarly, the universities were tuition free and, the Federal Government, which was already subsidizing the meals of university students, promised it would further subsidize their feeding. The Federal Government had also promised that secondary school education would be tuition-free with effect from September 1979. Chief Awolowo, the critics concluded, was therefore offering nothing new.

His critics further argued that the free education campaign promise itself had its own weakness, particularly because there was little or no prior planning at all. In the effort to fulfill the UPN campaign promise of free education, the states where the UPN controlled the state government – Lagos, Ondo, Ogun, Oyo and Bendel – faced serious problems because of inadequate prior planning. The Chairman of the Implementation Committee for the National Policy on Education, Professor S. Onabamiro, himself also Yoruba and indeed Regional Minister under Chief Awolowo in the old Western Region which first introduced free primary education, was quite succinct in his criticism of the UPN campaign promise. He said that “In the scramble to fulfill campaign promises, the five UPN states are turning every available space into a classroom – but four walls of a building do not make a school.”<sup>70</sup> Indeed, those buildings were for the most part not even available, because no prior arrangements had been made to erect them. No less a person than one of the UPN Governors in

the heart of UPN country, Alhaji Lateef Jakande, Governor of Lagos State, inadvertently acknowledged the inadequate preparations in the rush to implement the UPN free education campaign promise when he disclosed that lack of accommodation was the greatest problem inhibiting its effective implementation.<sup>71</sup> Addressing a rally of school children at the Ikeja Stadium during the State's 25th anniversary celebration of the free primary education scheme introduced by the old Western Region in 1955, Alhaji Jakande further disclosed that the free education programme in Lagos State had been plagued by acute shortage of teachers in all categories of schools in his state. These included shortage of teachers in primary schools, secondary schools, and in teachers' training colleges.<sup>72</sup> The Governor added, however, that the services of members of the National Youth Service Corps serving in Lagos State had been enlisted to solve the problem; his Government would deploy part of the 2,000 youth corpsers serving in the state to teach in the various schools.<sup>73</sup>

It was obvious that prior planning had been inadequate. As one of the UPN free education campaign critics, the late Dr. Obarogie Ohonbamu said, "We must learn a hard lesson provided by the chaotic unplanned disgraceful experience of the free primary education of the [old] West"<sup>74</sup> in 1955. Accompanying that experience was the resultant poor quality of education and the related question: education for what? Thus, for example, the Western Region had produced primary school graduates many of whom were claimed to have been unable to write a correct sentence, or in some cases, even spell their names correctly! Parents therefore found it necessary to provide "prep" after-school teachers and lessons to "brush up" their children who enrolled in such free schools in the old Western Region; some parents enrolled their children in private schools while the more affluent ones sent their children to private schools abroad in Britain because of the poor quality of elementary schools in the Region. As the late Dr. Ohonbamu continued in his criticism of the UPN free education campaign promise, "Nobody will quarrel with free anything but if it

is to succeed and to be in the interest of everyone, we must not put the cart of political gains before the horse of national planning."<sup>75</sup>

Indeed, other critics also said that should Chief Obafemi Awolowo successfully fulfill his campaign promises of free education at all levels as well as provide free medical services, though laudable, severe strains would be put on the financial resources of the nation at the exclusion of every other development. Some observers opined that a free medical service is meaningless if the nation does not have the supporting infrastructures. As one critic wondered, "what is the meaning of free medical service if the ambulance can't get to the hospital because of go-slow," the perennial traffic jams of Lagos and other major cities due to poor roads? It is this question of the development of other infrastructures that the qualification of the UPE programme by the exiting Head of State, Gen. Olusegun Obasanjo, while addressing the World Confederation of Organizations of the Teaching Profession in August 1977, can be regarded now in retrospect as a prophetic statement on the UPN free education campaign promise. In that speech, read on his behalf by Col. (Dr.) A. A. Ali, then Federal Commissioner for Education and now NPN Senator from Benue State in the National Assembly, Gen. Obasanjo said that

"If national resources were to be concentrated on the UPE scheme to the exclusion of other vital development projects, such as the provision for transportation networks, and various agricultural projects; the iron and steel complex; the oil refinery projects; housing; local governments; etc., then the UPE Scheme itself will suffer, as its ultimate success is obviously dependent upon a strong dynamic economy. This is to say that the Government and the people must begin to grapple with the simple truth that our financial resources are not only limited, but that the resources cannot be used exclusively for the UPE scheme."<sup>76</sup>

Perhaps one of the most lucid analysis of the UPN free education campaign promise was by Chief N. K. Adamolekun in his short essay, "The Politics of Free Education."<sup>77</sup> An activist in educational development and reforms and formerly Registrar of

the University of Ibadan, Chief Adamolekun succinctly pointed out that Nigerian political parties have never really grounded their manifestos on ideologies but on promises; hence, the future hope of a political party rested largely on establishing a reputation for fulfilling its promises.<sup>78</sup> One such promise was free education, which goes as far back as 1923 when the three successful candidates for the Legislative Council in Lagos pledged to work for "Compulsory Primary Education" throughout the country. The Nigerian Youth Movement also urged the Colonial Government to make elementary education progressively free and compulsory. Similarly, the West African Students Union in London pursued the same demand in 1941. In 1943, Chief N. K. Adamolekun further wrote, the Lagos Town Council actually set up a committee to consider the feasibility of free primary education for the advantage of the residents of the city. Some three years later, in 1946, Mr., and later Sir, Francis Ibiam tabled a motion in the Legislative Council calling for Free and Compulsory Primary Education. An amended version of this motion was in fact passed in 1949; it provided that Native Authorities should levy education rates in order to facilitate the introduction of this social amenity in certain areas.<sup>79</sup> Chief Adamolekun noted that nothing was done about these promises because "none of the several bodies which had pleaded for free primary education was desperate enough to ignore the complex of problems inherent in them."<sup>80</sup> These problems included:

"lack of statistical data for accurate planning; finance, especially to known resources; special effects (especially with regard to peasant families) of suddenly and compulsorily deploying all children for education; the certainty that education standards would decline; the effect of the success of the scheme on secondary education; a curriculum appropriate to prepare pupils of tender age with only six years schooling for any kind of future contribution; the prospects of employment; and what was even more important, whether such a costly scheme might not retard investment in economic projects without which the scheme itself and progress generally would be stultified."<sup>81</sup>

Chief Adamolekun further wrote that the Action Group Party, a party then newly launched under the leadership of Chief Obafemi Awolowo in 1951 and "desperate to gain political legitimacy, which it hoped to confirm in the elections of 1956, could not be deterred by the consequences."<sup>82</sup> By the standard of those days, Chief Adamolekun continued, "the proposed free and compulsory scheme, though confined to the Western Region, and though the 'compulsory' notion had to be dropped perforce, was a gigantic undertaking, and it taught the Action Group Party a permanent lesson, in detailed planning. But planning, even when it is accurate, is not to be substituted for financial and political realities. Those of us who followed the events of 1951 – 54 would agree that on the whole it is wiser to subject promises to the test of means."<sup>83</sup> Barely a year later in 1952, it became clear that a levy of 10 shillings (10/-), a substantial amount in those days, had to be imposed on each tax payer. There was subsequent widespread disillusionment in the Western Region, a situation which the NCNC exploited. Chief Awolowo later admitted that the levy of 10 shillings (10/-) per tax payer was responsible for the failure of his Action Group Party in the 1954 elections.<sup>84</sup> In August 1954, one of the intellectuals and a staunch member of the Action Group, Dr. Sanya Onabamiro, publicly criticised the Action Group Scheme in the *Daily Times* on the ground that the scheme would lower educational standards. He further charged that the party leaders were insincere since some of them maintained their children at the University College (now University of Ibadan) Staff School.<sup>85</sup>

Chief Awolowo, as the leader of the UPN, again used free education in 1979 as the best bait to win the electorate. The rising cost of living had made secondary school education "a burden to parents with little or even moderate means, and a source of worry and anxiety to students so that a party that offered to relieve parents of this burden here and now, could not fail to gain their support."<sup>86</sup> Thus, one could argue that the ovations of "AWO" in the states of the old Western Region were more as a clamour for free education and the bonanza to come than by the undoubted cha-

risma of Chief Awolowo in the old Western Region, and "voting in those states was largely voting for grammar scholl education without cost."<sup>87</sup> In concluding his article, "The Politics of Free Education," Chief N. K. Adamolekun observed:

"Right now it does not need a trouble-shooting opposition to detect that the UPN's promises do not hang together. In Education, (say, in Ondo State) the government will no longer build classrooms which will henceforth become the financial responsibility of parents. The government will no longer give grants towards the construction or maintenance of boarding houses which will be phased out; meanwhile boarding house bills have gone up, pending the phasing out, and parents are obliged to pay. Cooks and servants whose salaries used to be paid by the Government in connection with school meals, will be discharged. Tuition fees, having already been scrapped by the Federal Government, are no longer the responsibility of a State Government. Parents are already calling for a balance sheet! Was the scheme not proclaimed to be free? Who is more relieved, the government or the parent?"<sup>88</sup>

Was this what "free education" under "UPN Socialism" meant? There was also the problem of Chief Awolowo's non-acceptability by non-Yoruba people, particularly the Ibo people. Chief Awolowo was believed not to be popular with the Ibo people because secessionist Biafrans maintained that he could not be trusted; this was because, according to them, he had made them expect that the West would support their secessionist objective. Chief Awolowo's position, contained in his letter of resignation from a Yoruba Leaders-of-Thought meeting in Ibadan at the initial stage of the Nigerian crisis, had been an emphatic demonstration of that expected support. "It is my considered view", Chief Awolowo had said in his letter of resignation, "that while some of the demands of the East are excessive within the context of a Nigerian union, most of such demands are not only well-founded but are designed for smooth and healthy association among the various national units of Nigeria."<sup>89</sup> In effect, he was saying that he supported the East. Then, he dropped still another bomb-shell.

Should the East secede, he said, the West would "feel free to follow suit".<sup>90</sup> The Federal advocates were caught with their pants down and the Federal side was on the verge of collapse. The authorities in the East broke champagne. Once the civil war started, and the Mid-West Region came under rebel control in such a swift manner, the next logical move by the rebel forces was into the Yoruba Western Region. The statement of Chief Awolowo on August 12, 1967, was an effective reply to Ojukwu's call to the Yorubas to join what the secessionist leader called "a rebellion against the Federal Government".<sup>91</sup> Chief Awolowo said that he was "irrevocably committed to the unity of Nigeria," and that the Yoruba people had "constantly supported unity, while they also believed in the federal union of the Nigerian peoples and for self-determination for all national units. It is for these causes," Chief Awolowo continued, that the Yoruba people "must now be ready to resist any attempt by the rebel forces from the East to violate their territory and subjugate them."<sup>92</sup> The secessionists were stunned in gross disbelief. The Yorubas rallied to the appeal of Chief Awolowo to give their support and loyalty to the Federal Government, if only for the reason that they feared domination from across the Niger.

While Nigerian unionists and nationalists hailed Chief Awolowo, the secessionists maintained that Chief Awolowo could not be trusted because, they said, he led them into false expectations. Many of Chief Awolowo's Ibo critics held this against the UPN presidential candidate whom they further accused of having played a major role in the collapse of their secessionist dream once the war itself started. Thus, for example, some of his critics across the Niger said that it was Chief Awolowo who advocated that starvation was a legitimate instrument of war.<sup>93</sup> Indeed, as the UPN Director of Research and Publicity, Chief M. C. K. Ajulu-chukwu, himself an Ibo from the heart of former Biafra and who said he fled in the same plane on January 10, 1970, with the rebel leader at the collapse of their secessionist dream, put it, the Ibo people "identified the UPN as if it was Chief Awolowo in per-

son."<sup>94</sup> Continuing, the UPN Director of Publicity stated that the Ibo people said that the UPN presidential candidate

"was the man who made them die when he should have brought the West out to them in the East. They also said that Chief Awolowo advocated the use of starvation as an instrument of war. I soon took up this with the Chief and he told me he said so and wouldn't deny it. But he said he wasn't directing it to civilians. He was directing it against the soldiers."<sup>95</sup>

Chief Awolowo's Ibo critics further said that the UPN presidential candidate also advised the Federal Military Government during the crisis to blockade secessionist Biafra,<sup>96</sup> an economic ploy which undoubtedly created severe economic hardships for the secessionists. While that criticism from former Biafrans may be understandable, his supporters however emphasized that Chief Awolowo as Commissioner for Finance — indeed like any other Nigerian federalist — had to pursue measures, political and economic pressures, which would defeat the secessionist attempt of Biafra or indeed of any part of the Federation. Therefore, one could look at Chief Awolowo's alleged advice for the blockade of secessionist Biafra, they maintained, as a laudable economic strategy to end the war and alleviate the pain and agony of the suffering masses. Former secessionists were not convinced and further argued that even after the war ended, Chief Awolowo as Federal Commissioner for Finance in 1970 "authorised a N 20.00 rebate for whatever holdings the defeated Biafrans had in the Banks,"<sup>97</sup> as one commentator observed in *West Africa*. It was also further said that in the same capacity as Commissioner for Finance, Chief Awolowo had "delayed the re-opening of the African Continental Bank, [owned by the old Eastern Region] and popularly known as the Ibo Bank, after the civil war ended."<sup>98</sup>

The campaign against the UPN leader from largely Ibo people as someone who hated them was so severe that Chief Awolowo's UPN party had to put out a statement, "Does Awo Hate the Ibos?" The answer was, of course, NO! The Ibos did not seem to have been impressed. Then, Chief Awolowo promised his Ibo au-

dience that he would grant secessionist leader Ojukwu amnesty if he, Chief Awolowo, was elected president. That notwithstanding, political observers believed that Chief Awolowo had an uphill task among the Ibo people. Not surprisingly, he was booed and jeered at when he went on a campaign tour to Enugu in the heart of Ibo country. Indeed, some observers believed that the late entry of Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe into the presidential race was an attempt, among other issues, to throw the monkey wrench into the wheel of the campaign machinery of Chief Awolowo and in the process forestall him from victory at the polls. Further, it seemed that Chief Awolowo was also not particularly welcomed among other peoples; this was because the UPN leader could not easily dissociate himself from what was believed to be one of his greatest problems, namely, his tribal allegiance, a factor which worked against him on a national basis. Chief Awolowo's appeal to his Yoruba people made him appear as their candidate and not a presidential candidate who had the whole country as his constituency. Indeed, as a student of Political Science in one of the Nigerian universities observed, "If Awolowo wins, tribalism will have a rebirth in staggering proportions."<sup>99</sup> This is because Chief Awolowo had been so definitive and loud in his tribal challenge of Dr. Azikiwe during the period of nationalism and the struggle for independence that he himself later appeared to be a victim and strong perpetrator of tribalism, consumed by the very fault he found in his old political foe.

A prospective leader of this nation must be detribalized *and* should be seen to be so. The Yorubas are only one of the multiplicity of the ethnic groups in the country, howbeit an important part of the presidential constituency. This was a point his Yoruba critics and particularly his non-Yoruba admirers repeatedly emphasized: that Chief Awolowo must move out of the Yoruba constituency into the other parts of the country *and* win support there; that he should not portray himself, nor should he be portrayed by his people, as a "Yoruba candidate"; nor, indeed, should he even be seen to appear so. In a post-mortem look at the elections,

the Federal Minister of Industries, Alhaji Adamu Ciroma, who was also a member of the Constitution Drafting Committee, said that "While writing the Constitution of Nigeria, we were persuaded with the feeling that no longer would it be possible for a single ethnic group in the country to capture power at the Federal level. This is what we put in the Constitution."<sup>100</sup> Continuing, Alhaji Ciroma said that "If all the Yorubas vote for one man, he cannot become the President, likewise the Ibos as well as the Hausas, unless that person can get a reasonable quantity of votes from other people different from his own ethnic group."<sup>101</sup> Thus, "in a nutshell", Ciroma further said, "anybody who is aspiring to lead the country should try to make himself acceptable to the nation democratically."<sup>102</sup> Unfortunately, for the UPN, its presidential candidate appeared as a candidate of his Yoruba people. As Professor Jean Herskovits observed, Chief "Awolowo has continued to personify Yoruba politics."<sup>103</sup>

It also seemed that Chief Awolowo did not particularly like criticism and many people further criticised him that another of his greatest weaknesses is that he believes his opinions are the best always and that he even tends to be vindictive to those who criticize him; indeed, that the party is so disciplined that there is no room for even constructive criticism which the party leadership apparently equates with sabotage — as also happened with the former but now banned Action Group party. As a result, Chief Awolowo seemed to be the only nationally known person within the UPN. As the UPN Director of Publicity, Chief M. C. K. Ajuluchukwu, put it, "you must remember that the only known person in the UPN was Chief Obafemi Awolowo. The rest of us were unknown. Who is MCK?", Chief Ajuluchukwu asked. "Who is the other person you can name in the UPN beside Chief Awolowo?", he further asked.<sup>104</sup> That Chief Awolowo was the only person within the UPN known nationally was perhaps good for the party, particularly as it won the unflinching support and loyalties of his believers. The *Daily Times* columnist, Stanley Macebuh, put this phenomenon quite succinctly when he wrote that "the UPN is

more notable for the dedication of its members than for the uniqueness of its programmes."<sup>105</sup> Unquestionably, it is good to have dedicated followers. However, as the history of political campaigns and electioneering all over the world shows, victory at the polls does not depend on the support of the die-hards of your tribe or group but on the ability to win the votes of other members of the electorate.

Chief Awolowo's hope, observers believed, was that no one candidate would win by the first ballot as it appeared that no candidate could satisfy the requirements of the 1977 Electoral Decree by winning at least one quarter of the votes in at least two-thirds of the 19 states. If no candidate satisfied the electoral requirements, the National and State Assemblies would vote for the president at a second ballot. This was where UPN supporters perhaps believed they would perform wonders if their presidential candidate was unable to win by the first ballot. The prospect of going to the National and State Assemblies was enough cause for apprehension. The GNPP presidential candidate, Alhaji Waziri Ibrahim, had anticipated the problems inherent in the Electoral College system even before the elections. Mincing no words, Alhaji Ibrahim publicly stated in a television programme from Ibadan that "the Electoral College is a very very bad system vulnerable to corruption."<sup>106</sup> The apprehension became real after the elections. This anxiety was well put by Martin Dent, in a rather acidic way, when he said that he would personally have hoped that Nigeria would be spared the electoral convention of legislative houses with what he called "its opportunities for log rolling and bribery,"<sup>107</sup> and "the possibility of the overturning of the verdict of the people given in the first election."<sup>108</sup> He further said: "but if the judges order such a convention to take place it must do so. The difference between a great nation such as Nigeria and a banana state," Dent continued, "is largely that one obeys the basic rules and respects the referees and the other does not. One can only be silent on this issue and wait to see if there is any appeal and if so wait for the judges to speak."<sup>109</sup> And so the nation waited

patiently, or anxiously. So also did Chief Awolowo, the UPN presidential candidate whom Moslems and Christians alike, even among his own Yoruba people across party lines, later accused of gross and inexcusable blasphemy when he publicly claimed after the election that he was luckier than both Jesus Christ and the Holy Prophet Muhammed.

The credibility of the socialist claims of the UPN was severely shaken when one of the national newspapers in its front page publication revealed after the elections that the UPN leader, Chief Obafemi Awolowo, had purchased for N1 million some 29.613 hectares of land, equivalent to about 360 plots, in Maroko and Igboere in the environs of Victoria Island, one of the choicest residential areas of Lagos. The paper substantiated its investigative report with a photocopy of the transactions. It reported that "the Deed of Conveyance was dated February 28, 1978 and the registration was carried out on May 6, 1980 as No. 38, at page 38, in volume 1689" of the Lands Registry at the Lagos Office of the State's Register of Deeds.<sup>110</sup> Continuing, the paper reported that "a registration fee of N2,506 was paid by Chief Awolowo on March 29, 1978. The Registration number is B918322 of 29/3/78. A fee of N41.50 was raised on receipt voucher No. C66100 of May 6, 1980 for LR2400172/62 and signed by a Mr. Olumide for the Registrar of Titles."<sup>111</sup> The paper further revealed that "The Conveyance stipulates Dideolu Estates Limited as the beneficiary of the purchase,"<sup>112</sup> a limited liability Company which the paper reported "is owned by the Awolowos."<sup>113</sup> A few days later, the paper, the *National Concord*, published yet another photocopy of the land transactions.<sup>114</sup> All the evidence and documentations seemed to substantiate the report that the UPN presidential candidate and advocate of Socialism, Chief Obafemi Awolowo, had acquired an area approximately some 360 plots of prime economic land at Igboere and Maroko areas of Victoria Island, Lagos.

When asked to comment on the report, particularly in view of the UPN claim of Socialism, the UPN leader replied that he had no comment to make except to say that the issue was "strictly pri-

vate."<sup>115</sup> That was a report by the Lagos *Daily Times*. Similarly, *The Punch* quoted Chief Awolowo as saying that the report was "obnoxious" and added that "in spite of that it has no effect on me."<sup>116</sup> When pressed further to confirm or deny the report of his ownership of the piece of property equivalent to 360 plots, Chief Awolowo replied that it was his "private affair. I have no comments."<sup>117</sup> For once, Chief Awolowo who is noted to have a ready answer for every issue was silent. The UPN leader who was leaving the country for a two-month overseas trip which was reported to be a pilgrimage to Europe and the United States of America left Nigeria, as he had earlier planned, on the same day the *National Concord* broke the news of his land deal. In his absence, the national newspapers carried the rant of the pros and cons, some held brief for Chief Awolowo while others damned him for what they called "preaching one thing and practising the opposite" and even questioning the morality and probity of the UPN presidential candidate.

One of his supporters, the *Nigerian Tribune*, reported that the UPN Director of Research and Publicity, Chief M. C. K. Ajuluchukwu, said that "Chief Awolowo had a right to own property;"<sup>118</sup> he added that "the fact that the UPN leader was preaching Socialism did not mean that he should be a poor man."<sup>119</sup> The *New Nigerian* also reported that Chief Ajuluchukwu, in an interview with the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN), pointed out that people "should not refer to Socialism as to mean poverty," adding that the Socialism his UPN party talked about "means equality of wealth and not that everybody should be poor."<sup>120</sup> A critic wondered what the UPN "equality" meant: Should one individual own 360 plots of prime economic land while others had none? Nigerians did not quite understand this new interpretation of 'Socialism'. A few days later, the UPN made further explanations in defence of its boss for the acquisition of the land despite the socialist claims of the party and of the UPN leader. In a statement issued by the UPN, and signed by its National Director of Research and Publicity, Chief M. C. K. Ajuluchukwu,

and by the National Director of Organization of the UPN, Mr. Ebenezer Babatope, the party stated that Chief Awolowo bought the land legitimately from his legitimate earnings as a lawyer.<sup>121</sup> Continuing, the statement said that Chief Obafemi Awolowo, since 1961,

“declared his commitment to the socialist goals of economic and political development. His whole life and property have been devoted exclusively towards the prosecution of this noble course. Nigeria as at now is a capitalist society and Chief Obafemi Awolowo has made it clear in all his writings on Socialism that all property must be state-owned when Nigeria eventually obtains Socialism. Until that goal is achieved, it will be unthinkable to expect Chief Awolowo not to own property through his legitimate earnings.”<sup>122</sup>

The statement further emphasized that the land Chief Awolowo acquired in Maroko “has no connection or bearing whatsoever with the Maroko scheme of the UPN government of Lagos State,”<sup>123</sup> which was reserved for the construction of low cost housing for the people of Maroko and environs. It seemed that the UPN had quite an uphill task in convincing Nigerians. A UPN Senator representing Ekiti-West (Ondo North Senatorial District) of Ondo State in the National Assembly, and himself also Yoruba, Mr. Ayo Fasanmi, publicly criticized the UPN leader’s N1 million land deal concerning the 360 plots as “morally indefensible.”<sup>124</sup> In the open criticism which he made in the lobby of the National Assembly, Senator Fasanmi (UPN) said that if the newspaper accounts of Chief Awolowo’s land deal were correct, then, the purchase stood a direct negation of the socialist stand of his party leader.<sup>125</sup> Quoting from *Strategy and Tactics of the People’s Republic*, a publication which the UPN presidential candidate authored, the UPN Senator remarked that what was now happening ran counter to Chief Awolowo’s professed opinion on private property ownership. The only way to justify the land acquisition by Chief Awolowo, the UPN Senator continued in his criticism of his party leader, was for the UPN boss to “say publicly that he had acquired the land in trust for the people.”<sup>126</sup>

Similarly, a prominent Lagos lawyer, himself also Yoruba, Mr. Kanmi Ishola-Osobu, reportedly commented at the same venue that the land deal had provided grounds for "Chief Awolowo's final political oblivion."<sup>127</sup> Mr. Ishola-Osobu further said that the issue deserved better and deeper treatment than it was receiving in the mass media so that, according to him, Chief Awolowo "might be properly exposed as a leader trading on deceit."<sup>128</sup> The NPN similarly condemned the UPN leader for "wearing a toga of deceit, wanting the nation to see him as a socialist while Chief Awolowo was privately perpetuating capitalist ideals."<sup>129</sup>

In the meantime, the UPN leader was away from the country. Two months later, Chief Obafemi Awolowo returned to Nigeria on Sunday, July 6, 1980. He had said on the day he travelled out of the country that the alleged land deal was his private affair and that he had no comment. On his return, he changed his mind. He now had some comment. At the Lagos Murtala Muhammed Airport, he read to waiting reporters a 30-page prepared statement on his alleged N1 million land deal. In his 30-page explanation, which several of the national newspapers carried in full,<sup>130</sup> Chief Awolowo confirmed that "the Deeds of Conveyance showed quite clearly" that he no longer had land at Maroko since February 1978 because, he said, he had transferred his interest to Dideolu Estates Limited in whom the title to the Maroko land vests since the execution of the conveyance.<sup>131</sup> That was also what the *National Concord* had reported. Chief Awolowo further confirmed another statement by the investigative reporting of the *National Concord* when the UPN presidential candidate stated that, in his words, "Dideolu Estates Limited is a private limited liability company in which the only shareholders are my wife, myself and our children."<sup>132</sup> The Company, Chief Awolowo further said, had not yet paid him personally anything for the conveyance of the land at Maroko to it since February 1978.<sup>133</sup> The UPN leader also inadvertently admitted that the initial size of land involved consisted of 360 plots; at least, he did not deny the

charge that it was 360 plots. Where Chief Awolowo seemed to have disagreed with the *National Concord* was the actual number of plots *presently* involved. The paper had said 360 plots at Maroko and Igbosere. Chief Awolowo replied that it was "only 103 plots at Maroko."<sup>134</sup> Why the difference? Chief Awolowo himself offered an explanation: "When allowances had been made for roads and the types of density permissible under the Town Planning Laws and Regulations of Lagos State," the UPN leader claimed, "it has not been possible to have more than 103 plots."<sup>135</sup>

Those were the salient responses by the UPN presidential candidate on the allegation of his land deal about which the *National Concord* had stunned the nation. In the third of its 3-part editorial on Chief Awolowo's airport press conference and admission that he transferred the conveyance of the said land to Dideolu Estates Limited (DEL), the *National Concord* said that "The law may be an ass, but Nigerians are not, for as far as we can see, Awolowo is DEL and DEL is Awolowo"<sup>136</sup> As a Yoruba proverb says, "*Omi eko, eko ni*," meaning, "pap fluid is nothing but the pap itself;" in other words, it is Chief Awolowo who owns the land whether the conveyance is in his personal name or in the name of DEL company which, by his own admission, is owned exclusively by his wife, children and himself. As the first of the 3-part *National Concord* editorial also said, "Chief Awolowo opens himself to question on the score of morality and probity."<sup>137</sup> Continuing, the paper asked: has the transfer of ownership of the land to a company owned by his wife, his children and himself, by his own admission, "in any way deprived Chief Awolowo of ownership of any portion of the land? Is it morally justifiable in present day Nigeria that the Awolowo family should own 360 plots?"<sup>138</sup>

Quoting from what it said was page 192 of Chief Awolowo's book, *People's Republic*, in which the UPN leader in his advocacy for Socialism said "we declare that the aims of socialism are social justice and EQUALITY, and a state of affairs in which the resources provided by Nature belong to the citizens EQUALLY," the *National Concord* in its second of the 3-part editorial commentary

said Chief Awolowo "did not pause to ask himself how the acquisition of 360 plots or even the 103 plots he acknowledged would make for the early advent of socialism"<sup>139</sup> which the UPN leader advocates. In the third of its 3-part editorial commentary, the paper concluded:

"The way we see the whole affair, therefore, is that by multiple acts which can hardly pass moral, legal or ethical tests, Chief Awolowo or DEL has held the 360 plots of prime land which was rushed through legal processes on the same day that the Land Use Decree came into effect. And we do not think this is good enough for someone who claims to be the most qualified person to be the President of Nigeria"<sup>140</sup>.

The rest, and most part, of Chief Awolowo's 30-page airport press conference was not only irrelevant but also, in the words of Habibu Sani, National Director of Publicity of the National Party of Nigeria (NPN), "self-glorified claim."<sup>144</sup> Continuing in his short essay titled "Awo, The Not So Artful Dodger", the NPN Director of Publicity stated that

"The irrelevances of Chief Awolowo's testimony in the land deal affair can be seen in bold relief when he devoted the greater part of his defence in recounting his past activities and financial contributions to the defunct Action Group (AG); his rents from his properties hired to the University of Ife; his lack of confidence, even though he is a Senior Advocate of Nigeria, in some of the judgements of the Supreme Court; the special dispensation, to him by the then Military Governor of Lagos State, Commodore Adckunle Lawal, with regard to the said gracious release of part of the said land to the City Properties Development Limited; his arrogant claims as regards being, in his words, 'the first and chiefest advocate of federalism' for whatever that may mean to him; his being one of the Nigerian Youth Movement delegates who met Sir Bernard Bourdillon the then Colonial Governor of Nigeria to demand a national minimum wage; and his high taste for 'one of the best though not one of the most flashy or most expensive cars' in the country dating back to the cocoa boom of 1936/37 as well as his first Ijebu Remo house built in 1939.

I submit with all respect that all these face-saving explanations and presumptuous claims of being 'the first in Africa' in everything he did and still does, are completely beside the point."<sup>142</sup>

Similarly, *Daily Times* columnist, Stanley Macebuh, in his comments on the N1 million land deal, titled "Out of Conflict, A National Consensus?", observed that Chief Awolowo's

"articulation of the essence of socialism was eloquent; his excoriation of his critics vehement. But after the hurricane has settled, issues still remained about which he was either silent or less convincing than one had hoped."<sup>143</sup>

Dispassionate observers agreed with Habibu Sani that Chief Awolowo, in Sani's words, "has never been in such a tight corner in his political career as in the reported Maroko and Igbose land deals in recent times."<sup>144</sup> "Like a caged boxer pushed into a tight corner on the receipt of a devastating blow from a more superior pugilist," the NPN Director of Publicity continued in his criticism of the UPN leader's 30-page response, "Chief Awolowo can be seen, very much unlike himself in his golden political age and glorious days, sweating it out in that tight corner into which the strange turn of political misfortunes have consigned him by his own very handwork as a land merchant, a socialist aristocrat and feudal overlord with many landed properties to his credit in a capitalist paraphernalia."<sup>145</sup> What was at issue, Chief Awolowo's critics said, was not how generous the UPN leader had been to his household staff and others. According to the NPN National Director of Publicity,

"The simple issue at stake on which the future political credibility of Chief Awolowo lies, is whether as a self-proclaimed socialist it is in any way defensible that he alone should use his social standing in a society in which the vast majority of the teeming population of this country have not got on equal basis, to accumulate so much landed property and personal wealth without any qualms of the social injustice and inequality of opportunities inherent in such acquisition, and at the same time

turn round to point accusing fingers at others in similarly privileged positions who are also acquiring identical properties with the same quest and propensity . . . . [but] who have not hidden their capitalist identities and instincts under a socialist pseudonym.

What Chief Awolowo has failed to realise, in spite of his many years in the politics of Nigeria, is that it is not his dogmatic claim that he is a SOCIALIST and not a CAPITALIST that will convince the rational observer as much as his shining examples as opposed to his theoretical percepts unless he wants to give the impression that Nigerians should only do what he preaches and not what he practices.

It is in this context that Chief Awolowo's critics see his Maroko land acquisition and his other property interests when juxtaposed with his socialist ideology. Regrettably and rather painfully, especially at these dying days of his political career, he has not yet successfully extricated himself from the Maroko and Igboere land quagmire.<sup>146</sup>

In a similar vein, Stanley Macebuh of the *Daily Times* commented that Chief Awolowo "remains one of the greatest statesmen of our contemporary history as a nation, and it is at once his triumph and misfortune that he should be held answerable to a higher code of morality than ordinary citizens could be burdened with."<sup>147</sup> That being the case, continued Macebuh, it was not a legitimate defence merely that Chief Awolowo's conduct in the acquisition of the Maroko and Igboere land was legal and ideologically consistent and morally proper. "What morality?", the *Daily Times* columnist asked.<sup>148</sup> "The morality of the capitalist market place, or the morality of an exceptional citizen whose major bequest to Nigerian history has been his dogged advocacy for the rights of the poor?"<sup>149</sup>

The experience of this country is that all land in Lagos State has been choice land. As Nigerians as well as expatriate businessmen and foreign diplomatic missions in Nigeria know, and as was indeed stated by the Lagos State Governor, Alhaji Lateef Jakande, in his speech in which he dispossessed even *legitimate* allottees

who properly acquired only *one* plot each in Maroko and the Dolphin Schemes (allottees who did not own any other plot even in any other part of Lagos), the major economic resource of Lagos is its land. (The Governor promised such people would be given new allocations.) This is the place where landlords demand, and get, 3–5 years' rent in advance, the rents in the choicest areas ranging from N30,000–N60,000 (i.e. \$50,000–\$100,000) *per annum!* As a result, it has been a consistent policy of *all* governments in Lagos State to ensure that no single individual possessed too much, and thereby deny others, of the land available for residential purposes. It has been in view of this that citizens in the past were dispossessed of that amount of plots which the Governments believed was far too much for one individual – and most probably improperly acquired, “impropriety in the sense that legitimate demand for it was far in excess of what could be given out.”<sup>150</sup> Thus the “moral” problem, in the view of Stanley Macebuh, is precisely this:

“Not that Chief Awolowo acquired land in Maroko. He was entitled to it both as a citizen and as payment for legal services he rendered. But rather, in my view that the 103 plots which he acquired and bequeathed to a company [owned by himself, his wife and children as he himself admitted] was a great deal more than was absolutely fair, given the fact of land scarcity in the metropolitan area of Lagos. And I hold this view to be true irrespective of whether one assumes a capitalist or socialist or whatever order as the context of this acquisition.”<sup>151</sup>

On his part, the defeated NPP gubernatorial candidate for Lagos State and now National Chairman of the NPP, Chief Adeniran Ogunsanya, while advising his party members not to get mixed up about the land controversy, said that the whole trouble over the land has been caused by what he called Chief Awolowo's own statements. “You see,” continued Chief Ogunsanya, “Papa Awolowo has made such statements to the effect that all wealthy people of this country, if they don't share their wealth with the

wn-trodden, will be in trouble. When you place that statement with Papa's injunction to his party men in the past that none of them should take any state land, all these had given the impression that Papa is a conscientious socialist", Chief Adeniran Ogunanya further declared.<sup>152</sup> The NPP Chairman in his interview with *The punch* further said that he as a lawyer would not agree to take his client's land, as the UPN leader seemed to have done.

The furor of the N1 million land deal by the UPN leader was still raging when another UPN heavyweight, UPN Governor of Lagos State, Lateef K. Jakande, was reported to have purchased 88.37 acres of land, equivalent of 900 plots, near Badagry in Lagos State.<sup>153</sup> Again, the paper supported its allegation with photocopies of the land registration transactions which were carried out at the Lagos Lands Registry on May 6, 1980, the same day Chief Awolowo's acquisition was also allegedly registered. Not only UPN critics, but also some UPN members and supporters were stunned. The credibility of the socialist claims of the UPN had received yet another severe jolt, particularly if the allegation was correct. It was left to the UPN Governor to disprove it. On his part, Governor Jakande, in a statement issued to refute the allegation, condemned the publication as "dishonest, fraudulent, and mischievous distortion of the facts."<sup>154</sup> Continuing, the statement admitted that the UPN Governor "as a private citizen" had purchased between August 2, 1972 and August 26 of the same year, a total of 88.37 acres of land in four lots from the owner, for which he paid in installments; but in 1974, the statement further explained, "the land was acquired, along with others, by the Lagos State Government headed by Brigadier Mobolaji Johnson."<sup>155</sup> Continuing, the statement said that the "acquisition still remains in force to this day. The land, therefore, belongs to the Lagos State Government" and not to the UPN Governor.<sup>156</sup> The statement further said that an instrument conferring on Alhaji Lateef Jakande the right to claim the compensation due on the land was registered at the Registry of Lands of Lagos State on July 29, 1976 and not on May 6, 1980. The compensation for the land consisting of

88.37 acres which is equivalent to 900 plots, the statement added, had "not been paid by the Lagos State Government up till this day."<sup>157</sup>

The Nigerian public did not necessarily disbelieve the statement issued to explain the Governor's disclaim of the ownership of the land. The one area where the explanation did not seem to have satisfied the public was the allegation that the land was registered on May 6, 1980, at a time when Alhaji Jakande was already in office as the UPN Governor of Lagos State, a registration which the paper reported was done on the same date the N1 million land deal of the UPN boss, Chief Obafemi Awolowo, was also registered. The "right to claim compensation dated July 29, 1976," as the statement explained, is quite different from the registration of land dated May 6, 1980, as the *National Concord* reported. Did the newspaper muddle up things, even with the photocopies of the registration, photocopies whose authenticity did not seem to have been denied, or, did the statement from the authorities in the Lagos State Governor's Office deliberately ignore the latter date? Was it possible that because the Lagos State Government had not paid the compensation due to the Governor, as the statement said, the land was reverted back to him? The public was left to speculate, which is not necessarily the best basis for credibility — particularly for a party which preaches socialist ideals in a capitalist country. The public wondered whether the UPN leadership was living up to its ideals, the same leadership which the Coker Commission of Inquiry into some Western Regional-owned corporations in 1962 accused of being privy to what it called "reckless and indeed atrocious criminal mismanagement and diversion of public funds."<sup>158</sup>

The UPN's greatest rival, the NPN, did not make any pretentious socialist claims. It had as its presidential candidate Alhaji Shehu Shagari whom one weekly periodical described as "a level-headed, right winger."<sup>159</sup> Alhaji Shehu Shagari at 53 years was the second youngest of the five presidential candidates. Born of Fulani parentage in April 1925 in the village of Shagari, Sokoto Sta-

te, Alhaji Shehu Shagari studied Science and the methodology of teaching science in Kaduna and Zaria from 1941–45, returning to Sokoto to become science master at the Sokoto Middle School. He taught for 13 years, with intermittent in-service training both locally and abroad in the U. K. One of the cultural groups to which Alhaji Shagari belonged was later transformed into a political party that became known as the Northern People's Congress (NPC) on whose platform he contested, and won, the Sokoto-West constituency into the Federal House of Representatives in the election of 1954. In 1958 he was appointed Parliamentary Secretary to the late Prime Minister, Alhaji Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa, a job the young Shehu Shagari found so particularly boring for lack of any thing to do that he packed up and returned to his teaching profession in Sokoto. On learning of his departure the Prime Minister summoned his Parliamentary Secretary back to Lagos where the then expatriate Secretary to the Government dumped a heap of files on Shehu Shagari to prepare a memorandum on a suitable citizenship law for an independent Nigeria. Though complimented for a job well done, the young Parliamentary Secretary still preferred his teaching profession to compiling memoranda, a job he said was meant for civil servants and not for the Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister. The compromise was that Shagari should continue to serve as the Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister when Parliament was in session, but that he could return to his teaching profession in Sokoto during the long periods when Parliament was on recess. This the young Parliamentary Secretary did cheerfully, even though he was earning only one salary.

Thus started Alhaji Shehu Shagari in Public Service, in which he served continuously until the coup of January 15, 1966, that ended the First Republic and again from 1968 to July 1976 when there was a change of government. His experiences in Public Service included the Nigerianisation Committee whose main function was to expedite the appointment of Nigerians into responsible posts in the Civil Service in preparation for independence. This

exercise also afforded him the chance to realize that there were relatively very few Northerners in the Federal Civil Service. To correct this imbalance Alhaji Shagari travelled extensively in the old Northern Region to encourage civil servants in the Northern Civil Service to transfer to its Federal counterpart, an effort which now in retrospect can be said to have promoted unity. His other assignments included being appointed the first Minister of Economic Development, as Federal Minister of Establishments and Training, as Minister of Internal Affairs and, later, as Federal Minister of Works; all of these posts afforded Alhaji Shehu Shagari immense experience in public policy and the management of political and economic resources. With the coup of January 15, 1966, Alhaji Shehu Shagari, along with other politicians, was relieved of his ministerial appointment as the Federal Minister of Works, at which time he returned to his home.

The Biafran secessionist war brought a new dimension to Nigerian politics. The secessionists had mounted an effective and virulent propaganda in foreign countries to justify their cause. In its effort to counter the Biafran propaganda machinery, the Federal Military Government of former General Yakubu Gowon sent some eminent Nigerians abroad to countries where those Nigerians commanded respect. Thus, for example, Chief Enahoro's major assignment was in the United Kingdom where he was well-known during his extradition period in 1962. Alhaji Shehu Shagari on his part, was sent to Italy, Switzerland and France. That exercise needs a little explanation. Italy, being the seat of the Vatican and the Pope as well as the major European Catholic nation, needed to be convinced that the Nigerian civil war was not a crisis between Nigerian Moslems and Biafran Catholic Christians as Biafran propaganda had publicised the war internationally. Switzerland was the base of the relief organizations and of some of the finance resources and donations for the aid of secessionist Biafra — for the purchase of weapons. France was the major source of arms supply to the secessionists, channelling its supplies through Ivory Coast and Gabon. It was therefore necessary for Ni-



Alhaji Shehu Shagari, NPN presidential candidate.

geria to do some serious politicking in these European countries so that their activities and involvement would not lead to the success of the rebellion, particularly with the Biafran internalization of the conflict.

Secessionist Biafra had first attempted to convince African nations and the Organization of African Unity (OAU) to recognize its sovereignty. But no African nation recognized the rebel regime initially. The principle of "non-interference in the internal affairs of states", as outlined in Article III, Section 5 of the Charter of the OAU, militated against the recognition of Biafra by African leaders. African heads of states saw the threat in anything other than a united Nigeria, and they all initially advised Ojukwu not to secede. They all backed Nigerian unity. The late Diallo Telli, former Secretary-General of the OAU, told former General Yakubu Gowon in Lagos in 1967 that there was no single disagreement among African Heads of States on the Nigerian crisis; all shared the view that it was a domestic affair of Nigeria.<sup>160</sup> This support for Nigerian unity was perhaps best expressed by President Julius Nyerere of Tanzania who deplored the secession, saying that:

"We deeply regret the break-up of the Nigerian Federation, and we honestly hope that it is possible for the people of Nigeria to agree to maintain some form of unity. We are firm believers in unity and believe that a fragmented Africa cannot do as much for her people as a united Africa, and we regret even more deeply the break-up of such unity as does exist. Let us by all means encourage the people of Nigeria to maintain their unity."<sup>161</sup>

The fear that Biafra's successful secession would encourage balkanization of Africa could not be dismissed easily. It is this phenomenon that Professor Immanuel Wallerstein so aptly described when he noted that "every African nation, large or small, has its Katanga. Once the logic of secession is admitted, there is no end except in anarchy."<sup>162</sup> Or, as Lloyd Garrison, an advocate of Biafran secession put it, "For leaders of many other African countries, presiding over nations composed of equally factious tribal ele-

ments, the fear has arisen that if the secession virus spreads it could become a disease from which few governments could claim immunity."<sup>163</sup> This factor acted as a deterrent force against those African nations which thought of recognising Biafra's tribally-inspired and tribally-sustained secession. But Biafra's quick defeat of some federal troops and the capture of some federal areas, such as the Mid-West Region and parts of the Western Region at the initial stage of the secessionist war, contributed in changing the trend of the role of African nations. The reason for Biafra's initial victories was because she was better equipped and well-supplied with arms and ammunition, and because of sheer guts of the secessionists. In the effort to retrieve the captured territories and then bring Biafra back into the union, the Lagos authorities also purchased weapons from overseas countries. This changed the trend of the war. Nigeria now had the upper hand.

With Nigeria's quick victories one after the other, the secessionist regime mounted a propaganda of "genocide and starvation" particularly in Europe and in the U.S.A. At the same time, it intensified its appeal to African nations for it to be recognized as a sovereign state. Many of its political leaders, who seemingly joined Biafra more because of fear of repercussions in a re-united Nigeria than a belief in Biafra, paraded the African nations on behalf of Biafra. The attempt was not fruitless. Four African countries recognized Biafra, namely, Ivory Coast, Gabon, Zambia and Tanzania. President Nyerere's recognition of Biafra on April 13, 1968, was claimed to have stemmed from his sense of humanity, with the expectation that the recognition of the secession would force the Nigerian Government to a quicker negotiated settlement which would end the human suffering in Biafran-held territory. In its "Case for Recognition of Biafra: Statement by Government of the United Republic of Tanzania" which Tanzania's Mission to the United Nations released, we read, *inter alia*:

"States are made to serve people; governments are established to protect the citizens of a State against external enemies and

internal wrong-doers. It is on these grounds that people surrender their rights and power of self-defence to the Government of the State in which they live. But when the machinery of the State, and the powers of the Government are turned against a whole group of the society on the grounds of racial, tribal, or religious prejudice, then the victims have the right to take back the powers they have surrendered and to defend themselves. When the State ceases to stand for the honour, the protection and the well-being of all its citizens, then it is no longer the instrument of those it has rejected. In such a case the people have the right to create another instrument for their protection — in other words, to create another state."

What was particularly disturbing in that statement as well as in other pro-Biafran propaganda was the question of religion, the allegation that the Ibos were being oppressed by the Muslim North because they are Christians. The Biafran "propaganda of religion" was so effective in Europe and in the U. S. A that it won the hearts of the Vatican and others. The late Pope Paul VI, in a public address in July 1968, spoke of what he called "some points of the earth where the sufferings of the whole population have become so frightening that world public opinion deplores it with a sense of horror. We are referring", he went on, "in particular to Biafra, that beautiful eastern region of Nigeria which we had the good fortune to visit a few years ago, meeting people open to civilization in complete civil, cultural and religious development. We cannot think without deep sorrow of those good and hard-working people," the Pope continued, "now completely upset by civil war and dying of hunger and illness." When the Pope and the papacy became drawn into Biafran secession, Catholic opinion of the Biafran tragedy became grossly amplified.

It was now left for the Federal Government to counter that prevailing opinion. Nigeria sent Alhaji Shagari to Italy for this specific purpose. Alhaji Shehu Shagari's tour of Italy was quite fruitful in the effort to explain that the Biafran war was not based on religious differences. There was the need to explain the criss-cross of religious differences in Nigerian politics. It was necessary to po-

int out that the Nigerian Federal Government after the 1959 Federal elections was formed by a coalition of two of Nigeria's three major political parties — the predominantly Moslem-led NPC, to which Alhaji Shehu Shagari himself belonged, and the NCNC which was made up mostly of the Ibo Christians. Again, in the 1964 Federal elections, the late Alhaji Dauda Adegbenro, a Moslem and Acting Leader of the Action Group Party when Chief Obafemi Awolowo was in prison, formed the United Progressive Grand Alliance (UPGA) coalition with the predominantly Christian NCNC party — most of whose members were Ibo — against the NPC whose members were mostly Moslems. Similarly, the late Alhaji Adelabu Adegoke (Yoruba), a Moslem and a member of the Ibo - dominated NCNC, was the single main instrument in the popularity and victory of the NCNC party among the Ibadan-Oyo Yoruba electorate, an area that is predominantly Moslem. When the predominantly Christian NCNC made effort to gain a foothold in Islamic Northern Nigeria, it did so by aligning with the Moslem Alhaji Aminu Kano (Hausa) and his predominantly Moslem Northern Elements Progressive Union (NEPU). Major-General Yakubu Gowon, former Head of the Nigerian Government, is a Christian and son of a preacher with the Church Missionary Society (CMS). So also was a large percentage of the members of the Executive Council of the Nigerian Federal Government Christians. Similarly, Biafran leader, Ojukwu, is a Christian. Thus, the point that the Nigerian envoy emphasized was that politics and religion have always criss-crossed and have always fused, and hence the irrelevance of the notion that the Nigerian crisis was the result or a conflict between Nigerian Moslems and Biafran Christians.

Despite those facts the world was still deliberately told, even by those who knew better, that the Nigerian crisis was a feud between Christianity and Islam. For example, America's *Associated Press* in early September 1967 stated that Sir Francis Ibiam, Ojukwu's adviser and former civilian Governor of the then Eastern Region, resigned his knighthood because, it reported, "Christian Britain

was not supporting Christian Biafra. And so Queen Elizabeth II lost one of her knights!"

While Shagari was persuading the Catholics in Italy as well as in France and Switzerland, other Nigerians were also pursuing similar objectives elsewhere. For example, leaders of some churches in Britain urged the British government to abstain from any military involvement in the Nigerian crisis as such involvement, they claimed, would prolong the fighting and increase the bitterness then felt in the Eastern Region. Nigeria's High Commissioner to the United Kingdom, the late Brigadier B. O. Ogundipe, replied that the statement of the missionaries, "prejudiced and one-sided as it is, might have made sense some eight months ago."<sup>164</sup> He stressed that Gowon was opposed to the use of force and that the former General had even "bent over backward to amend the constitution to give the rebel Ojukwu greater authority. But Ojukwu was uncompromising in his military rule which made the minority ethnic groups in the eastern states live in a kind of George Orwell's *1984* . . . All this time our friends, the missionaries, did not see the need to warn Ojukwu against the murder of innocent civilians."<sup>165</sup> The appeal of the missionaries to the British Government, continued Brigadier Ogundipe, was based on the "outdated assumption that the present struggle is one between the largely Muslim North and the largely Christian East. But there is now no Northern identity and no Eastern Nigerian identity. Nigeria is very much a secular state and religion plays no important role in the country's politics . . . What is now going on is for the very survival of Nigeria as a nation. It is not, as some people would have us believe, any religious warfare."<sup>166</sup>

In Washington, D. C., Dr. Okoi Arikpo, then Nigeria's Federal Commissioner for External Affairs, also emphasized in the Summer of 1967 that what was happening in Nigeria was not an attempt by a powerful Moslem-dominated government trying to exterminate a meek Christian community; he said it was a struggle for the territorial integrity of Nigeria and the right of self-determination for all groups within the Federation.

Another important area was Switzerland where Alhaji Shehu Shagari also visited to explain to Swiss officials and financiers the issues involved in the Nigerian crisis, because Switzerland was the seat of the financial support for secessionist Biafra. There was also the question of relief supplies. For one thing, the relief flights into Biafra made it possible for the secessionists to "mix" guns and food when Biafrans were starving, a fact which was collaborated innumerable times by the Catholic food relief fliers who flew the planes for CARITAS, the Catholic relief organization; indeed, *Biafran Journal* reported in 1968 the disappointment of a Roman Catholic priest who ran the shipment of relief supplies for CARITAS when he found that a plane bound for the refugee camps was "carrying nothing but 10 tons of guns and ammunition." For another, the foreign monetary donations buttressed Biafra's foreign monetary exchange. Biafra's war efforts required huge sums of foreign exchange to pay for the arms and ammunition, "and here again the Churches and other relief organizations indirectly helped by depositing large sums of money into Swiss, French and British bank accounts to cover their expenses in Biafra."<sup>167</sup> For example, the *annual* budget of the International Committee of the Red Cross before the crisis, reported St. Jorre of the *London Observer*, was £ 0.5 million. By June 1969 its operations expenses as a result of its involvement in Biafra had increased to £ 1.4 million per month!

There were also the contributions of the churches to Biafra's foreign exchange, though "how large this amount was is a matter of controversy; one figure (anti-Biafra) puts it at £ 8.5 million, another (pro-Biafra) pegs it at £ 1.5 million. Joint Church Aid (J.C.A.), the churches co-ordinating body, regards the first as 'wildly exaggerated' and, while having no exact figures of its own, feels that 'somewhat near' the second estimate is more likely."<sup>168</sup> Whatever the true figure was, the foreign deposits of the churches and relief organizations — as well as the money, including foreign currency, which they spent inside Biafra — went a long way in sustaining the war as long as Biafra lasted. If not for these sources of finance,

it would have been almost impossible for Biafra to find an alternative source of funds to pay for her arms and pay the pilots and mercenaries who all had no regard for Biafran currency and insisted they be paid in American dollars. And they were paid in dollars, salaries of \$2,000 – \$3,000 per month to each mercenary.

It was therefore necessary for Nigeria to educate the European public and hopefully dry up the sources of the funds and donations which Biafra used to support its war effort. Unquestionably, Biafra's propaganda of her self-imposed starvation and its internationalization by the world press which flashed pictures of starving children and of living skeletons on television and billboards, aroused much human sentiment. Some of the remorse was genuine and others were politically motivated. George Orwell, in an article during World War II, wrote that "food is a political weapon, or is thought of as a political weapon . . . The folly of all such calculations," continued Orwell, "lies in supposing that you can ever get good results from starvation."<sup>169</sup> No one could disagree with him, particularly now that the Biafran secessionist war is over. Indeed, as the *New York Times* pointed out in its editorial captioned "Plea to Biafra", the true friends of the Ibos were not those who encouraged them at that point to continue a useless and hopeless war of secession.<sup>170</sup> The propaganda by such Biafran supporters was used, as the popular Catholic journal, *The Tablet*, put it, "not only in appeals for outside aid but as a means of deluding the Ibo people that they [were] fighting a war of religion, and that the Christian world [was] behind them."<sup>171</sup> And as the London *Financial Times* pointed out,

"Colonel Ojukwu's problem is to get his priorities straight. He has to decide whether the safety and welfare of the Ibo people is his main object, or whether he wants an independent Biafra for its own sake. If the latter is what he decides on, there may be no alternative to a bitter fight to finish. But the cost is certain to be high — and the result could still be the subjugation of the Ibos to the Federal Government."

Alhaji Shehu Shagari's tour of Switzerland helped a lot in explaining to the European public the issues involved in Biafra's self-imposed starvation. The support which the relief agencies in Switzerland gave Biafra became more discriminatory, restricted to relief supplies to the Biafran civilian population. There was now less attention to the supply of arms to the secessionists and the use of finance to support European mercenaries fighting in Biafra. Swiss officials began to cut off Biafra's major oxygen supply from Switzerland — international finance. But Alhaji Shagari also convinced them of the need for continued aid to the civilian population.

Having cut off, or at least reduced, the flow of international finance into Biafra, there was also the need to cut off the supply of arms and ammunition whose major source was France. This was necessary because of the belief that the continued supply and availability of arms to the secessionists made the Biafrans resist any effort at peaceful negotiations of the crisis; the tragedy was the continued resultant hardships for the civilian population whose plight was of great concern to Nigeria's doves, such as Alhaji Shagari. The best approach was for Nigerian Federal authorities to appeal to France. Alhaji Shehu Shagari therefore had as one of his areas of assignment France itself.

Gabon and Ivory Coast, as already mentioned, had recognized secessionist Biafra, a recognition which was largely due to France. It was, therefore, necessary for effective results to concentrate more of the counter-propaganda effort on France itself rather than on these two African nations more so as France merely used them as cover for her assistance to the secessionists. For example, Gabon provided a stopping place for French mercenaries and ammunition bound for and returning from Biafra. Like Gabon, Ivory Coast was also used by Paris as a French entré point into the Nigerian crisis. There was the question of Biafra's American-made B-26 bomber. The United States Government denied that it gave the aircraft to secessionist Biafra but acknowledged that it gave the bomber to Ivory Coast — which had no immediate use for a B-26.

Ivory Coast immediately gave the bomber to Biafra which claimed "considerable success for it."<sup>172</sup> Also, the London *Financial Times* observed that some arms of "Chinese manufacture" were being sent into Biafra from Tanzania, but agreed with other press sources that most of the new arms were "certainly being purchased quite openly in Europe for the accounts of the Governments of the Ivory Coast and Gabon."<sup>173</sup> Indeed, the Gabon and Ivory Coast armies, reported *Africa Report* from Washington D. C., were "being re-equipped by France on a particularly lavish scale and with a large quantity of anti-tank weaponry."<sup>174</sup> John de St. Jorre, who covered the war for the London *Observer* from both sides, noted that "as a simple 'cover' the Ivory Coast and Gabon governments supplied the Biafrans from their own stocks which the French then replenished. On other occasions, weapons destined for French army units based in these two countries were sent to the Biafrans."<sup>175</sup>

France's supply of weapons to Biafra through Ivory Coast and Gabon "helped the French Government to maintain the fiction that it was not aiding the Biafrans. Some consignments were paid for, but others were gifts."<sup>176</sup> It is significant to note that both Gabon and the Ivory Coast were not fighting any wars nor did they face any threat of military aggression either from without or within as to necessitate the sudden massive "purchase" of weapons and anti-tank guns. The increasing supplies of these French-financed arms and ammunition, reported *Biafran Journal*, enabled the Biafrans to frustrate Federal advances and mount a counter-offensive of their own.<sup>177</sup>

France later moved into the open to offer its assistance to the secessionists. Correspondent Anthony Astrachan reported in *The Washington Post* that about 21 tons of French-supplied arms, ranging from small arms ammunition to anti-tank guns, were being flown into Biafra from Gabon *each night* and that *more* were coming from Ivory Coast and São Tomé.<sup>178</sup> As noted earlier, most of Biafra's new arms were purchased quite openly in Europe for the accounts of the governments of the Ivory Coast and Gabon,

both former French colonies, whose armies France re-equipped on a particularly lavish scale with a large quantity of anti-tank weaponry. By the Fall of 1969, French supply of arms and ammunition to Biafra "grew to massive proportions, reaching an estimated peak of 200 tons a week."<sup>179</sup> The German-born and former French Foreign Legionnaire, Rolf Steiner, and his band of white mercenaries were expelled from Biafra, but the rebels "immediately acquired a new group of mercenaries, largely French."<sup>180</sup> Jacques Foccart, General de Gaulle's powerful secret service chief and special adviser on African Affairs,<sup>181</sup> played a leading role in this regard. He was active in obtaining arms from dealers for Biafra. He was described as a "firm believer in the use of mercenaries to back French policies and had employed them before, notably in Katanga and the Yemen."<sup>182</sup> It was Foccart who organized the first batch of French mercenaries — euphemistically called "foreign volunteers" — to Biafra.<sup>183</sup>

The involvement of France in the supply of arms and mercenaries to Biafra was to strengthen her influence in Africa at the expense of other nations, in this case Britain. The French presence in and the influx of weapons and mercenaries into Biafra re-intensified the secessionist attempt. France did not stop at the supply of arms and ammunition. There was also the question of recognition. The late President De Gaulle said at a press conference on September 9, 1968, that French "recognition of Biafra is not excluded in the future." The rebel regime was quite flattered and its head, Ojukwu, thanked the "great leader under whom the role of France . . . has consistently been the star of hope on a darkened horizon"; he saw "the vista of an indissoluble union between our two peoples and governments." That was a reply on September 11, 1968. But France did not recognize Biafra. The ambivalence of the authorities in Paris seemed to have been due to a number of reasons. France was concerned with the deftness of the Federal side which it could anger if it made a glaring embrace of Biafra by recognizing the secession. More importantly, Biafra was not Francophone Africa where a strong influence of French imperialism

was well-entrenched. For another reason, Francophone Africa was split. France was further hedged to give Biafra the degree of support, most important of all the recognition of Biafra's sovereignty, as she could have done because she did not want to be openly "tainted" by being on the same side with such Biafran supporters as Portugal, South Africa, Rhodesia, and Communist China. To France, according to John St. de Jorre, the most disturbing experience was to be associated with another Biafran supporter, Israel. And on the very quiet side, Alhaji Shehu Shagari's visit was also yielding diplomatic results. Not surprisingly, President de Gaulle said that France would recognize Biafra's sovereignty "if Africa willed it," implying that more African nations would have to recognize Biafra's sovereignty before France would.

By May 1969, French officials were re-evaluating their relationship with Biafra, particularly after France's involvement in the uprising in Chad where she sent military "aid" in support of the Chad Government. The Nigerian emissary to France, Alhaji Shagari, had also done his home work thoroughly. It paid off. As a result of his efforts, French officials and parliamentarians began to exert their own pressure, and the French support for Biafra began to dwindle. France began to pull back. Significantly, the retraction of French support from Biafra was helped immensely by the silence of the Nigerian Federal Government. Despite France's previous overt support for Biafra, the French Embassy in Lagos operated without any harassment, nor was there any threat of breaking diplomatic ties with France as Nigeria had done in 1962 during the French atomic bomb tests in the Sahara. France was not the enemy but a friend. French firms, such as the CFAO and SCOA and other French commercial interests operated in Nigeria and, of course, exported their profits back to France — profits some of which perhaps went to the aid of Biafra! (Only the French oil company SAFRAP had its operations in Nigeria "frozen" during the war for being too grotesquely committed to Biafra; but the clamp was defrosted after the war when it changed its name to ELF.)

The incessant and lavish French military and diplomatic support for Biafra had given the secessionists continued will and endurance to continue in their fight to break away – and break up Nigeria's unity. Once the external support from France began to dry up, Biafra's oxygen supply – arms and ammunition – also began to dwindle.

In the meantime, the later superior military position of the Nigerian authorities brought another dimension to the war, namely, the question of starvation. While Nigerian "hawks" argued for starvation as a legitimate means of warfare, the "doves" were persuading their fellow federalists on the need to prosecute the war with moderation in order to prevent the civilian population from unnecessary hardships. Col. Murtala Muhammed had liberated the Mid-West from Biafran control; one of the after-effects, to the dismay of Col. Muhammed, was the way the Ibos were treated in the newly liberated areas. Col. Murtala Muhammed's reconciliatory peace efforts had resulted in the Nigerian civil war policy of "no victors no vanquished,"<sup>184</sup> a doctrine which made the re-absorption of the defeated Biafrans into the mainstream of the Nigerian society easy, peaceful and quick. Once the war shifted to Biafran territory itself, this policy continued, at least it was advocated among the federal doves. But how do you reconcile this policy with the very enemy you want to defeat? The doves argued, or at least supported the argument, that the Federal side should provide "a mercy corridor" through which food and medical supplies could be carried to the civilian population, even if the enemy territory should be completely surrounded. Alhaji Shehu Shagari was one of the doves supporting the plea for the "mercy corridor."

Unfortunately, the secessionists played politics with this issue of "a mercy corridor". They said they would starve than accept "a mercy corridor". Their hope was that starvation, particularly of children and pregnant women, would arouse international sympathy which would put pressure on their enemy – Nigeria – to accede to Biafra's sovereignty. Colin Legum of the London

*Observer* explained this hope quite well. He correctly noted that "the great international pressure built up around the propaganda of genocide, and re-inforced by the damaging evidence of starvation, are an important aspect of Biafra's strategy for changing Western policies. While this is a perfectly understandable tactic," Colin Legum continued, "it doesn't acquit Biafran leaders of direct responsibility in contributing towards disaster."<sup>185</sup> And from the USA, *The Washington Post* reported on the findings of a U. S. Presidential peace delegation led by Mr. C. Clyde Ferguson, Jr., which noted that Nigeria agreed to airlift food "even though it may be unprecedented for a government to allow outsiders to feed and thereby sustain rebels."<sup>186</sup> Continuing, the delegation stated that "Biafra rejected the relief-flight proposal ostensibly out of fear that Nigeria would exploit it militarily. Thus, Nigeria, which has good political reasons to reject humanitarian intervention, is in favour of a relief plan. Biafra which has good humanitarian reason to accept such intervention, opposes the plan."<sup>187</sup> One had to agree with these papers as well as with the influential Roman Catholic journal, *The Tablet*, whose editor, Tom Burns, wrote with candor that Ojukwu, by rejecting relief supplies, "prolongs a war the outcome of which is inevitable. If genocide is in question, it must be laid at the door of Colonel Ojukwu himself: he seems prepared to let his people die in uttermost misery so long as there is some hope of international recognition of his own claims."<sup>188</sup>

With the blunt refusal of the secessionist hawks to accept the use of "a mercy corridor" through which to provide relief food and medicine to those in the war zone, the Nigerian doves looked for another way out of the dead lock. Here again, Alhaji Shehu Shagari and others like him were able to persuade the Federal Government to agree to the operation of day-light relief flights. The secessionists, as mentioned earlier, had successfully "mixed" guns and relief materials in the relief flights into the war zone, particularly in the night flights. Because of the fear that any air-lifts directly into Biafra would provide an inlet for weapons into seces-

sionist hands — and hence a prologation of the war and a consequent greater starvation and refugee problem — Lagos rejected the suggestion of direct air-lifts into the area. Secondly, any direct air-lifts into Biafra by any foreign nations meant not only a violation of Nigerian air space but also a tacit recognition for the breakaway regime and thus a diplomatic victory for it; hence another reason why Lagos rejected the suggestion.<sup>189</sup> The federalist doves, such as Alhaji Shehu Shagari, argued that human life was far more valuable than the political scores the Federal Government would achieve from such bans. If the fear was the question of Biafrans smuggling arms into their land-locked secessionist state, why not at least permit day-light relief flights, to be operated by the international relief organizations (such as the Red Cross and Joint Church Aid), which would make it possible to get some food and medical supplies to the civilian population? They succeeded.

The success of the federalist doves in persuading the federalist hawks notwithstanding, Biafra, the potential benefactor, again rejected the proposal and even claimed that Nigeria would poison the food, with that deadly chemical, cyanide! Another United States Government observer team, under the leadership of former Congressman Charles C. Diggs, Jr., Democrat Congressman from Michigan, spoke for a large sector of the disappointed “doves” when the report of the delegation emphasized that food was available and that starvation could be prevented through greatly increased delivery of food supplies. The report concluded:

“The Biafran refusal to permit daylight flights and land corridors is the primary reason that relief and rehabilitation procedures are not today as well developed in the east as they are elsewhere in the country.

We see no justification for Biafra's continued refusal to permit daylight operations by the ICRC [International Committee of the Red Cross] and JCA [Joint Church Aid] mercy missions. We have heard all the arguments and justifications for this posture, but we believe that in the light of the grave necessity such

rationalizations are unconvincing. If Biafra does wish to save the lives of those verging on starvation in the area which it controls, then, it must recognize the necessity of increased airlifts and the advisability of land corridors. The fear of poisoned food has to be shown as unfounded. If military and political considerations are the bases for the rejection of daylight flights and land corridors, then, the Biafrans must take responsibility for the consequences."<sup>190</sup>

Biafra's former "ambassador" to France, Ralph Uwechue (now publisher of the magazine, *Africa*), who was credited for his diplomatic endeavours in France which resulted in the French support for the secessionists, later parted company with Biafran secessionist hawks over the question of deliberate starvation of children and the civilian population to gain world attention in Biafra's effort to be recognized as a sovereign state. He then went on a self-imposed exile in London, supporting neither Nigeria nor Biafra. Uwechue spoke for the disappointed Nigerian and international peace-makers in his *Reflections on the Nigerian Civil War* in which the former Biafran envoy wrote that "if innocent and largely ignorant people die because of faulty decisions we take on their behalf, the minimum expected of those of us who are privileged to know what is happening is to speak against this reckless and costly extremism."<sup>191</sup> It should be stressed that the bulk of what he wrote in his book was not in support of the Nigerian Federal Government.

And so the war dragged on, which Nigeria finally successfully prosecuted when it ended with the collapse of secessionist Biafra on January 10, 1970. Then, there followed Gowon's policy of reconciliation, the concept of "no victor, no vanquished," which Nigerian nationalists again vigorously pursued. One of those people in the Northern area was Alhaji Shehu Shagari, in the North-Western State. On the whole, the post-war endeavours in other sections of Nigeria to re-absorb and recruit the Ibos were impressive. The Mid-West Region was one of the first states to relieve unemployment in the devastated area. Not only did it offer

generous stringless financial and material donations, particularly to the schools in Iboland, it also reached out to employ the Ibos. Other states in the nation, especially the six northern states, also employed numerous Ibos into permanent and responsible positions in their administrations, and in other cases awarded contracts to Ibo businessmen. North-West State alone, the homeland of the late Sardauna of Sokoto whom the Ibo mutineers assassinated in the first *coup*, employed some 500 Ibos into its civil service.<sup>192</sup> "Imagine, an Ibo high up in the Military Governor's Office in Sokoto — the Sarduana's bones would turn over!", a man from North-West State once remarked.<sup>193</sup> One of those people of North-Western State origin who helped re-absorb the Ibos into the State was Alhaji Shehu Shagari. It was largely because of his conciliatory role that Alhaji Shagari was later brought from Sokoto and appointed Federal Commissioner for Economic Development, Rehabilitation and Reconstruction, the Ministry entrusted with the most important task after the civil war.

It was not just the question of the physical accomplishment of the reconstruction of war-devastated areas, but the kind of leadership that would generate and infuse confidence in the defeated secessionists that there was a genuine effort to re-integrate them into the society. Gowon, it was later claimed, made one of the best appointments of his Federal Cabinet in his choice of Alhaji Shehu Shagari for the Ministry responsible for rehabilitation and reconstruction. The Federal Commissioner personally toured the war-affected areas extensively, and in some cases even supervised the distribution of relief materials and the reconstruction of damaged hospitals and schools. Further, not only did he personally persuade former Biafrans to return to the Federal Civil Service, but also prevailed on the Federal Government to re-absorb former secessionists into the service and to repeal quickly restrictions on former Biafrans.

In the Cabinet reshuffle in 1971, Alhaji Shehu Shagari was made the Federal Commissioner for Finance, the Ministry in which he served longest (1971 — 75), and where he gained additional ex-

periences particularly in the administration of public finance and the question of revenue allocation. When asked during the 1979 presidential elections by a *Daily Times* panel whether or not his party found the then existing revenue allocation formula acceptable, Alhaji Shagari replied with an emphatic "NO".<sup>194</sup> Continuing, he said:

"We have looked at the Aboyade report on revenue allocation and found that it is unacceptable in the sense that it is a little too complicated for our liking. It has been accepted half way by the Federal [Military] Government. I don't think that they are even quite satisfied because it is a report prepared by professionals who made things extremely complicated that even its interpretation requires professionals, and, in the interpretation, there are bound to be abuses which even people in the States will not understand. It sets a complicated formula which can be manipulated by officials.

Rather than basing the criteria on complicated formula like Aboyade has done, the first consideration will be what the State, for example, is expected to do. What are the Local Government Authorities expected to do? What are the Federal Government's responsibilities? How can we provide for them in order that they will meet these responsibilities?

Now, in the case of Aboyade, he is putting the cart before the horse. When the Aboyade report was published, the new Constitution had not been formulated. So they do not know, or they didn't know what were going to be the responsibilities of the Federal Government, or Local Government, or State Government for that matter. Even, from that consideration you will see that it is out of the question – taking that formula when you do not know, is just like taking money to the market when you do not know what to buy until you get to the market.

First, the consideration should be based upon what the new Constitution has provided on the various responsibilities of the various levels of Government. That is one."<sup>195</sup>

The next issue to be considered, Alhaji Shagari continued, "is the question of how oil producing-areas are going to benefit from

the oil that is produced from their own areas and I do think that there should be consideration as to the actual areas where oil operations are carried out."<sup>196</sup> Expatriating on this point, the NPN presidential candidate said:

"In the days of derivation, Bendel State used to get quite a large chunk of the Federal revenue just because oil is tapped from there. But the amount of funds they get does not go to the oil-producing areas themselves — the Delta area. The oil money went to Benin and the other people in the rest of Bendel get the benefit while the Delta people still remain where they were in spite of what they suffer in oil operation.

I think it is not fair. So there should be a reconsideration on what the actual oil-producing areas rather than oil-producing states should get from the oil produced in their own areas."<sup>197</sup>

Alhaji Shehu Shagari had earlier made the same point when he was member of the Constituent Assembly which debated the Draft Constitution. On this issue of revenue allocation, and with specific emphasis on the share of the oil-producing areas, Alhaji Shehu Shagari had said that experience has shown that the money accruing to the States had not been used to adequately benefit the oil-producing areas of the oil-bearing states of the country.<sup>198</sup>

The presidential candidate's experiences in the Ministry of Finance, observers believed, had put him in a vantage position to understand the management of the oil revenue and of the nation's other financial resources. Besides, most of a nation's issues any executive head of government anywhere in the world would be confronted with would have passed through the desk of his Finance Minister. Shagari had this experience. He was further privileged that as Federal Commissioner for Finance, he had worked and developed valuable relations with Finance Ministers of other nations at the International Monetary Fund, and with members of the Committee of Twenty. Some of these men have become heads of governments in their own countries, people like President d'Estiang of France, Chancellor Helmut Schmidt of Western Ger-

many, the President of Lebanon, and the Prime Minister of Japan, people he would have to deal with in the conduct of Nigeria's foreign affairs should he be fortunate to receive the mandate of the people at the presidential elections. Indeed, Alhaji Shehu Shagari's first major exposure to international affairs occurred in 1965 when Ian Smith proclaimed Southern Rhodesia's unilateral declaration of independence (UDI). Alhaji Shehu Shagari, who was attending the Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference in New Zealand, moved a motion there "condemning the action of Smith and calling on Britain to suppress the rebellion before it was too late."<sup>199</sup>

When a *Daily Times* panel at an interview asked him whether he would take any type of possible sanctions against Britain or any other Government that recognized the Muzererwa Government in Zimbabwe-Rhodesia, Alhaji Shehu Shagari replied:

"I still feel the same [as in 1965] — very very strongly against the minority regime in Zimbabwe and I came out straight as soon as Mrs. Thatcher won the elections. I was the first to speak out against her policy on Zimbabwe.

So that is another opportunity when I became the first man. I was the first to speak against the Smith rebellion in 1965 and I was the first here in Nigeria to talk against Mrs. Thatcher's policy towards Zimbabwe, and I made it clear that Nigeria would not accept any move by Britain to recognize the minority sponsored regime in Zimbabwe. I would not like to talk in form of a threat to Britain, but all I am doing is to appeal to them to reconsider the matter as I have done."<sup>200</sup>

With the change of government in July 1975, Alhaji Shehu Shagari, like all other members of Gowon's Cabinet, was removed from office. The following year, in 1976, the Federal Military Government appointed him Chairman of the Peugeot Automobile Nigeria Ltd., a position he held until the return of politics preparatory to the return of the Military to the Barracks when he resigned from the chairmanship of the company to contest the elections. He returned to politics in his belief, he said, of dedica-

tion to the service of the nation. "I am a humble servant," he said, "and I will never be happy if I am not serving. My own philosophy is that I feel I have an obligation to the people — may be because of my background. I consider myself most privileged in that perhaps since the beginning of my own life, I have been fed, clothed and sheltered through public funds, and I am one of the very few, especially among my own community, who have this privilege."<sup>201</sup> Continuing, he said that he had enjoyed "free education right from the start of my education, so, throughout my life, I felt I have enjoyed everything at the expense of the public. So, I feel I have an obligation to do my utmost to serve [the public], especially considering millions around me who haven't had this privilege, even my own relations."<sup>202</sup> For example, he said that in his own little village, up to the time he left college, he was "the only one who had ever been to school. Can you imagine that! Yes, so even considering that, I consider myself very privileged and that is why I dedicated my life for serving."<sup>203</sup> This, Alhaji Shagari told a panel of *Daily Times* interviewers, was the reason why he accepted to run for public office, the presidency, even if it meant denying himself personal conveniences. As he put it, "whenever any issue came up to me (this is not the first time I have been asked to do something) and I felt it is not the kind of thing I want to do, but on consideration when I found that I am being selfish, then I discard [my own selfish position]. I say, if it is at my own personal convenience that I don't want to do [something but] at the expense of other people, then, I'd rather go and do it in the interest of the people."<sup>204</sup> His selfless disposition was illustrated when he said:

"On this matter of standing as presidential candidate, I first had thoughts that well I had served enough, that it was time I chose for myself what would suit my own pleasures.

I again, as in other cases, was convinced that I was being selfish, because, in the context of my own party, if I declined I might probably put my party in a difficult situation because Nigeria is a country of crisis and people want crisis every single opportunity, and this very thing [the party's choice of a presidential

candidate] might cause some crisis within our party and make it break, and I would not like to be the cause of the break of my party; so I had to have second thoughts.

So, in the end, I had to accept, considering that other people had sacrificed even their lives in the interest of this country. Why shouldn't I sacrifice my own personal conveniences? That is why I accepted."<sup>205</sup>

The late President Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana in his *Africa Must Unite* had defined the qualities of the leadership required in the newly independent nations of Africa. He had said that "Africa needs a new type of citizen, a dedicated, modest, honest, informed man. A man who abhors greed and detests vanity. A new type of man whose humility is his strength and whose integrity is his greatness."<sup>206</sup> This type of man Nigerians believed was also the kind of leadership they needed after the political turbulence and the subsequent entry of the Military into our body politics.

Soft-spoken and gentle, yet firm, NPN supporters believed that Alhaji Shehu Shagari was the type of presidential candidate Nigeria needed to unify the country in a post-military civilian administration. The mere presence of the Military had provided some cohesion, even if it was only theoretically coercive. With the restoration of civil liberties as the Military was marching back to the Barracks, Nigerian unionists argued, the country needed the kind of leader who will be respected for his unifying qualities, his tolerance for the views of others, the kind of man (not so much his party) who would generate public confidence. Alhaji Shagari's supporters believed that the NPN presidential candidate had those qualities.

Shunning flamboyance, glamour, flair and fanfare because of his humility and humble carriage, Alhaji Shagari had not been in the limelight when he held public office. His "low profile", some observers believed, was an advantage because the public therefore did not associate him with the failures of the First Republic, nor even with the corruption during the Gowon regime. To the elec-

torate, therefore, the NPN presidential candidate did not seem even to have a record; this was to his advantage because many dispassionate observers believed he could therefore unify the country and build on the foundations for political stability the Military Government was leaving behind. Indeed, some political observers discredited the old politicians because, they claimed, it was the politicians who were responsible for the failures of the First Republic. For this reason, such critics had proposed that none of the old politicians should be allowed by the Military Government to contest the 1979 elections. It is in this understanding that an NPN supporter in Enugu believed that Alhaji Shagari would win the presidential election because, he said, the NPN presidential candidate is "a gentleman and at least he is innocent; his rivals are crooks."<sup>207</sup> Similarly, that was why Alhaji Shehu Shagari, unlike some of his opponents, could boldly state: "I have never been found guilty in any enquiry or probe."<sup>208</sup>

Alhaji Shagari's major drawback, however, was the calibre of some of his *then* nationally better known colleagues in the NPN. These were the political heavyweights of the First Republic fame – "juggernauts and men of timber and calibre" – most of whom the public had discredited. Indeed, the NPN was regarded as a party of rich people. In an interview by a panel of *Daily Times* journalists on Thursday, June 21, 1979, Alhaji Shehu Shagari, as the NPN presidential candidate, was asked about his party being "labelled by critics as belonging to the wealthy class." He was also asked how he would "allay the fears that if elected, the main direction of your administration will be to protect the interest of that small minority group at the expense of the masses."<sup>209</sup> Alhaji Shagari replied that the majority of the people in the NPN were not wealthy people.<sup>210</sup> "The majority of the people in the NPN," the NPN presidential candidate continued, "are the ordinary peasants in this country – that is a fact. The wealthy people are a very small minority within the party. The fact that we have a lot of wealthy people does not mean that we are dominated by wealth."<sup>211</sup> Continuing, Alhaji Shagari said:

“Everybody wants to have these wealthy people in his party. I have not seen any of the other parties which said ‘We do not want these wealthy people, go away.’ They even try to attract them to their own parties, so it is not an argument to say that you get too many wealthy people. People look at the principles and objectives of the party before they join, and the majority of the people of this country have joined the NPN, and when you talk of the majority of the people of Nigeria it means majority of farmers, majority of wealthy people, majority of everything. They are all in our party. So the other parties are criticising us because they could not get these people on their own side. They would be very happy to have them but they don’t have them. I do not see how a minority can influence a big party even if they are wealthy. The fact is that the wealthy people are in minority in the NPN; they are [also] in minority in every other party; so there is no difference.

According to the size of the NPN, it has considerable number of wealthy people; [similarly] according to the size of the UPN, it has considerable number. So if you look at the proportion, it will be about the same proportionately. In accordance with our size, we have larger number of farmers, we have larger number of workers and so on. and in accordance to the size of the UPN or PRP, they have also this set of people. So, there is no point in the wealthy people influencing us or our protecting [the] wealthy. We cannot afford that.”<sup>212</sup>

There was also the question of people with dubious integrity being in the NPN party. Those who admired Alhaji Shagari and would like to support and vote for him as a presidential candidate were disillusioned because of his association with discredited politicians and financial tycoons of the First Republic. A *Daily Times* panel reminded the presidential candidate that “Your critics say there are too many men of doubtful integrity in the NPN. Well, with such a large number of them in the party,” the *Daily Times* panel interview continued, “are you sure that when making appointments in the offices, you will be able to have enough men of clean character like yourself?”<sup>213</sup> While denying that it is “not our [NPN] system” but admitting that it is “the Ni-

gerian system”<sup>214</sup> as a whole that has the problem of people with dubious integrity, the NPN presidential candidate replied that “Some of the very important appointments in the government will have to be voted by the Senate, so you cannot afford to introduce a bad egg to the Senate. When you talk of bad eggs, they exist everywhere,” he continued, “not only in the NPN.”<sup>215</sup> But as one ardent supporter of Shagari mused, “my candidate has not surrounded himself with but has been surrounded by crooks and rogues.” He hoped that his candidate’s fortunes and chances would not be ruined by what he called the “political juggernauts and untouchables.” That apprehension from an admirer and supporter who admitted that he did not know Alhaji Shagari personally was understandable. But for those who knew him, they were confident that Shagari’s integrity and uprightness were such that the juggernauts and the financial tycoons could not influence or affect the presidential candidate adversely.

Another serious allegation against the NPN was the “Zoning System” which it introduced in its strategy to select its presidential candidate for the 1979 elections. By this policy, the NPN divided the nation into zones from each of which a candidate for a particular post would be nominated by the party for the election. Thus, the “Northern Zone”, consisting of the 10 northern states, was to provide the presidential candidate for the 1979 elections, and the “Eastern Zone”, consisting of the eastern states, would provide the vice-presidential candidate. What this implied was that *all* the nominees the party would consider for the presidency would be from the “Northern Zone”, and not from any other part of the country – even if there were better potential presidential candidates from such areas – and hence the NPN presidential candidate must be a Northerner. Further, should the NPN win the presidential elections, the executive president would be a Northerner. Critics of the policy argued that the NPN “Zoning System” might not necessarily produce the best Nigerian but the best *Northerner* as its presidential candidate. Therefore, should the NPN win the presidential election, such critics further said,

Nigeria would not necessarily have the best president the NPN could provide the nation, but the best *Northerner* the party could provide. Why should the nation, the critics asked, have as its president anybody less than the best? The NPN "Zoning System", many critics concluded, was discriminatory and that it had tribal overtones.

As the *Daily Times* group of journalists put it to Alhaji Shagari during an interview with the NPN presidential candidate, "This zoning system has created the impression, among your critics, that it is designed to reserve the right to rule the country for a particular part of the country. And now against the future," the *Daily Times* panel continued, "what chances do you foresee for the system to be operated to the advantage of the areas of the country below the Niger?"<sup>216</sup> Alhaji Shehu Shagari replied that the zoning system was "the policy of our party right from the beginning."<sup>217</sup> Continuing, he said that the party "agreed that for the first election we will ask the 10 northern states to produce candidates for the presidency"<sup>218</sup> from among whom the party would select its presidential nominee. The practice of selecting the party's presidential candidate from a particular zone, Alhaji Shagari said the party had agreed, "should be on the basis of rotation, that is, next time we will change" so that the presidential candidate then would be selected from another zone. Expatiating on the rationale for the "zoning system", Alhaji Shagari said that

"Our idea has, in fact, been realistic. As I said in my opening remarks, Nigerians tend to think of their ethnicity. There is nothing we can do about it: that is the position as of now; but we hope it is not going to continue and, in our efforts to build a truly united nation, we think this is a phase which will come to pass.

There will come a time when people do not think any more of their ethnicity or what section they come from and then there will be no need for this kind of arrangement. But in the mean time it will be futile to ignore it because it is a reality; but we hope by education and understanding, in the course of time, all

these things will be forgotten. In the face of reality, we have to accept this situation on the understanding that next time people will learn more about the need for cohesion and unity; but we hope next time we shall rotate it and by another election, there will even be no need to consider anything. We will become a nation that we want to become without any differences."<sup>219</sup>

There were those supporters of the NPN "zoning system" who further argued that the requirements of the federal Electoral Decree made it necessary to field joint presidential and vice presidential candidates to reflect the "federal character" of the nation; further, that the presidential candidates of the other parties were pre-determined before their respective conventions, a situation which therefore meant that their presidential candidates were going to be not only from particular areas and their running mates from any other section of the country but they were also particular persons. For example, it was known from the onset that Chief Obafemi Awolowo would be the presidential candidate for the UPN, and hence should the UPN win the presidential elections, the President of the nation would be from the Yoruba section of the country. The same thing was also true of Alhaji Aminu Kano of the PRP, Alhaji Waziri Ibrahim of the GNPP and, of course, Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe of the NPP. Indeed, supporters of the NPN "zoning system" further maintained that the situation with the other parties was even more dangerous for the country because it specified *individuals*; that, they argued, was far too limiting and restrictive unlike the NPN idea which, they further argued, offered a choice out of several prospective candidates within a specified area of the nation. The problem of the NPN was that it had boldly verbalized what the other political parties in a sense had subtly done without saying so in specific terms; it was certainly damaging to its national image. As Professor Jean Herskovits put it, "All Nigeria's parties concerned themselves with ticket-balancing; but the other parties were, in a sense, pre-zoned by the origins of their presidential candidates, and could balance their tickets without seeming to say what part of the country must pro-

duce the President; the critical and highly controversial difference", she continued, "was that the NPN declared before the fact that the presidency was reserved for the northern zone."<sup>220</sup>

The NPN chose Alhaji Shehu Shagari, whose profile and qualities it believed would win for it the high office, as its presidential candidate, the same party which did not seem to have refuted the charge that it has capitalist orientations — unlike some of the other parties which made quite pretentious claims about their socialist orientations.

The candidate who appeared genuine about his socialist ideas was Alhaji Aminu Kano, presidential candidate for the Peoples' Redemption Party (PRP). He is an intellectual charismatic figure with huge and strong popular support in his home state, Kano State, where he has been the standard-bearer of radical reforms in his tradition-bound society. A maverick in the old Northern Region, Alhaji Aminu Kano came into the limelight of Nigerian politics at about the time Nigerian nationalism was becoming orientated more and more to the tribal origins of the nationalists. The pronouncements of the Ibo Union and the NCNC as well as those of the Egbe Omo Oduduwa and the Action Group Party were tribal and sectional in character. Thus, the two parties, the NCNC and the AG, more than made it clear to the Hausa and other Northerners (the largest group in Nigeria's then tripartite structure) that they had only one choice: form their own party. Alhaji Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa, Alhaji Aminu Kano and other Northerners had founded the Northern People's Congress (NPC) in 1949, initially a cultural association like the Egbe Omo Oduduwa. Seeing the sectional political mood in the country, NPC leaders also turned their cultural association into a political party, which retained the same name. Its interests, of course, were centred in the North. One man who made a particularly poignant statement at its preliminary meeting in 1948, when a colonial District Officer warned that the delegates should proceed cautiously through the Government Reservation Area (residential area reserved for whites then) where the meeting was held, was one Mallam Aminu

Kano. The reply he gave was quite radical for its time. Alhaji Aminu Kano retorted, saying that "You may tell us to go by carmel but we will go by airplane."<sup>221</sup>

Mallam Aminu Kano however did not remain long in the NPC. He formed the Northern Elements Progressive Union (NEPU) in 1950, initially as a vanguard group within the NPC. NEPU became an independent party in the Northern Region when it broke away from the NPC and became largely the only principal opposition in the North against the NPC. He remained the leader of the Northern (later, Nigerian) Elements Progressive Union (NEPU) which was banned along with the other political parties after the coup of January 15, 1966.

Mallam Aminu Kano had won the admiration of quite a substantial number of Nigerians during his political fights against the conservative Northern Peoples' Congress (NPC) and certainly he had massive support in his home state, Kano, throughout the civilian years. He also held ministerial appointment in the Military Government of former General Yakubu Gowon as Federal Commissioner for Health before that Administration was toppled in the bloodless coup on July 29, 1975. However, Alhaji Aminu Kano was not associated with the corruption and decadence of that period, and he is one of the few public figures in that Government whom Nigerians still respected for his approach to life, his simplicity and his concern for the ordinary man. He was a respected presidential candidate who was quite articulate and lucid in his claims of what he believed to be the social ills of the nation and how his Peoples' Redemption Party (PRP) could solve them. As the *Lagos Times International* put it, "If there was any party [during the 1979 election campaigns] that saw nothing good in the Nigerian social, economic and political situation that party is the Peoples' Redemption Party led by Alhaji Aminu Kano. Hence for those who thought the Nigerian society needed a complete surgery and equitable distribution of the nation's resources," the paper continued, "the PRP provided the ray of hope."<sup>222</sup>

Be that as it may, Alhaji Aminu Kano had some four major

problems. The first was that he seemed to have had problems with traditional indigenous institutions of authority, particularly in the northern states. Indeed, it was because of his conflicts with accommodating institutions of traditional authority, the Emirs, in the new political system that he left the National Party of Nigeria (NPN) of which he was first a member. In his own words, Mallam Aminu Kano said that he left the NPN because the party was trying to restore what he described as the dictatorial powers of emirs and local governments.<sup>223</sup> This, he said, justified his decision to leave the NPN in its formative stage. "We went to jail," Mallam Aminu Kano said, "and suffered several humiliations to liberate our people from the ugly situation, how do I team up with the people who intended to bring the old system back?"<sup>224</sup> Not only did he have problems with traditional institutions of authority in a society where illiteracy is high and where people still have respect for the traditional institutions they inherited, and hence he broke away from the NPN at its formative stage, Alhaji Aminu Kano consequently started late in organizing a new party, the Peoples' Redemption Party (PRP). Thus, his second problem was that he started late, a factor which robbed him of the support of those influential people who could have joined him.

Thirdly, Alhaji Aminu Kano had earned the displeasure of those Southerners and Northern non-Moslems who admired his other policies because he aligned with the Moslem adherents over the "Sharia issue" during the Constituent Assembly debates on the Constitution. The pro-Sharia advocates had wanted a special clause, which would make provisions for litigations involving Moslems independent of the Supreme Court, written in the Constitution. Nigeria is not a secular state and the Constitution specifically provides for religious freedom. In its Section 10, the Constitution specifically states that "The Government of the Federation or of a State shall not adopt any religion as State Religion." The pro-Sharia group was in effect advocating a segregatory religious provision to be written in the Constitution. His non-Moslem admirers as well as nationalists and other federalists were ap-



Alhaji Aminu Kano, PRP presidential candidate.

palled and disappointed that Alhaji Aminu Kano, who aspired to be the President of the nation, could have advocated for such a sectional issue which in effect would isolate the Moslem community from the rest of the country and from the laws of this nation — and for him to insist that the provision should be specifically written in the Constitution for that matter. His association with that issue alienated Alhaji Aminu Kano from a substantial number of his non-Moslem admirers.

His already shaky political campaign really got groggy and rickety when the Federal Electoral Commission alleged that the PRP presidential candidate had not satisfied the tax payment requirements of the 1977 Electoral Decree. What was particularly damaging was when it was alleged that the PRP presidential aspirant had paid only N 4.00 (four naira) as his annual income tax. The inferences Nigerians drew from this allegation against a man of Alhaji Aminu Kano's social standing need not be belaboured here. Alhaji Aminu Kano, like Dr. Azikiwe of the NPP, filed a court action and subsequently obtained a ruling at the Kano High Court that he had paid his taxes correctly. The ruling not minding, the tax issue put severe cracks on the candidacy of Alhaji Aminu Kano.

These were the political profiles of the five presidential candidates. And these were what Nigerians looked at in judging the potential effectiveness as president of any of the five presidential aspirants. One must add — very hastily, too — that these observations were by the intellectuals and by those Nigerians who had an appreciation for History. In a society where illiteracy is high, the average voter does not see or even look at the issues which the intellectual considers in assessing a presidential candidate; and, fortunately or unfortunately, it is the vote of those people that matter most because they form the overwhelming proportion of the voting electorate. But the intellectual can shape public opinion through the mass media. Similarly, the masses do not see or appreciate the various ideological manifestoes of the political parties. For the masses who do not seem to appreciate the merits of po-

litical candidates on national issues, the tribe and place of origin become the overriding considerations for the candidate for whom votes of particular areas would be cast. Some of the political candidates themselves contributed to this phenomenon by exploiting and appealing to the tribal allegiance of their supporters. Thus, the re-emergence, or the repetition or continuation of tribal loyalties and regional allegiance at the exit of the Military was cause for alarm for those nationalists who expected a transition into civilian rule that would be devoid of tribal frictions and regional hostilities.

As the transition drew nearer and the tempo of the election campaigns increased, there was obvious political excitement, even apprehension. The *New Nigerian* in a comment, "The Day of Reckoning," had warned that any period of transition is a period of maximum danger for the security of nations everywhere.<sup>225</sup> That fear is even more threatening in the developing countries where there has not been an established or routinized mode for change of government, and hence the transition period was rather agonising.



*Chapter Three*

**ELECTION '79:  
RETURN TO CIVILIAN RULE**



## THE ELECTIONS

It was with the underlying assumption that a transition period is wrought with danger that the election in 1979 was regarded by many people as a moment of anxiety. For example, candidates of some of the emerging political parties had made utterances that were unbecoming of those who aspired to lead the nation at the exit of the Military. Indeed, there had been indications of threats that some people or parties might not accept the results of the elections should they or their parties be rejected by the electorate. It was therefore obvious that willingness to observe the rules of the game should the results fail to give satisfaction to the claims of the participants was low. The scathing warning by the exiting Nigerian Head of State, Gen. Olusegun Obasanjo, in a nation-wide broadcast on Sunday, June 23, 1979, during the political campaigns was therefore most welcome. He said that there was concern about the politicians who were seeking support on religious and tribal basis.<sup>1</sup> He then warned that the Federal Military Government would not tolerate any actions that could disrupt the social and political programme of the country.<sup>2</sup> Nigeria's former Chief of Army Staff, General Theophilus Danjuma, also sounded a similar cautionary note in an address at the Command and Staff College, Jaji, on the disturbing nuisance. He observed that "tribalism as a fall-back position for political ends was destroyed by the Nigerian civil war",<sup>3</sup> but that "religious and sectarian chauvinism were fast replacing tribalism as a vehicle for political coercion. The use of ethnic and/or religious differences as a means of

achieving political solidarity", he continued, "is fraudulent enough but it becomes more disturbing when it is used to polarise the people and thereby disturb the peace and stability of the country."<sup>4</sup>

The threatening clouds preceding the first post-civil war elections had appeared so tense and indicative of a violent immediate political future that its down pour could destroy the very stable political order the last Military Administration had mapped out. Indeed, the threat was so severe that Gen. Danjuma pondered over history and stated that he was "not aware of any country that has survived two civil wars. I am not even aware of any country", he continued, "that has survived one religious or sectarian strife. I am afraid that our country, Nigeria, may presently be living between wars."<sup>5</sup> He hoped he was "wrong, but all the ingredients and the signs to the contrary are there for any perceptive analyst to see".<sup>6</sup> Mincing no words, General Danjuma placed the country's blames at the rightful place: the politicians. He said:

"I regret to tell you that the biggest threat posed to our corporate existence as a country is not by any foreign powers but by us Nigerians. This is not to say that we lack our foreign detractors. In fact, there is no shortage of them. But they can only exploit our weaknesses and thrive on them. Until and unless we have men of standing who can perceive the limits of the stresses that the country can accommodate at the time of strife, and take appropriate measures to arrest them. Nigeria shall continue to be a high-risk country of questionable standing internationally. My greatest fears are that there may be no Nigeria after our next strife."<sup>7</sup>

General Danjuma was so definitive and cryptic. The timing of the speech couldn't have been better. Though the audience was a group of Military graduands at the Command and Staff College, Jaji, its exposure to the public by the press made the message accessible to the general public. For a man who had been a major participant in the Nigerian civil war as well as in the process of reconstruction, and, even more so as Nigeria's Chief of Army Staff, Gen. Danjuma's fears about the fact that "no nation has sur-

vived two civil wars" were even more poignant because of the obvious threat which those he called the disciplines "of religious and sectarian chauvinism" posed to the stability of the nation. The utterances from some political leaders who aspired to lead the nation at the exit of the Military had not demonstrated maturity or statesmanship. It was in view of the disturbing political apprehension, particularly after the result of the screening exercise of political candidates by the Federal Electoral Commission, FEDECO, that one became even more worried about the reaction of those who might fail to observe the rules of the game. Fortunately, however, and ironically, as the election campaigns gathered momentum, it seemed that the elections themselves would be conducted in an atmosphere of peace and tranquility. The excitement to exercise their civic right after nearly a decade and a half itself seemed to have demonstrated a profound degree of appreciation for the return to civilian rule and the democratic process; this provided some restraint on the magnitude of tribal and sectional hostilities reminiscent of the Federal and Western Regional elections in 1964 and 1965, respectively, because of the fear that political chaos could provide an excuse for the return of the Military. Nigerians had aged and mellowed; they had learnt their lessons, apparently.

The political excitement itself had been manifested in the founding of at least some 50 self-proclaimed political associations, most of which failed the "federal character" requirements of the screening exercise by the Federal Electoral Commission (FEDECO) under the chairmanship of Chief Michael Ani. They were reduced to five, namely, the National Party of Nigeria (NPN), the Unity Party of Nigeria (UPN), the Great Nigeria People's Party (GNPP), the Nigerian Peoples' Party (NPP) and, the Peoples' Redemption Party (PRP). The presidential candidates of these parties were, respectively, Alhaji Shehu Shagari (NPN), Chief Obafemi Awolowo (UPN), Alhaji Waziri Ibrahim (GNPP), Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe (NPP), and Alhaji Aminu Kano (PRP).

There were five elections on the whole, spread out in weekly intervals. The first, held on Saturday, July 7, 1979, elected members of the Senate, followed a week later by another election of candidates into the House of Representatives — the lower house of the National Assembly. Then followed two more elections for State Houses of Assembly and State Governors, and finally, the fifth for the election of the first executive President of the country held after a 2-week interval on August 11, 1979. If nothing else, the acceptance to hold the elections represented re-affirmation of the principle of democracy, and even more so the acceptance by the Armed Forces that legitimate authority to govern is the right of the people. This in itself was a victory for the Military Government in that it honoured its commitment to return the country to a civilian Government freely and democratically elected by the people themselves. This, indeed, is unique and historic by any standard anywhere in Africa and the rest of the world where a military government willingly handed over power.

Indeed, the peaceful handing over from Military rule to a civilian administration in October 1979 also provided a rare example of a nation reversing the trend towards military juntas, single-party states and even dictatorship by life-presidents. The Military Government provided not just a mere reversal but also solid bases for political stability, political decisions which have an important centralizing role and in the process have made the central or Federal Government much stronger. It was in this spirit of a smooth return to civilian rule that the President of the International Peace Academy, Major-General Rykhe, showered praise on Nigeria. "Having overcome your birth pangs as a young nation", the President of the International Peace Academy said, "Nigeria is rapidly moving towards civilian democratic rule which indeed will be an example to many other nations."<sup>8</sup> Further, it was also a pointer to those who aspired to rule the country that they could occupy the offices they aspired to only if the electorate gave them the mandate. Thus, the previous electoral manipulations and fraudulent practices by politicians to win public offices or for

them to remain riveted to their political offices irrespective of public opinion, should not only be avoided but must also not be accepted nor even condoned. Gen. Obasanjo had made a nationwide broadcast on the eve of the elections during which he said that a true national leader is one who recognizes that "the will of the electorate is supreme, and the self-interest of an individual must be subjugated to the will of the electorate".<sup>9</sup> The senatorial elections on July 7, 1979, were the first in a series of five elections in which about 47 million registered voters were expected to vote for candidates of their choice.

The Federal Electoral Commission (FEDECO) had been set up with the specific purposes of registering voters, the delimitation of the nation into constituencies, and conduction of the elections into the State and National Assemblies as well as of governors and of the President. Promulgated as the Federal Electoral Commission Decree No. 41 With effect from October 1976, the Federal Electoral Commission was formally inaugurated by General Olusegun Obasanjo on November 15, 1976. The decree made provision for a Chief Electoral Commissioner, who was also the Chairman, as well as one Electoral Commissioner from each of the 19 states and four others appointed by the Federal Military Government, making a total of 24 Electoral Commissioners. There was also an Executive Secretary who had to be an officer in the Federal Public Service. The Commission was empowered to appoint either directly or on secondment any officers from the several Public Services in the country. It was in pursuance of this that FEDECO appointed one Administrative Officer each from each of the 19 States, making a total of 19 Administrative Officers, each in charge of the State Branch offices of FEDECO. These State Administrative Secretaries were responsible to the Executive Secretary at FEDECO's Headquarters in Lagos.

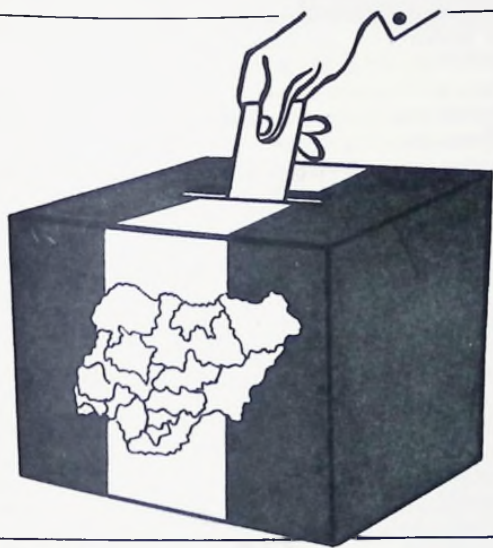
As pointed out earlier, FEDECO had three major duties, namely, the preparation of the Voters' List, delimitation of the country into constituencies, and, the conduction of the several elections. FEDECO's first major duty in preparation for the elec-

tions was the preparation of the Register of Voters. This exercise entailed the display of the Preliminary List of Voters which was then corrected to produce the final Register of Voters. There were several complaints during the registration exercise; for example, many potential voters were not registered because, it was alleged, FEDECO officials did not show up in some areas during the exercise. Such people could not vote at the time of the elections. In the delimitation of the country into constituencies in preparation for the elections, FEDECO divided the country into 95 Senatorial Districts (5 Senatorial Districts in each of the States), 449 constituencies for the House of Representatives, and lastly, a total of 1,347 constituencies into the 19 State Houses of Assembly. The number of constituencies for each state depended on the population of that state. To facilitate the mechanics of the elections, the constituencies were further demarcated into a total of 97,000 polling areas, each with a polling station to serve about 500 registered voters. The number of polling stations provided an indication of the number of personnel and quantity of electoral materials FEDECO needed for its enormous work and, above all, its extremely sensitive responsibility.

The next step related to the elections themselves, five on the whole, namely, the senatorial elections, elections into the House of Representatives and the State Houses of Assembly, the Gubernatorial elections and, lastly, the Presidential elections. All the five political parties – the GNPP, NPN, NPP, PRP and UPN – contested, with some exceptions, all the election for each of the total of 95 senatorial seats held on Saturday, July 7, 1979.

The Federal Electoral Commission (FEDECO) had made what seemed to be adequate preparations for the elections. Its screening of potential candidates had disqualified a surprisingly huge number of prospective candidates. The arrangements for the elections themselves also seemed to have been quite satisfactory; so too were the arrangements for the counting process and the procedure of declaring a winner, the stages where previous political parties

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Nigeria is now  
in your hands**



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notoriously perpetrated some of the most fraudulent election rigging in the history of Nigerian politics and electioneering. The most notorious example of this travesty in the 1965 Western Regional election, wrote Dr. Okoi Arikpo, Nigeria's former Commissioner for External Affairs, "was the case of a man who won the election in one of the Owo constituencies. His opponent was declared the victor. He thereupon announced that he had decided to join the NNDP [opposing party]. A few days after this announcement", Dr. Okoi Arikpo further wrote, "the Electoral Commission declared him the successful candidate and quietly dropped his opponent"<sup>10</sup> It was in view of this historic background of fraudulent election practices that FEDECO's arrangements seemed to have been commendable. Indeed, FEDECO's Chairman, Chief Michael Ani, had assured the nation that the elections would be free and fair, and that the final results of each of the five elections would be released within three days of every election.<sup>11</sup> He explained that the peculiar problems in the country, which included transportation of ballot papers from the riverine and creek areas of the country to the counting centres, could delay the counting process.<sup>12</sup>

The several precautionary measures tended to convince the public that the elections would be free and fair. And above all, the presence of the Military and the stern warning by General Obasanjo some two weeks earlier, just after the screening exercise, confirmed that any one who attempted to disrupt the elections would be dealt with severely. Nigerians went to the polls with hope and enthusiasm to exercise their civic responsibility they had been "denied" for a decade and a half. The elections took place peacefully as optimists had expected. Voters turned out in their millions to exercise their civic right to vote. What was particularly surprising was that despite the heavy torrential down pour and flooded streets and inundated polling-booths in most parts of the country, Nigerians still turned out in appreciable numbers. Literally, thousands stood in the rain and in ankle-deep water at polling stations to vote. It was amazing, and extremely gratifying,



Voters queue up in the rain, waiting their turn to vote.

Voters defied rains and floods in various parts of Lagos State to exercise their civic responsibilities. Above are some of such voters at polling station.



that Nigerians went about voting in a calm and orderly manner. Thousands were literally soaked wet as they waited patiently for electoral officials to report for work at polling stations so that they could cast their votes. Many people were reported to have left their homes without breakfast and stayed in queues until dusk. In some places voting started as late as 5 p. m., instead of the 6 a. m., because of late arrival of ballot boxes. A large number of voters visited several polling stations in an effort to locate their voting centres. There was no act of hooliganism or intimidation by rival political parties and their supporters even in some polling stations where there were no policemen.

The enthusiasm of the voters was not matched by what was generally believed to be the short-comings of the election and polling arrangements. There were complaints of late arrival of ballot boxes at polling stations — as well as those that never arrived; incomplete and wrong voters' lists to wrong polling stations; lack of transport to take ballot materials from area offices to polling stations; and, the absence, late arrival or disappearance of electoral officers. While places far from Lagos, the Federal Capital, had relatively less problems, the problems in the Lagos area provided anxiety not only to the political observer but also to FEDECO officials themselves who later met to review and investigate the senatorial elections of Saturday, July 7, 1979. "It is all a mess. It is a sham election",<sup>13</sup> was how the NPP gubernatorial candidate for Lagos State, Chief Adeniran Ogunsanya, described the situation.<sup>14</sup> Thus, as the experiences of the first of the five elections showed, theoretical arrangements or preparations on paper for the elections were quite different from the realities of the practical exercise. In an appropriate headline caption, the Lagos *Daily Times* declared: "COMPLAINTS GALORE",<sup>15</sup> while the Port Harcourt *Sunday Tide* had as its coverage caption: "IT WAS ELECTION WITH TEARS."<sup>16</sup> Similarly, the Jos *Sunday Standard* had a headline which read: "JOS FEDECO OFFICE UNCOVERS FAKE VOTERS' CARDS."<sup>17</sup> *The Punch* of Lagos on its front page declared: "KEYS TO BALLOT BOXES MIS-

SING."<sup>18</sup> Similarly, the *New Nigerian* from Kaduna on its front page declared: "BAD OFFICIALS TO BE PROSECUTED", a statement the newspaper credited to the Executive Secretary of FEDECO, Alhaji Ahmadu Kurfi, when he disclosed in Lagos that presiding electoral officers who plunged the senatorial elections in parts of Lagos State into confusion were to be apprehended and dealt with according to law.<sup>19</sup>

There was general report that some FEDECO officials made blunders and in the process created problems during the first election in particular. Following the shortcomings of the election officials, FEDECO chairman, Chief Michael Ani, said that the Commission "noted with regret"<sup>20</sup> the behaviour of some of the presiding officials and election officials in Lagos State who for inexplicable reasons, he said, failed to turn up at their respective polling stations.<sup>21</sup> Shortly after, he made another announcement which said voting could go on after 6 p. m., the official closing time.

In Lagos State in particular, the exercise experienced serious problems. In some polling stations, voting did not start until 12 noon because many electoral officers arrived in their polling stations very late, with little or no election materials. Even in some of the polling stations where electoral officers were present at about 11 a. m., reported the *Sunday Standard*, they had to wait for their Local Government Council officials to deliver election materials to them;<sup>22</sup> in some cases, election officials had to go collect the election materials themselves. At the Lagos City Hall, over 100 ballot boxes were reportedly lying idle even as late as 12 noon, some six hours after voting started. Then, there was the question of irregularities in the voters' lists in several polling stations; these included areas in Mushin, Bariga, Somolu, Surulere.<sup>23</sup> The problems in Lagos were so blatant that the Chairman of the Federal Electoral Commission, Chief Michael Ani, expressed his disappointment with the conduct of the Lagos senatorial election. He, however, expressed the hope that it had not been deliberately fouled.<sup>24</sup> One incidence which gave credence to Chief Ani's fears

involved a polling officer who said he was hit by some unknown men who later disappeared with two empty ballot boxes which were in the care of the polling officer. These two boxes were later found, among others, in the evening when ballot boxes were returned to the Lagos City Hall in order to count the votes; those two earlier missing ballot boxes were found filled with ballot papers.<sup>25</sup> The two men who returned them were believed to have impersonated polling officers and were immediately arrested by the Police.<sup>26</sup> The NPP gubernatorial candidate for Lagos State, Chief Ádeniran Ogunsanya, saw the senatorial election problems in Lagos State as "the result of sabotage".<sup>27</sup> He said he would not blame FEDECO for the failures, "but some people who are trying to rig the election".<sup>28</sup> He alleged that "presiding officers in the State had been influenced to keep away from polling stations on schedule".<sup>29</sup>

It was not so much the question of who was responsible for the problems, but the fact that the problems existed at all after what had appeared to be thorough preparations, particularly problems such as polling officials absenting themselves from polling stations, and irregularities on voters' lists. One of those who frowned at the poor arrangements, reported the *New Nigerian*, was the then Head of State, Gen. Olusegun Obasanjo, who was said to have "had a chat with Chief Michael Ani himself over the issue".<sup>30</sup> Chief Ani himself expressed his disappointment with the conduct of the senatorial election in Lagos State. He said in a broadcast that he was surprised at what happened in Lagos and observed that most of the polling stations were not manned by polling officers whom he described as recalcitrant.<sup>31</sup> He, however, praised the Chief Electoral Officer in the State, Alhaji Odunewu, for making what he called "supreme effort" to ensure that the situation was brought under control.<sup>32</sup>

If the Chairman of FEDECO could admit that there were problems, needless to emphasize the reaction of the political candidates and that of the five political parties which all condemned the voting arrangements as "shoddy".<sup>33</sup> In a release by the National

Party of Nigeria (NPN), the party deplored the election procedure in Lagos under which many polling stations as late as 2 p. m. had neither ballot papers, ballot boxes, nor polling officers in several areas on the polling day, areas which the NPN said included Ajeromi, Abule-Oja, Abule Ijesha, Ikeja, Surlere and Ilasamaja.<sup>34</sup> The NPN therefore called on FEDECO to investigate the hitches or postpone the election.<sup>35</sup> Similarly, the Unity Party of Nigeria (UPN) criticised the way FEDECO handled the election in the Lagos Mainland area which, it said, could not be described as free and fair.<sup>36</sup> The UPN said that thousands of voters could not vote because polling officers abandoned their posts. It called on FEDECO to find an acceptable solution to the problem posed by what it called "this serious infringement on the peoples' rights".<sup>37</sup> Similarly, the other parties criticised the election procedure and expressed fear as to the fairness of the elections. The Peoples' Redemption Party (PRP) and the Great Nigeria People's Party (GNPP) also said the election was not democratic.<sup>38</sup> Similarly, the Nigerian Peoples' Party (NPP) expressed dismay over the way voting was conducted in Lagos.<sup>39</sup> The NPP gubernatorial candidate, Chief Adeniran Ogunsanya, said that it was unfortunate that up till 2 p. m., some eight hours after voting officially started, there were no presiding officers at polling stations in Ajegunle, Ikate, Isolo, Aguda, Amuwo-Odofin and Apapa.<sup>40</sup>

Similarly, there were reported cases of problems and failures of FEDECO in other parts of the country. In the Port Harcourt Senatorial Zone, Rivers State, it was reported that thousands of registered voters could not cast their votes because some of the electoral personnel posted to polling stations failed to carry out the instructions given to them by FEDECO in the Rivers State.<sup>41</sup> For example, electoral personnel posted to a polling zone along Ojoto/Azikiwe junction in Diobu area of Port Harcourt did not turn up throughout the duration of the election on that day, July 7, 1979.<sup>42</sup> And as late as 11.15 a. m., reported the Port Harcourt *Sunday Tide*, one of the polling stations in the area was still locked up as there were no electoral personnel to open it.<sup>43</sup> Conse-

quently, a number of registered voters who turned up at the polling station could not cast their votes. They were seen wondering where to go to vote. One of them who refused to identify himself complained that "if this is what FEDECO has done for the past one year, then, without hesitation one could describe the senatorial election as a farce".<sup>44</sup> There was also the problem of keys to ballot boxes which were reported missing in some areas of Rivers State.<sup>45</sup> The Chief Electoral Officer for the State, Mr. H. M. Mannie, while confirming the statement in an announcement over "Radio Rivers", appealed for calm in the state and said that he was in the meantime waiting for directives from FEDECO Headquarters in Lagos.<sup>46</sup> Ibadan, capital of Oyo State, also had problems with voters' list; the State Administrator, Brigadier Paul Tarfa, acted promptly to correct the irregularities.<sup>47</sup> In Ondo State, counting was delayed because ballot boxes had not been brought to the counting centres. Sources said there were not enough vehicles to convey the ballot boxes to the counting centres; only 4 vehicles were available instead of the 24 required.<sup>48</sup>

Similarly, in Anambra State, more than 10,000 voters (6,000 from Enugu alone) could not vote because their registration cards contained irregularities. Among those affected in the disqualification were those who were registered by FEDECO at the Enugu Town Hall the previous year. Their registration cards bore code numbers such as "G" and "GG 33" for the Government Reservation Area (GRA) South I.<sup>49</sup> When FEDECO compiled the final list, the names of those registered voters were inadvertently omitted and as a result such affected persons could not cast their votes for the senatorial elections on July 7, 1979.<sup>50</sup> Representatives of the five political parties met with FEDECO officials over this problem in Enugu. Following their protest, the Federal Electoral Commissioner in the State directed that a polling booth should be mounted at about 2.30 p. m., some eight hours after polling officially began. All ballot papers which did not bear FEDECO's official stamp at the end of polling were declared void.<sup>51</sup> And in Plateau State, the Resident Federal Electoral Commissio-

ner, Alhaji Shehu Ringim, confirmed reports that fake 1979 election registration cards were discovered by FEDECO officials in the State during the senatorial elections on July 7, 1979.<sup>52</sup>

Perhaps in the effort to save its image, some FEDECO Electoral Commissioners said that anybody who was not able to vote because he could not locate his polling station or find his name on the voters' list should not blame FEDECO but himself and the political parties. Two FEDECO members, speaking at different places, said that intending voters should have checked their names on the preliminary lists of voters published earlier in the year, and that the various political parties too should have enlightened their supporters on where to vote. After pacifying several hundreds of people who besieged his office in Jos in anger at having failed to locate their polling stations or to find their names on the voters' list, the Resident Electoral Commissioner for Plateau State, Alhaji Shehu Ringim, told a *Punch* correspondent that the various parties should have educated their supporters to ensure that their names were on the voters' register.<sup>53</sup> "It is understandable that there was political inactivity during the registration exercise," Alhaji Ringim said, "but it is the responsibility of the politicians to enlighten their supporters on this crucial matter when the ban on politics was lifted."<sup>54</sup> Similarly, the paper reported that in Enugu, Mr. E. C. Halim, the Resident Electoral Commissioner for Anambra State, said that if people had checked the preliminary voters' list when it was displayed they would have detected any omissions or other mistakes and reported them long before the elections.<sup>55</sup> He also blamed the political parties, the paper further reported, saying that "FEDECO was only to provide information but it was the duty of the political parties and the mass media to educate people on the issue."<sup>56</sup>

Shifting the blame to the voters themselves or to the political parties, observers believed, was merely an attempt to look for a scapegoat. One had to admit that there were problems during the elections. One also had to give Chief Ani, FEDECO's Chairman, credit for being bold enough to have accepted that there were pro-

blems and that he was looking into the issues as to how they could be prevented in subsequent elections, particularly the question of rigging in elections. In a radio broadcast on Thursday, July 12, 1979, the FEDECO Chairman admitted the occurrence of malpractices during the July 7, 1979, senatorial elections when he said that the principal characters who attempted to sabotage the elections in Lagos had been rounded up.<sup>57</sup> In addition, he said, those people had been relieved of their electoral duties and handed over to the authorities for appropriate disciplinary action.<sup>58</sup> Chief Ani admitted that "no doubt, the elections exercise of July 7, [1979], like any other anywhere in the world, was not without some administrative hitches. But the nation," he continued, "will admit that rigging which was the major malpractice [in the past] was effectively brought under control and will continue to be held under control until the elections are over".<sup>59</sup> He further said that FEDECO, with the aid of the relevant arms of the Federal Military Government, was maintaining close surveillance over the elections. Indeed, some of the difficulties in the early stages of the elections were corrected as subsequent elections were held.

FEDECO reported that a total of 12,532,195 votes were cast in the senatorial elections; this figure represented 25.76 % of the total number of registered voters. In the elections held a week later on Saturday, July 14, 1979, into the House of Representatives the five registered political parties fielded an impressive number of candidates. The NPN contested for all the 449 seats, the UNP fielded 363 candidates and the GNPP 359. The other two parties, the NPP and the PRP, fielded 200 and 158 candidates, respectively. Thus, a total of 1,529 candidates contested the 449 seats into the House of Representatives. The results showed a marked increase in the number of votes cast. A total of 14,941,555 votes, representing 31 % of the total number of registered voters, were cast. A week later, on Saturday, July 21, 1979, a total of 3,300 candidates contested the seats into the State Houses of Assembly. The breakdown of this total number of candidates into the State Houses of Assembly showed that the NPN fielded 1,334 candidates and the

UPN 1,005 candidates. The GNPP and the NPP fielded, respectively, 998 and 588 candidates while the PRP put up 405 candidates. The voter turnout showed a slight increase; a total of 15,166,100 votes were cast, representing 31.18 % of the total number of registered voters. Observers believed that the turn out of registered voters should have been much higher because this election involved candidates who were closest to the grassroots at the constituency level. The rather low turn out was apparently due to voter apathy in a series of five elections. The gubernatorial elections held on the following Saturday July 28, 1979, showed some increase of voter turnout; a total of 15,730,895 votes were cast, representing 32.35 %. Besides scoring the highest number of votes, there was also the electoral provision that a victor at the gubernatorial elections must also score at least one-quarter of all the votes cast in each of at least two-thirds of all the Local Government areas of that State. This requirement was similar to the provision for the presidential election held two weeks later on Saturday, August 11, 1979, during which the highest number of votes were cast; a total of 16,846,633 votes were cast out of the 47,433,757 registered voters, representing 35.5 % of the number of registered voters.

Some observers believed that the figure of nearly 48 million registered voters was high for a population of nearly 56 million for planning purposes (or, even of the estimated 80 million) possibly because the figures were inflated by political aspirants who had planned to rig the elections. The device by FEDECO where voters marked their ballot papers in secret but cast their votes in public view — and the additional provision of only one ballot box for all the political candidates at each polling station on each polling day — prevented the riggings and manipulations fraudulent politicians had in mind. As a result, the voter turnout was much lower than expected.

The elections on the whole were peaceful, devoid of violence and rigging as was characteristic of the old times. Academically, the five elections in Nigeria provided a rare opportunity for scho-

lars and political scientists to study political behaviour and voting patterns among the electorate. As Martin Dent put it, "The election results will give an unrivalled opportunity to political scientists, in Nigeria and elsewhere, to study voting behaviour. In no other instance," he continued, "does one have accurate detailed figures for five separate elections with the same electorate and the same parties. Since the variations due to the relative popularities of individual candidates at different elections may well cancel each other out or be relatively unimportant," he further said, "one has a unique opportunity to make a number of measurements of basic phenomena of political science".<sup>60</sup>

What was immediately striking in looking at the results of the elections was the tribal bloc-voting pattern. For those Nigerian optimists who believed that the long ban on the previous political parties which were tribally-based and tribally-sustained, and, the 13 years of military rule would have changed the pattern of political loyalties, the 1979 political campaigns and election results were a disillusionment. The general disappointment at the results was perhaps best expressed by one of the old politicians, Alhaji Maitama Sule, himself an executive member of the National Party of Nigeria (NPN). Alhaji Maitama Sule, who said he was speaking as an "elder statesman", stated that he was deeply disappointed and disgusted at the trend of the results in the 1979 elections which, he said, indicated that "we have learnt nothing and forgotten nothing";<sup>61</sup> in other words, history repeated itself. The fears of General Olusegun Obasanjo while lifting the ban on politics a year earlier in September 1978 were confirmed. He said then that one heard "pessimistic predictions and expressions of fears that the political elite has learnt nothing and has forgotten nothing about the destructive political practices of the past".<sup>62</sup> Alhaji Maitama Sule recalled that in the First Republic, factors like tribalism and at times religion were brought into play and remarked that the same things were again being used "underground" in the 1979 elections.

He said he would have loved to see, for example, the PRP

(whose base of support was among the Hausas of Kano State) win some seats in the old Western Region and in the East while the UPN, whose base of support was among the Yorubas of the West, win in the North and in the East.<sup>63</sup> Similarly, he would have loved to see the NPP, whose strength rested largely among the Ibos of Imo and Anambra States, winning substantially in the West and in the North.<sup>64</sup> If the pattern of victory at the polls had been as he suggested, Alhaji Maitama Sule said, one would have felt that the 13 years of military rule had broken the old pattern of tribal allegiance of political parties.<sup>65</sup> Instead, Alhaji Maitama Sule observed, the parties won in their respective home bases, a phenomenon that "was not peculiar to any one of the political parties which, like in the past," he added, "were nothing but glorified tribal organisations".<sup>66</sup> "It is a pity", he further remarked, "for one would have thought that after 13 years of military rule, the politicians would have learnt their lessons and forgotten religious and tribal politics which could plunge Nigeria into another chaos".<sup>67</sup> Alhaji Maitama Sule said he was convinced from the election results that the nation had gone back "to square one in some respects, and worse than that" in some others. Continuing, he pleaded that "we can't afford to allow religion to rear its head into politics. If we do", he warned, "it will be the end of what is now known as Nigeria, and God forbid."<sup>68</sup>

In view of such obvious tribal allegiance at the elections, Alhaji Maitama Sule hoped that political leaders would be understanding so that they would have a working arrangement that would enable all or some of the parties to come together to give the nation a government that would reflect the true nature of the federation.<sup>69</sup> Concluding his interview, Alhaji Maitama Sule, who has a wealth of practical experience in Nigerian politics, said he believed that the multi-party system was good but "if we won't change [from the tribal pattern of party loyalties], it might be desirable to look into the possibility of bringing about the one-party system".<sup>70</sup>

Unquestionably, optimists who expected that the long ban on

politics and the mere fact of our own experiences — of the havoc of tribal loyalties which previous political parties brought to the nation — would have provided a different voting pattern were disappointed. 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 habits — habits and traits which tend to atrophy only as a nation ages and matures. This pattern of political behaviour was distressingly more obvious with the politicians themselves who tended to encourage the politics of tribal allegiance and ethnic loyalties. The optimists were disillusioned. But as one observer rightly pointed out, “such optimism was, however, contradictory to Nigerian political realities, where the tribal card is the obvious one for the politician to play.”<sup>71</sup> This trend was most obvious among the UPN and the NPP, apparent reincarnations of the banned AG and NCNC, respectively. The Unity Party of Nigeria (UPN), like the old and banned Action Group Party (AG), was led by Chief Awolowo who won in only 6 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 Nigerian Peoples’ Party (NPP), like the old and also banned National Convention of Nigerian Citizens (NCNC), was led by Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe who won in the two Ibo States of Imo and Anambra, the hard-core Ibo areas of the old Eastern Region which was the stronghold of the banned NCNC.

While the old bases of the banned AG and NCNC strongly showed the continuing importance of tribal allegiance and regional loyalties to the respective new parties in those places, political realities were different to some extent in the old Northern Region, the stronghold of the also banned NCP — largely because the Sardauna of Sokoto was no more alive to be a rallying point. The National Party of Nigeria (NPN) found that it lost the gubernatorial seat in Kano State to the People’s Redemption Party (PRP) and that in Plateau State to the NPP, areas where the banned NPC met some of its strongest opposition in the old Northern Region.

But Benue State of the old Middle Belt, another old "trouble spot" for the NPC, voted for the NPN. The Great Nigeria People's Party (GNPP) won the gubernatorial seats in Borno and Gongola States, areas where the NPC had also been strong. The leader of the GNPP, Alhaji Waziri Ibrahim, is a Kanuri from Borno State, thus, again showing the phenomenon of bloc-voting and tribal loyalties for the GNPP in the area where its leader originated from. Nationwide, the results showed that it was only the National Party of Nigeria (NPN) which emerged as a genuine national party, winning support from most part of the country across tribal frontiers and regional loyalties. Not only did the NPN's victories stretch from the extremely northern states of Sokoto, Kaduna,

TABLE I: *State Houses of Assembly Results*

State	GNPP	NPN	NPP	PRP	UPN	Total No. of Seats	Party in Majority
1. Anambra	1	10	75	—	—	86	NPP
2. Bauchi	9	45	4	2	—	60	NPN
3. Bendel	—	22	3	—	35	60	UPN
4. Benue	4	44	3	—	—	51	NPN
5. Borno	60	11	—	1	—	72	GNPP
6. Cross River	16	57	3	—	8	84*	NPN
7. Gongola	26	17	1	1	18	63	GNPP
8. Imo	2	8	80	—	—	90	NPP
9. Kaduna	11	68	4	11	5	99	NPN
10. Kano	2	13	—	123	—	138	PRP
11. Kwara	2	25	—	—	15	42	NPN
12. Lagos	—	—	—	—	36	36	UPN
13. Niger	2	28	—	—	—	30	NPN
14. Ogun	—	—	—	—	36	36	UPN
15. Ondo	—	1	—	—	65	66	UPN
16. Oyo	—	9	—	—	117	126	UPN
17. Plateau	3	11	34	—	—	48	NPP
18. Rivers	—	29	13	—	—	42	NPN
19. Sokoto	26	85	—	—	—	111	NPN

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

Kano, and Borno across Niger, Kwara and Benue States in the "Middle Belt" to Cross River, Rivers and Bendel States in the South, the party also won overwhelming victories in several of the elections. For example, it won Assembly seats in 17 out of 19 State Houses of Assembly, as shown in Table I.

Even in the solidly Ibo and Yoruba States, the NPN came a strong second far ahead of the remaining parties. Further, the NPN won 168 seats into the (National) House of Representatives in 16 out of the 19 States; the next highest scorer, the UPN, won 111 House of Representatives seats in 9 States; the NPP won 79 seats also in 9 States; the GNPP won 48 seats in 7 States and the PRP won 49 seats in 2 States, as Table II shows.

TABLE II: *House of Representatives Results*

<i>States</i>	<i>GNPP</i>	<i>NPN</i>	<i>NPP</i>	<i>PRP</i>	<i>UPN</i>	<i>No. of Seats</i>
1. <i>Anambra</i>	—	3	26	—	—	29
2. <i>Bauchi</i>	1	18	1	—	—	20
3. <i>Bendel</i>	—	6	2	—	12	20
4. <i>Benue</i>	—	18	1	—	—	19
5. <i>Borno</i>	22	2	—	—	—	24
6. <i>Cross River</i>	4	22	—	—	2	28
7. <i>Gongola</i>	8	5	1	—	7	21
8. <i>Imo</i>	—	2	28	—	—	30
9. <i>Kaduna</i>	1	19	2	10	1	33
10. <i>Kano</i>	—	7	—	39	—	46
11. <i>Kwara</i>	1	8	—	—	5	14
12. <i>Lagos</i>	—	—	—	—	12	12
13. <i>Niger</i>	—	10	—	—	—	10
14. <i>Ogun</i>	—	—	—	—	12	12
15. <i>Ondo</i>	—	—	—	—	22	22
16. <i>Oyo</i>	—	4	—	—	38	42
17. <i>Plateau</i>	—	3	13	—	—	16
18. <i>Rivers</i>	—	10	4	—	—	14
19. <i>Sokoto</i>	6	31	—	—	—	37
<i>Total</i>	48	168	79	49	111	449
<i>%</i>	9.6	37.4	17.4	10.9	24.7	100

Similarly, the NPN came first or second in 90 out of the 95 senatorial seats into the Senate; it won the highest number of senatorial seats as well as the greatest spread, winning a total of 36 senatorial seats in 12 States. The next highest scorer was the UPN which won a total of 28 senatorial seats in 7 States (winning all the 20 senatorial seats in the four hard-core Yoruba States). The NPP won 16 seats in 4 States (10 seats in the 2 hard-core Ibo States); the GNPP won 8 senatorial seats in 3 States, while the PRP won 7 senatorial seats in 2 States. The parties' respective senatorial victories in each of the States are as shown in Table III.

TABLE III: *House of Senate Results*

States	GNPP	NPN	NPP	PRP	UPN	No. of Senate Seats
1. Anambra	—	—	5	—	—	5
2. Bauchi	—	5	—	—	—	5
3. Bendel	—	1	—	—	4	5
4. Benue	—	5	—	—	—	5
5. Borno	4	1	—	—	—	5
6. Cross River	2	3	—	—	—	5
7. Gongola	2	1	—	—	2	5
8. Imo	—	—	5	—	—	5
9. Kaduna	—	3	—	2	—	5
10. Kano	—	—	—	5	—	5
11. Kwara	—	3	—	—	2	5
12. Lagos	—	—	—	—	5	5
13. Niger	—	5	—	—	—	5
14. Ogun	—	—	—	—	5	5
15. Ondo	—	—	—	—	5	5
16. Oyo	—	—	—	—	5	5
17. Plateau	—	1	4	—	—	5
18. Rivers	—	3	2	—	—	5
19. Sokoto	—	5	—	—	—	5
<i>Total</i>	8	36	16	7	28	95
%	8.42	37.89	16.84	7.37	29.47	100

In the gubernatorial elections, the NPN again scored the highest victories, winning 7 States. The UPN was second with 5 gubernatorial victories; the NPP won 3, while the GNPP and PRP each won 2 States in the gubernatorial elections as Table IV shows.

In the presidential elections (see Table VI), NPN presidential candidate Alhaji Shehuz Shagari won in 13 States, as compared to the next highest scorer, UPN presidential candidate, Chief Obafemi Awolowo, who won in only 6 States. The NPP presidential candidate, Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe, won in only 3 States as also did

TABLE IV: *Gubernatorial Results by State & Party*

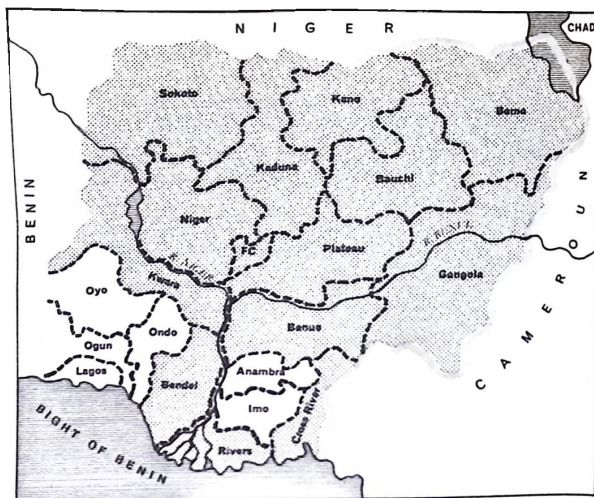
States	Parties					Total
	GNPP	NPN	NPP	PRP	UPN	
1. Anambra	-	-	1	-	-	1
2. Bauchi	-	1	-	-	-	1
3. Bendel	-	-	-	-	1	1
4. Benue	-	1	-	-	-	1
5. Borno	1	-	-	-	-	1
6. Cross River	-	1	-	-	-	1
7. Gongola	1	-	-	-	-	1
8. Imo	-	-	1	-	-	1
9. Kaduna	-	-	-	1	-	1
10. Kano	-	-	-	1	-	1
11. Kwara	-	1	-	-	-	1
12. Lagos	-	-	-	-	1	1
13. Niger	-	1	-	-	-	1
14. Ogun	-	-	-	-	1	1
15. Ondo	-	-	-	-	1	1
16. Oyo	-	-	-	-	1	1
17. Plateau	-	-	1	-	-	1
18. Rivers	-	1	-	-	-	1
19. Sokoto	-	1	-	-	-	1
<i>Total</i>	2	7	3	2	5	19
%	10.53	36.84	15.79	10.53	26.32	100

TABLE V: *Summary of Three Electoral Results*

Party	National Assembly				Governorship	
	House of Representatives		House of Senate		No. Won	%
	Seats Won	%	Seats Won	%		
NPN	168	37.4	36	37.89	7	36.84
UPN	111	24.7	28	29.47	5	26.32
NPP	79	17.4	16	16.84	3	15.79
GNPP	48	9.6	8	8.42	2	10.53
PRP	49	10.9	7	7.37	2	10.53
Total	449	100	95	100	19	100

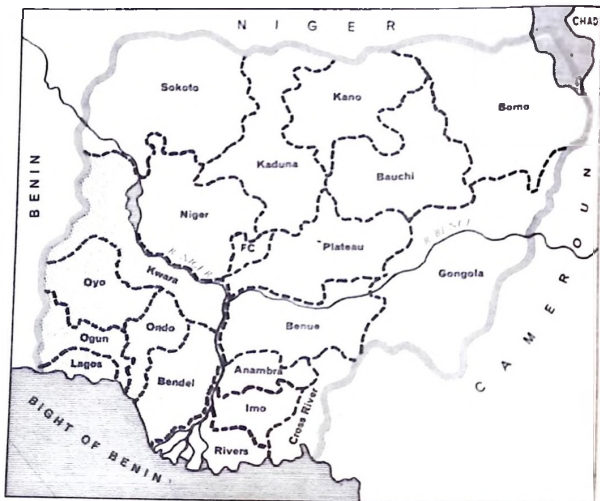
the GNPP presidential candidate, Alhaji Waziri Ibrahim, while the presidential candidate of the Peoples' Redemption Party (PRP), Alhaji Aminu Kano, won in 2 States. Thus, not only did the NPN presidential candidate win in a total number of states at least twice the next highest scorer but also won in nearly as many states as did all the other four presidential candidates put together, 13 against 14. (More than one presidential candidate can win in a state, as long as each candidate wins the minimum required percentage of votes. Thus, for example, both the NPN and UPN presidential candidates won in Bendel State because each had more than the required percentage votes. Similarly, both the NPN and PRP presidential candidates won in Kaduna State, as also both the NPN and GNPP candidates won in Gongola and Borno States, or the NPN and NPP presidential candidates both won in Plateau State.)

Similarly, judging from the results of the presidential elections, it was only the NPN which was genuinely national because it reached out successfully to states other than the place of origin of its presidential candidate as well as beyond areas of tribal loyalties to its candidate, Alhaji Shehu Shagari. Even in the hard-core Yoruba and Ibo States where Alhaji Shagari lost, the NPN presidential candidate was still second, ahead of any of his 2 greatest



Map of Nigeria showing Geographical Spread of States won by the NPN presidential candidate, Alhaji Shehu Shagari.

Map of Nigeria showing Geographical Spread of States won by the UPN presidential candidate, Chief Obafemi Awolowo.





Map of Nigeria showing Geographical Spread of States won by the NPP presidential candidate, Dr Nnamdi Azikiwe.

Map of Nigeria showing Geographical Spread of States won by the GNPP presidential candidate, Alhaji Waziri Ibrahim.



TABLE VI: 1979 Presidential Candidates

State	Total Votes Cast		Shagari		Awolowo		Azikiwe		Aminu		Waziri			
	Votes	%	Votes	%	Votes	%	Votes	%	Votes	%	Votes	%		
1. Anambra	1,209,038	13.5	9,063	0.75	1,002,083	82.88	14,500	1.2	20,228	1.67	154,218	16.44		
2. Bauchi	998,683	62.48	29,960	3.0	47,314	4.74	4,939	0.7	8,242	1.2	8,242	1.2		
3. Bendel	669,511	242,320	36.2	356,381	53.2	57,629	8.6	7,277	1.35	42,993	7.97	383,278	54.04	
4. Benue	538,879	411,648	76.38	13,864	2.57	63,097	11.77	9,642	1.35	46,385	6.52	100,105	15.14	
5. Borno	710,968	246,778	34.71	23,885	3.35	77,775	11.76	50,671	7.66	6,737	1.01	217,914	34.09	
6. Cross River	661,103	425,815	64.40	327,057	35.52	138,561	21.67	27,856	4.35	27,750	4.34	34,616	3.0	
7. Gongola	639,138	1,153,355	101.516	8.80	7,335	0.64	999,636	84.69	10,252	0.89	437,771	31.0	190,936	14.0
8. Imo	1,382,712	596,302	43.0	92,382	7.0	65,321	5.0	11,081	0.91	932,803	76.41	18,482	1.54	
9. Kaduna	1,195,136	243,423	19.94	14,973	1.23	11,081	0.91	1,830	0.52	2,376	0.67	20,251	5.71	
10. Kano	354,605	190,142	53.62	140,006	37.48	681,762	82.30	79,320	9.57	3,874	0.47	3,943	0.48	
11. Kwara	828,414	59,515	7.18	14,155	3.67	45,292	1.11	11,555	3.77	63,273	16.6	3,974	0.53	
12. Lagos	383,347	287,072	74.88	46,358	6.23	689,655	92.61	2,343	0.32	2,338	0.31	3,561	0.26	
13. Niger	744,668	57,361	4.19	1,294,666	94.50	11,752	0.86	7,732	0.55	4,804	0.32	8,029	0.57	
14. Ogun	1,384,788	177,999	12.75	1,197,983	85.78	269,666	49.7	21,852	3.98	37,400	6.82	15,025	2.18	
15. Ondo	1,396,547	190,458	34.73	29,029	5.29	11,114	10.33	98,754	14.35	3,312	0.46	359,021	26.61	
16. Oyo	548,405	499,846	72.65	898,094	66.58	34,102	2.52	12,503	0.92	44,977	3.33	1,686,489	10.01	
17. Plateau	687,951	5,688,857	33.77	4,916,651	29.18	2,822,523	16.75	1,723,113	10.28	1,686,489	10.01			
18. Rivers	1,348,697													
19. Sokoto														
Total	16,846,633													

TABLE VII: *Total Number of States won by each Presidential Candidate*

<i>Candidate</i>	<i>Party</i>	<i>No. of States won</i>
<i>Alhaji Shehu Shagari</i>	<i>NPN</i>	13
<i>Chief Obafemi Awolowo</i>	<i>UPN</i>	6
<i>Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe</i>	<i>NPP</i>	3
<i>Alhaji Waziri Ibrahim</i>	<i>GNPP</i>	3
<i>Alhaji Aminu Kano</i>	<i>PRP</i>	2

rivals, both Chief Obafemi Awolowo and Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe, each of whom scored *less than 1 %* in either the hard-core Ibo States (i. e. Chief Awolowo) or in 3 of the four hard-core Yoruba States (i. e. Dr. Azikiwe), as Tables VIII and IX respectively below show.

A further look into the distribution pattern of the victories and losses reveals interesting political phenomena; for example, the voting pattern in the majority and minority states. In the nation as of now, there are 12 "majority" States and 7 "minority" States. The "majority" States are Anambra, Bauchi, Borno, Gongola, Imo, Kaduna, Kano, Lagos, Ogun, Ondo, Oyo and Sokoto, while the "minority" States are Bendel, Benue, Cross River, Kwara, Niger, Plateau and Rivers. Table X on p. 220 shows the number of the

TABLE VIII: *Percentage Scores in Hard-core Ibo States by each Presidential Candidate*

<i>Presidential Candidates</i>		<i>Hard-core Ibo States</i>	
<i>Name</i>	<i>Party</i>	<i>Anambra %</i>	<i>Imo %</i>
<i>Azikiwe</i>	<i>NPP</i>	82.88	84.69
<i>Shagari</i>	<i>NPN</i>	13.50	8.80
<i>Waziri</i>	<i>GNPP</i>	1.67	3.00
<i>Aminu</i>	<i>PRP</i>	1.20	0.89
<i>Awolowo</i>	<i>UPN</i>	0.15	0.64

**TABLE IX: Percentage Scores in Hard-core Yoruba States by each Presidential Candidate**

Presidential Candidates		Hard-core Yoruba States			
Name	Party	Ogun %	Ondo %	Oyo %	Lagos %
Awolowo	UPN	92.61	94.50	85.78	82.30
Shagari	NPN	6.23	4.19	11.75	7.18
Waziri	GNPP	0.53	0.26	0.57	0.48
Azikiwe	NPP	0.32	0.86	0.55	9.57
Aminu	PRP	0.31	0.18	0.32	0.47

“majority” and “minority” States won or lost by each of the presidential candidates. Alhaji Shehu Shagari, for example, won in all the 6 northern majority states but lost the remaining 6 which are based in the south, in the Ibo and Yoruba areas. Chief Awolowo of the UPN won the four hard-core Yoruba States (Ogun, Oyo, Ondo and Lagos) but lost in the remaining 8 majority States, while the NPP presidential candidate, Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe, won only the two hard-core Ibo States of Anambra and Imo and lost in the remaining 10 majority States. Alhaji Waziri Ibrahim of the GNPP won in Borno, Gongola and Sokoto States (all in the north) but lost in the remaining 9 majority State, while Alhaji Aminu Kano won in Kano and Kaduna States, both also in

**TABLE X: Majority & Minority States Won and Lost by the Presidential Candidates**

Presidential Candidates		Majority States		Minority States		Total States Won
Name	Party	Won	Lost	Won	Lost	
Shagari	NPN	6	6	7	—	13
Awolowo	UPN	4	8	2	5	6
Azikiwe	NPP	2	10	1	6	3
Waziri	GNPP	3	9	—	7	3
Aminu	PRP	2	10	—	7	2

TABLE XI: Percentage Scores in the Minority States  
by the Presidential Candidates

Presidential Candidates		Minority States							Total Minority States Won
Name	Party	Bendei %	Benue %	Cross River %	Kwara %	Niger %	Plateau %	Rivers %	
Shagari	NPN	36.20	76.38	64.40	53.62	74.88	34.73	72.65	7
Awolowo	UPN	53.20	2.57	11.76	37.48	3.67	5.29	10.33	2
Azikiwe	NPP	8.60	11.77	7.66	0.52	1.11	49.70	14.35	1
Waziri	GNPP	1.20	7.97	15.14	5.71	16.60	6.82	2.18	-
Aminu	PRP	0.70	1.35	1.01	0.67	3.77	3.98	0.46	-

the north, and lost in the remaining 10 majority States. The region of origin and/or tribal bloc-voting pattern in the majority states, as the results show, particularly in the hard-core Ibo and Yoruba States, meant that a presidential candidate could win at best a maximum of 6 states, as Alhaji Shehu Shagari did. Therefore, a presidential aspirant, in order to satisfy the electoral requirement of "2/3 of all the States of the Federation", must win, in addition, in *all* the minority States. Alhaji Shehu Shagari of the NPN won in *all* the 7 minority States compared to the next highest scorer, Chief Obafemi Awolowo of the UPN, who won in only two (2) minority States but lost in 5 while Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe of the NPP won in only one minority State and lost in 6; the other two presidential candidates did not win in any of the minority States, as Table XI on p. 221 shows. This is a new and extremely important phenomenon. What this significant development means for Nigerian politics is that the creation of more states has shifted the base of political power from the majority to the minority states. Thus, a presidential aspirant may not necessarily be elected by any of the three majority ethnic groups which dominated the politics of the First Republic but by Nigeria's "minority" ethnic groups all over the country. Hence, indeed, there were those political observers who could boldly state that Alhaji Shehu Shagari was elected President by Nigeria's "minority" groups.

A comparison of the scores in the majority and minority States for the victorious NPN presidential candidate shows another interesting phenomenon in Nigerian politics. The figures in Table XII on p. 223 show that Alhaji Shehu Shagari's strength was much higher in the minority areas than in the majority States; this is perhaps the truest indicator of a potential victor in the presidential elections. He also scored his highest percentage victory in a minority State; in fact, his percentage victory in the first 3 minority States are each higher than his highest percentage victory in the first majority State he won. Indeed, his lowest percentage victory in the 7<sup>th</sup> and last minority state (Plateau) is higher than his victory in the 5<sup>th</sup> majority state, as Table XII shows.

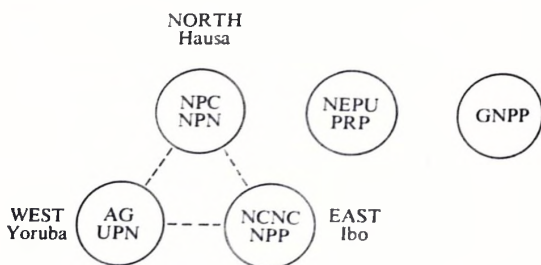
TABLE XII: *Alhaji Shagari's Scores in the 6 Majority and 7 Minority States he won*

<i>Majority States</i>		<i>Minority States</i>	
<i>States</i>	<i>Scores (%)</i>	<i>States</i>	<i>Scores (%)</i>
1. <i>Sokoto</i>	66.58	1. <i>Benue</i>	76.38
2. <i>Bauchi</i>	62.48	2. <i>Niger</i>	74.88
3. <i>Kaduna</i>	43.00	3. <i>Rivers</i>	72.65
5. <i>Gongola</i>	35.52	4. <i>Cross River</i>	64.62
5. <i>Borno</i>	34.71	5. <i>Kwara</i>	53.62
6. <i>Kano</i>	19.94	6. <i>Bendel</i>	36.20
		7. <i>Plateau</i>	34.74

In concluding the study of the elections, one has to understand the reason for the initial emergence of the multiplicity of political groups and their tribal loyalties. The end of 13 years of military rule unleashed a torrent of previously pent-up political aspirations, with the resultant emergence of a multitude of political parties to a degree that baffled even the apolitical observer. Each party sought its strength in its tribal or sectional location, with consequent inter-group rivalries and conflicts. What was basically the cause of all this excitement — even apprehension — was that in a society where the authorities had not permitted political activities and the development of political parties for nearly a decade and a half, the immediate and major basis for the opportunity for political association and political competition when the ban was lifted was therefore localised and not nation-wide. Political activities were thus seen not so much in terms of political competition but more in terms of old tribal or sectional rivalries and hostilities — certainly differences — with the glaring fact that regional, sectional or tribal allegiance was the major basis for support as was the case in pre-civil war Nigeria.

Indeed, there were those who saw the three major political parties — the National Party of Nigeria (NPN), the Unity Party of Nigeria (UPN), and, the Nigerian Peoples' Party (NPP) — as re-in-

carnations of the old tribally-sustained political parties. These were the Northern Peoples' Congress (NPC) in the old Northern Region, the Action Group Party (AG) in the old Western Region, and, the National Convention of Nigerian Citizens (NCNC) in the old Eastern Region. Those three old and now banned political parties had their respective support among the Hausa in the North, the Yoruba in the West, and the Ibo in the East; so too was the Northern Elements Progressive Union (NEPU) among the Hausa of Kano Province. The major basis of support was the tribe when they contested the Federal Election in 1959 for the party that would form the government at the exit of the British Colonial Government, come independence a year later. Now twenty years later, in 1979, the pattern of the basis of support for the political parties again seemed to be the tribe and/or place of origin of the presidential candidate – the NPN among the Hausa, the UPN among the Yoruba, the NPP among the Ibo, and the PRP among the Hausa of Kano State.



Indeed, the leaders of those four parties were exactly the same people, except for Alhaji Shehu Shagari in place of the assassinated Alhaji Sir Ahmadu Bello, the Sardauna of Sokoto, the place which incidentally is also the home of Alhaji Shagari. One must hastily add that the NPN to a large extent broke from the tribal and tripolar political relationship. (An observer in a comment to

the author even likened the GNPP to the old Borno Youth Movement, BYM).

The re-emergence in all the new political parties of the old political heavyweights, who had wrecked the First Republic, initially posed some concern for those who expected that young men and women would play the major role in the politics of the Second Republic; this phenomenon led to the acidic reference to "old wine in new bottles". Not only was it just the mere preponderance of the old political heavyweights but also the tendency to identify the new parties with the old ones. As Martin Dickson wrote in the London *Financial Times*, "Dr. Azikiwe strengthened this impression by making the embarrassing gaffe of referring to his new party by the name of his old one. 'Ladies and gentlemen,' he told a rally in Lagos, 'I want to present to you the standard bearer of the NCNC — ' pause. 'Sorry, I beg your pardon. The NPP'".<sup>72</sup> While the observation about "old wine in new bottles" could not be easily dismissed, it would be unfair to say that all five political parties were re-incarnations of the old and banned major political parties. Thus, for example, the NPN seemed right from the beginning to have attracted politicians from areas other than the old NPC stronghold. It even attracted the support and membership of old political foes of the NPC such as the late Senator Chief Joseph S. Tarka, leader of the old United Middle-Belt Congress (UMBC) among his Tiv and other peoples of the former Benue Province and the Middle-Belt within the former Northern Region. So too was the NPN unlike the old NPC in Kano State. The NPP also had made one major impression beyond its tribal frontiers, among the people of Plateau State of the old North.

Because of the apparent re-emergence of the old tripolar political structure, one is tempted to reflect on Dame Margery Perham's contention that "a tripod is neither physically nor politically a very stable basis, and when one leg and then another weakens, collapse is unavoidable."<sup>73</sup> The several political crises Nigeria went through since independence had their origins, to a large extent, in the country's tripartite regional structure and its

tripolar tribally-sustained political relationship as shown diagrammatically at p. 224. The creation of more states removed the previously tripartite regional structure of the Federation, one major factor which was inhibitive to harmonious politics in Nigeria. Now, the second factor, that is, the tripolar relationship of the three major tribally-sustained political parties in the past. In other words, just as the tripartite federal structure was fragmented so also must the tripolar relationship of the political parties be destroyed. Of importance, therefore, is the necessity for Nigerian political parties to break from and actually break the tripolar tribal relationship of the political parties – and thus free the sustenance of the political parties from tribal loyalties in the multi-party system of the country – in order to achieve effective political integration and national unification. Indeed, this is the major thesis of this book. This too is the basis for one's appreciation for the victory of Alhaji Shehu Shagari because his success at the election as the President of this nation has been his effectiveness in achieving political integration by breaking away from tribal loyalties and by fragmenting the tripolar tribal sustenance of Nigeria's political parties.

Indeed, it was obvious to political observers – except those who were wrapped up in their own little worlds and petty political cocoons – that a political aspirant who could emerge as the President of the nation, particularly in view of the stringent requirements of the new Constitution, must organize or at least belong to a political party whose support must transcend tribal frontiers. As already pointed out, one of the founders of the NPN, Alhaji Adamu Ciroma, Federal Minister of Industries and who was a member of the Constitution Drafting Committee, said that while writing the Constitution they “were persuaded with the feeling that no longer would it be possible for a single ethnic group in the country to capture power at the federal level. That is what we put in the Constitution,” he said.<sup>74</sup> Continuing, Alhaji Ciroma said that

"We who formed the NPN were the people thinking along this line. We had to keep an open mind that if there was going to be a political party, it must contain people from all parts of the country, who come as allies. This was the underlying policy for our setting up and forming the NPN."<sup>75</sup>

Not only should any of the parties merely contain peoples from all parts of the country, the leadership of each of the parties must also believe in the co-existence of the different ethnic groups as equal partners in their respective political parties. Fortunately for the NPN — and the nation — Alhaji Shehu Shagari as its presidential candidate had the vision to see the importance of this prerequisite for successful leadership of this nation. I emphasize Alhaji Shagari because he was one of those few people among all the political leaders who saw this important prerequisite, unlike others whose parochial politics within their respective parties — and even within the NPN — limited their national appeal. It was the rigid adherence of the Yoruba and Ibo to tribal loyalties in their respective support for Chief Obafemi Awolowo of the UPN and Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe of the NPP that was, perhaps, the underlying reason for the advertisement by the NPN, in the last days of the campaign for the presidential election, to the electorate — and, indeed, to the presidential candidates themselves — to think and look beyond their tribal loyalties. In its campaign, "Forward to Peace and Unity", in which Alhaji Shagari appealed to the electorate to "Vote for NPN: One Nation, One Destiny," the campaign advertisement said:

"We in the NPN believe in One Nation, One Destiny. We firmly believe in equality and the pooling together of minds in solving the problems of this country. We do not believe in hero-worshipping or subjugating our whole being to the whims and caprices of any one man. We believe that NO ONE has a right to hold this country to ransom, no matter what contributions he might have made towards the political growth of our country. No man is indispensable to this country. The days are gone when Nigerians are made to believe that the good things

of life can be instantly created by lofty words coming from a skillful propagandist. We believe in telling you the truth. We prefer hard work and realism."<sup>76</sup>

Continuing, the NPN campaign advertisement for its presidential candidate said that "Judging by the results of the elections so far, it is apparent that our party, the NPN, is the only truly national party. We have won more votes and spread our commanding lead over more States of the Federation than any of our rivals."<sup>77</sup> The architect of that advertisement was said to be Alhaji Shehu Shagari himself.

## WHAT IS "2/3 OF 19"?

The rationale or thinking 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 of this country should have not only the greatest popular support but also the widest spread of popular support — hence, a reflection of his nation-wide acceptability. Alhaji Shehu Shagari (NPN) won the highest number of votes cast at the presidential election, and also scored at least 25 % of the votes in 12 states and in the 13<sup>th</sup> state, Kano, he scored 19.94 % of the votes cast. The next highest scorer, Chief Obafemi Awolowo (UPN), won only in six states. In its view, the Federal Electoral Commission (FEDECO) believed that Alhaji Shehu Shagari satisfied the electoral requirements and therefore declared him the winner. In a prepared statement read by a returning officer, Mr. Frederick Menkiti, FEDECO said that Alhaji Shehu Shagari

“satisfied the provision of Section 34A sub-section (1) (c) (i) of the Electoral Decree No. 73 of 1977 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 Electoral Commission considers that in the absence of any legal explanation or guidance in the Electoral Decree, it has no alternative than to give the phrase — ‘at least two-thirds of all the states in the Federation’ — in Section 34A sub-section

(1) (c) (ii) of the Electoral Decree the ordinary meaning which applies to it. In the circumstances, the candidate who scores at least one quarter of the votes cast in 12 states and one-quarter of two-thirds, that is, at least one-sixth of the votes cast in the 13<sup>th</sup> state satisfies the requirements of the sub-section.”<sup>78</sup>

While the NPN presidential candidate and his supporters across the nation rejoiced and jubilated about the NPN victory, the other party leaders were furious and disgruntled about FEDECO's interpretation of the meaning of “2/3 of 19 states”. But it was only one of the four losers, UPN presidential candidate Chief Obafemi Awolowo, who went beyond mere verbal anger in his effort to seek redress. Chief Awolowo petitioned to the Presidential Election Tribunal against Alhaji Shagari's declared victory. In his representations, which he presented personally to the Tribunal, Chief Awolowo 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 of the Federation had not been fulfilled. Chief Awolowo told the Tribunal in his submission that “Alhaji Shehu Shagari was at the time of the election not duly elected by a majority of lawful votes at the election, as he has not satisfied section 34A subsection (1) (c) (ii) of the Electoral Decree 1977.”<sup>79</sup> The UPN presidential candidate based his legal submission on the interpretation of what in his opinion made two-thirds of 19 states which, he claimed, was 13. Chief Awolowo argued that the natural meaning of two-thirds of 19 is 13 because, he said, the fractionalization of a State is not practicable. “The state is a legal person – a corporate body – with eyes, legs and head”, Chief Awolowo said.<sup>80</sup> He therefore urged the Tribunal to nullify the election and order a second ballot through the Electoral College consisting of members of the National Assembly and of the State Houses of Assembly.

In the effort to strengthen his case, Chief Awolowo further asked the Tribunal to order that five classified documents with the Federal Attorney-General be produced because, he said, they



Alhaji Shehu at the moment of triumph on hearing of his electoral victory  
at the NPN Headquarters at Jibowu, Yaba, Lagos.

were vital to his petition. The documents included circular letters from FEDECO's Chairman, Chief Michael A. Ani, which he sent to Electoral Commissioners in the States, a telex message from FEDECO Headquarters in Lagos to all the State Electoral Commissioners and, lastly, their replies to the messages.

The NPN Legal Adviser, Chief Richard Akinjide, representing the President-elect, Alhaji Shehu Shagari, who was not even present at the hearings, argued that the documents were privileged and that the "public disclosure of documents written in confidence" was against the national interest. The Tribunal sustained the objection. Its Chairman, Mr. Justice B. O. Kazeem, turned down Chief Awolowo's request on the grounds, he said, that "the contents of the documents would be injurious to public interest if produced."<sup>81</sup> Not everyone shared the argument about the privileged nature of the documents. As the London-based *West Africa* put it, "This is a difficult argument for the layman to accept. One would think that the public interest demanded the fullest possible disclosure of all information on this issue. The publication of such confidential documents," the paper further stated, "might be embarrassing to the officials involved, but it is difficult to see how the public interest would be damaged."<sup>82</sup> The case continued, its major bone of contention being the interpretation of Section 34A (c) (1) (ii) of the 1977 Election Decree. While Chief Awolowo argued that the state cannot be fractionalized, and hence the phrase "2/3 of 19" must be taken to mean 13 states, counsel for Alhaji Shehu Shagari argued that the phrase "2/3 of 19" must be taken in its ordinary sense, which is 12 2/3. The Tribunal on September 10, 1979, ruled unanimously that

"Considering the words used in the subsection again, we are satisfied that they are plain and unambiguous. Fortunately the Petitioner and both counsel for the Respondent agree with this view. Hence to apply them as provided by the legislature will not, in our view, create any absurdity. However, we cannot find any gap which has been created in the subsection, which if left unfilled will work injustice on any person affected by the sub-

section. On the contrary, we are satisfied that to read more into the subsection is to ask the 1<sup>st</sup> Respondent [Alhaji Shehu Shagari] to bear more burden in order to be elected than what the legislature expressly require him to bear. In our view that will result in an injustice to him."

The Tribunal interpreted the phrase "two-thirds of all the States in the Federation" to mean "12 2/3 States". Continuing, the Tribunal said that "As the dominant requirement in the election was the number of votes cast in each of the 19 states, 'two-thirds State' would be synonymous with two-thirds of the total votes cast in that state and not the physical or territorial area of such state. It is not disputed," the ruling further said, "that the 1<sup>st</sup> Respondent, Alhaji Shehu Shagari, scored 25 % of the total votes cast in twelve States." The Tribunal further said that in order for Alhaji Shehu Shagari to succeed, "he must also score in addition 25 % of the total votes cast in the remaining two-thirds State", which in this case is Kano State. Continuing in its ruling, the Tribunal said:

"The question therefore is: what then is the total votes in two-thirds of Kano State? The obvious answer is 813,842. A quarter or 25 % of those votes will then be 203,460.5 votes. According to Exhibit T2, the total votes scored by the 1<sup>st</sup> Respondent is 243,423, which is obviously more than one-quarter of the votes cast in two-thirds of Kano State. In the circumstances, we are satisfied that the 1<sup>st</sup> Respondent [Alhaji Shehu Shagari] has satisfied the provisions of section 34A (1) (c) (i) and (ii) of the Decree; and we therefore hold that he was duly returned by the 3<sup>rd</sup> Respondent [the Returning Officer, Mr. F. Menkiti] as duly elected President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria."

FEDECO Chairman, Chief Michael A. Ani, in a subsequent publication titled "The True Facts", published under the 'Friday Essay' column of the Lagos *Daily Times* some three months after the change of government, revealed that "the great fuss" made about his letter to his Electoral Commissioner colleagues in the

States, Ref. No. EC/AZ/7/VIII of May 14, 1979, referred to a statement in the second paragraph of that letter.<sup>83</sup> In it, Chief Ani said that "the existing five political parties were registered upon evidence that each was then maintaining an office in, at least, 13 states of the Federation."<sup>84</sup> He then went on in his essay to explain what he meant by the content of that paragraph of his letter under reference. The FEDECO Chairman said that "the law required that an association seeking to be registered as a political party must satisfy the Commission that it had properly established branch offices in each of at least two-thirds of the (19) States in the Federation."<sup>85</sup> Accepting that 2/3 of 19 is 12 2/3, Chief Ani continued, "no one in his right sense can fail to ascertain what happens in the 13<sup>th</sup> State."<sup>86</sup> It was upon this consideration, the FEDECO Chairman further said, that the Electoral Commission accepted for registration as a political party one of the five associations which had "properly established" offices in 12 states but a "partially suitable" office in the 13<sup>th</sup> state. Chief Ani concluded that the Commission "believed that it would be unjust to reject that association just because its establishment in the 13<sup>th</sup> state was not up to the standard of any of those in the other 12 states."<sup>87</sup>

It was this logic of FEDECO in registering one of the 5 political associations as an acceptable political party under the Electoral Decree, because the association met FEDECO's requirements in 13 of the 19 states, which some of the critics were citing as the basis for their claim that FEDECO's declaration of Alhaji Shehu Shagari as elected was illegal. Thus, for example, observers and UPN supporters inferred from Chief Ani's statement that the Federal Electoral Commission itself all along had been operating on the understanding that "2/3 of each of the 19 states" of the Federation is 13; and that FEDECO could not later legally change the rules, in the middle of the game as it were, and give the phrase "2/3 of 19" a new and different interpretation on the basis of which it declared Alhaji Shehu Shagari duly elected. On the other hand, it would seem that FEDECO's earlier concern was what it regarded as satisfactory criteria in the registration of the political associa-

tions. The guideline it was given in that exercise was that it should be satisfied that "properly established" branch offices existed in at least 2/3 of the 19 states. The phrase "properly established" is *not quantifiable*, and hence it is unlike the number of votes cast at elections to determine a victor. FEDECO's logic would seem to be that the criteria used to register the political parties could not and should not be equated with the definitely quantifiable criteria used to determine whether/or not a presidential candidate was properly elected, and hence the FEDECO Chairman could say that his statement was being "held religiously" to mean another assertion.<sup>88</sup> Thus, while "properly established" is subjective and conjectural, the number of votes cast is concrete and exact no matter who the observer is, whether dispassionate or passionate.

Chief Michael Ani said that he himself had considered this matter of the meaning of "2/3 of 19" on several occasions – even *before* the commencement of the presidential elections – and each time he thought of the decision the Commission took to register the fifth association as a political party. Indeed, Chief Ani said that he also approached the Ministry of Justice on Friday, August 10, 1979, – again, *before* the presidential election – for the legal interpretation of the phrase "2/3 of each of the 19 states". He said that although it was suggested during the discussion that the word EACH could be a reason for aggregating 2/3 of 19 to 13, "the firm advice was that since the law-makers for whatever reason, failed to give a clear directive on the issue, the clause should be given its ordinary meaning."<sup>89</sup> It was the ordinary meaning which FEDECO therefore used to declare Alhaji Shagari the elected presidential candidate, a decision which only one of the four losers, UPN presidential candidate Chief Obafemi Awolowo, appealed to the Presidential Election Tribunal for redress. The hearing continued, and ended in favour of Alhaji Shehu Shagari. In its *unanimous* ruling, the Tribunal stated that Alhaji Shehu Shagari's election was legal. Observers believed that what was particularly significant about the ruling was not so much that it was in favour of Alhaji Shehu Shagari, or, that Chief Obafemi

Awolowo lost his petition, but that the decision was unanimous. *West Africa* boldly stated that the Tribunal's ruling "obviously deserves respect."<sup>90</sup> The UPN leader, Chief Obafemi Awolowo, did not share the opinion. He decided to use his right of appeal to the Supreme Court to reverse the decision of the Tribunal.

What some observers thought of during the interim period before the Supreme Court decision was not so much what the Court's ruling would be, but the legal basis that would determine the ruling; and, equally interesting would be the basis of a dissenting opinion, if any. Counsel for Chief Awolowo, Mr. G. O. K. Ajayi (S. A. N.), who was supported by 24 lawyers, submitted that a state, as used in the Electoral Decree 1977, is a territorial unit and as such has an artificial corporate personality like other persons. A State, he continued, is indivisible; he, however, conceded that one could fractionalize a state for certain purposes, such as the physical territorial area or "into the number of local government areas therein." Mr. Ajayi, counsel for the appellant, further submitted that a State cannot be fractionalized for the purpose of ascertaining the result of an election by counting the votes, as provided for, under the Electoral Decree 1977; and, that the word "each" as used in section 34A (1) (c) (ii) must therefore mean a whole state — and not a fraction thereof.

The intension of section 34A (1) (c) (i) and (ii) of the Electoral Decree, Chief Awolowo's legal counsel further submitted, was that a person to be elected President must not only win a majority of the votes cast, but he must also win a percentage of votes from a geographical spread. Continuing, Mr. Ajayi argued that there are more than one possible two-thirds area in Kano State and that it was for FEDECO to have delimited for the purpose of the election, two-thirds area in Kano State; as matters stood, there was no means by which one could delimit two-thirds area of Kano State. What should FEDECO have done in a case of such impossibility? Counsel for Chief Awolowo replied that FEDECO should have used the figure "13" in computing  $\frac{2}{3}$  of all the 19 states in the Federation. He further argued that "the total votes cast in two-

thirds of Kano State” had no relation with what was actually provided for in section 34A of the Electoral Decree because, he said, the figure had not been ascertained as representing the votes cast in a particular  $2/3$  area of Kano State as there was no evidence of any delimitation of two-thirds area of Kano State. Because of the impossibility of determining a particular  $2/3$  area of Kano State, counsel for the UPN presidential candidate submitted, a reasonable interpretation should be sought and hence the reasonable interpretation the returning officer should have used, according to Chief Awolowo’s counsel, was that “two-thirds of all the States in the Federation” was 13 states. The main thrust of the submission of Mr. Ajayi, counsel for Chief Awolowo, was that the interpretation to be placed on Section 34A (1) (c) (ii) of the Electoral Decree was 13.<sup>91</sup>

Alhaji Shehu Shagari who was not present at the hearings, submitted through his legal representatives, Chief Richard O. A. Akinjide (S. A. N.) and Dr. Mudiaga Odje (S. A. N.) – supported by 8 lawyers – that the real issue at stake was the correct interpretation of section 34A (1) (c) (ii) of the Electoral Decree. Chief Akinjide further pointed out that the appellant agreed that the ordinary interpretation was that of the ordinary meaning of the words used in that particular section of the Decree and that there was no ambiguity in the subsection. Counsel for the President-elect further submitted that:

- (a) the dominant word in that subsection is the word “votes”;
- (b) the subsection prescribed the exact criteria and precise qualification for the election of a candidate as President in a presidential election;
- (c) the subsection introduces percentages and fractions.

Counsel then clarified what the words and phrases in the subsection, in his opinion, meant. Thus, for example, he argued that the phrase “in each of” qualified the quotient obtained when the figure “19” is divided by two-thirds; the phrase, he said, did not

qualify the word "states". It was also his submission that the law-makers (that is, the Federal Military Government which promulgated the Electoral Decree 1977) used the fraction "two-thirds" because they intended the ratio to be constant, whether or not more states are created in the future; the law-makers of the States (Creation and Transitional) Decree 1976 No. 12, he further said, were the same law-makers of the Electoral Decree 1977, and therefore knew that when they were providing for "two-thirds of all the States" they were providing for "two-thirds of 19 States". Continuing, Chief Akinjide submitted that if the Federal Military Government had wanted a round figure to be used in the interpretation of the phrase "two-thirds of all the States", that is, "2/3 of the 19 States", they would have said so in clear and unmistakable terms. He compared the provision of the Electoral Decree to the content of the Companies Decree 1968, No. 51 to which he referred the court. That Decree provided at paragraph 39 that:

"At the first annual general meeting of the Company, all the Directors shall retire from office, and at the annual general meeting in every subsequent year one-third of the Directors for the time being, or, if their number is not three or multiple of three, then the number nearest one-third, shall retire from office."

Chief Akinjide also cited the case of *Magor and St. Mellows Rural District Council v Newport Corporation* (1952) to support his submission that "2/3 of 19" must be given its *ordinary* meaning and that the Court should not imagine what the legislator (that is, the Federal Military Government) in establishing the decree had in mind, that is, by approximating "2/3 of 19" to 13. The only answer, he said, is 12 2/3.<sup>92</sup>

The Supreme Court on Wednesday, September 27, 1979, gave its ruling. 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. The six Justices of the Supreme Court who upheld the decision were Messrs Justices

Atanda Fatai-Williams, Ayo Gabriel Irikefe, Mohammed Bello, Chukwunweike Idigbe, Andrews Otutu Obaseki, and Muhammadu Lawal Uwais. Reading the judgement, the Chief Justice of Nigeria, Mr. Justice Atanda Fatai-Williams, stated that there was "indisputable evidence" that

1. Alhaji Shehu Shagari scored more votes throughout the country than each of the other four candidates.
2. He scored 772,206 votes more than those scored by the petitioner/appellant, Chief Obafemi Awolowo; (Alhaji Shagari scored 5,688,857 votes, while Chief Awolowo scored 4,916,651 votes).
3. The country-wide votes referred to in (1) above are more geographically spread than those of any of the other four candidates.
4. Alhaji Shagari scored at least 25 % of the votes cast in each of 12 2/3 states out of the 19 states.
5. Even in the disputed issue of Kano State, Alhaji Shehu Shagari scored 19.94 % of the total votes cast in that State, while Chief Obafemi Awolowo scored only 1.23 % of the votes.
6. The percentage of 19.94 % of the votes scored by Alhaji Shehu Shagari in respect of the votes cast in the whole of Kano State falls short of 25 % by only 5.06 %.

The Court ruled that "it is fallacious to talk of fractionalization of the physical land area of a state when the operative words of Section 34A (1) (c) (ii) [of the Electoral Decree] relate undoubtedly to the votes cast in the state at the election."<sup>93</sup> Continuing, the Supreme Court judgement stated that "Not only is the meaning of the general words now in section 34A plain enough, there is also no reason for doubting the intension of the Federal Government." Quoting Lord Evershed, M. B., that "the length and detail of modern legislation has undoubtedly re-inforced the claim of literal construction as the only safe rule," the Court said that "the Federal Military Government must be deemed to know that 2/3

of 19 is  $12 \frac{2}{3}$ . If the number 13 which is the nearest to  $\frac{2}{3}$  of a state had been intended the Federal Government would have said so in clear terms". The Court cited the case of *Magor and St. Mellons Rural District Council v Newport Corporation* (1952) A. C. (H. L.) 189 at p. 191 in which Lord Simonds stated that "the duty of the court is to interpret the words the legislature has used; these words may be ambiguous, but, even if they are, the power and duty of the court to travel outside them on a voyage of discovery are strictly limited." The Supreme Court therefore held that FE-DECO's interpretation of " $\frac{2}{3}$  of 19" was correct and hence the judgement concluded that the election of Alhaji Shehu Shagari was conducted in accordance with section 34A (1) (c) (ii) of the 1977 Electoral Decree.

The Court went further to state that "even if we had found that there had been non-compliance with the said provisions, we would have invoked the provisions of section III subsection (1) of the Decree and held that the election, which in the present context means the election to the office of the President, was conducted *substantially* in accordance with the provisions of section 34A (1) (c) (ii) which is within Part II of the Decree. Section III subsection (1) reads: 'An election shall not be invalidated by reason of non-compliance with Part II of the Decree if it appears to the Tribunal having recognisance of the question that the election was conducted substantially in accordance with the provisions of the said Part II and that the non-compliance did not affect the result of the election'."<sup>4</sup> On the question of a mathematical submission made by Professor Ayodele Awojobi of the University of Lagos in his support of Chief Obafemi Awolowo, the Court observed that until election returning can be computerized in this country, the "mathematic canon of interpretation" put forward by Professor Awojobi at the Tribunal will remain impractical and legally unacceptable.

The one judge who disagreed with his six other colleagues of the Supreme Court was Mr. Justice Kayode Eso who, in his dissenting opinion, observed that counsels for the Appellant and for the Res-

pondent agreed that the important issue was the interpretation to be placed on section 34A(1) (c) (ii) of the Electoral Decree; further, that both parties agreed that the ordinary meaning of the words used in the subsection should be applied. Mr. Justice Eso further observed that there were some facts which were definitely not in dispute in the case, namely,

- (1) "That by the States (Creation and Transitional Provisions) Decree 1976 No. 12, Nigeria was divided into 19 States.
- (2) That the same legislator, that is, the Federal Military Government, which enacted Decree No. 12 of 1976 also enacted the Electoral Decree under reference.
- (3) That at the Presidential election, subject matter of this appeal, the 1<sup>st</sup> Respondent, apart from scoring the highest number of votes had not less than 25% in twelve States.
- (4) That in the 13<sup>th</sup> State, that is Kano State the 1<sup>st</sup> Respondent scored 19.94% of the total of all the votes cast for all the five Presidential candidates in that State."<sup>95</sup>

Having said these, Mr. Justice Eso then turned to the content of section 34A (1) (c) (ii) of the Decree, namely, that in a situation where there are more than two candidates, a person is deemed duly elected President if, in addition to scoring the highest number of votes, such a candidate 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." Continuing, Mr. Justice Eso said that "The question is: What are 'two-thirds of all the States in the Federation' in the context of the Decree? There is no problem about the first twelve States. The real issue of the appeal," he further said, "is surrounded with the 13<sup>th</sup> State, that is, in this case, Kano State. For the purpose of interpreting section 34A (1) (c) (ii) of the Electoral Decree, the questions to be answered must be –

- (i) Under the Decree, should two-thirds of Kano State mean two-thirds of the physical or territorial area of Kano State?

- (ii) Should two-thirds of Kano State be as the Tribunal has held (and as has been so ably defended by Chief Akinjide) 'synonymous with two-thirds of the total votes cast in that State and not the physical or territorial area of the State'? or
- (iii) Should the 1/3<sup>th</sup> State be the whole of Kano State – territorial and physical as Mr. Ajayi has contended?"

These points, Mr. Justice Eso said, were the real issues to be resolved in the appeal. He stated that the interpretation of statutes should be according to the intent of those who made them. He endorsed the Tribunal's contention that if a situation in which there is a controversy about seeking an interpretation according to the intent of the legislator arises, "the Court should do nothing more than to give effect to the intention of Parliament as expressed in the plain and unambiguous words of the Statute." Further, citing the case of *Animashaun v Osuma & Ors.*, 1972, *AUN. L. R.* 363, at pp. 372 – 373, a case also relied upon by the Tribunal, Mr. Justice Eso also reminded the Court of what it said in that ruling, namely:

"It is one of the established canons of construction that no gloss should be put on any of the words used. The function of the Court is to ascertain *what the parties meant by the words which they have used* . . . In ascertaining what the parties meant, the court must declare the meaning of what is written in the instrument, *not what was intended to have been written.*"

What the legislator of the decree, (that is, the Federal Military Government which promulgated the Decree), implied, in the dissenting opinion of Mr. Justice Kayode Eso, was that the electoral requirement of 2/3 of a State, and hence the 1/3<sup>th</sup> State – in this case Kano State – should be interpreted to mean the whole of Kano State, territorial and physical, because a State is indivisible. "With greatest regret,"<sup>96</sup> he said, he found himself unable to accept the majority judgement. He questioned that "why, for instance, should one measure the 1/3<sup>th</sup> state by votes and not by ph-

ysical territory as it has been done with the first 12 states?"<sup>97</sup> In Mr. Justice Eso's opinion, all interpretations of the word *State* must be the same throughout, "otherwise, it cannot be just."<sup>98</sup> To the layman and political observer, it seemed that both the majority ruling as contained in the statement read by the Chief Justice as well as the dissenting opinion of Mr. Justice Eso were based on one and the same issue: the number of votes cast, not the physical land mass of a state, whether in the first 12 states or in the 13<sup>th</sup> state. If that was the case, then, why the dissenting opinion? This is the question the non-legal mind wanted answered.

Whatever the answer to that question it was certain that the Supreme Court decision was final. Chief Obafemi Awolowo had been defeated three times in a row on the same issue.

Alhaji Shehu Shagari, born in April 1925, of Fulani parentage, in the village of Shagari in Sokoto State, emerged as the victor in the new system of government under an executive president. The end of 13 years of Military Rule was now in sight, the election being the last major exercise in the transition to civilian rule as mapped out by the late General Murtala Muhammed. That the Military Government of General Obasanjo honoured and respected the pledge of his predecessor, the assassinated Gen. Murtala Muhammed who had mapped out the concrete programme providing the bases for political stability and a return of the country to civilian rule in October 1979, was indeed commendable. Dispassionate observers all over the country showered genuine praise on the Military for the orderly supervision of the transition period: in providing for a careful consideration of the Draft Constitution, in overseeing the registration of voters, and, the supervision of the elections as well as the eventual peaceful handing-over ceremony itself; so also did other people inside and outside Nigeria, all over the world, praise the Military. But it seemed that not all people shared that opinion. These were in particular Chief Obafemi Awolowo and his UPN adherents who refused to accept that they had been beaten in a fair election.

The resentment was blatant, degenerating to the level where

many Nigerians began to wonder if the UPN was not making a mockery of itself. Thus, for example, the State Governments of the five UPN states — Lagos State, Bendel, Ogun, Oyo and Ondo — did not display in public offices the official photograph of the President. It is an accepted national and international practice that official presidential photographs — and even those of State Governors — are some of the national and state symbols which symbolize constituted authority and promote national unity and political integration. Other national symbols include the constitution, national flags, anthems and, even, dress. Dispassionate observers believed that the refusal by the UPN states to display the photograph of the President amounted to flouting, with impunity, one of the simple elements which represent constituted authority and symbolize national unity; and hence they wondered how UPN supporters expected Nigerian nationalists to sympathize with their party.

As indeed one UPN supporter said, "how would the UPN feel if the tables had been reversed, with Chief Awolowo as President and the non-UPN States refused to display his official photograph? Or, even take the present situation", he continued, "if non-UPN areas of UPN States should refuse to display the official photograph of the UPN State Governor in such a state — such as in the Delta Area of Bendel State whose Urhobo and Ijaw peoples supported and voted for the NPN?"

Indeed, the Bendel State Governor, Professor Ambrose Alli, carried the UPN grudges to a ridiculous extent when he chose the occasion of the visit of President Shehu Shagari to Bendel State, *en route* to the Ajaokuta Steel Project in Kwara State and the Aladja Steel Complex at Aladja, Bendel State, to impose a 7-day ban on February 16, 1980, on political gatherings and processions which he anticipated would greet and welcome the President to Bendel State. Governor Alli claimed that the visit of the President was likely to cause riot and unrest, and that was why he banned public political processions and any display of jubilation, cultural shows and traditional dances in honour of President Shagari du-

ring the period the President would be in the State. He ordered the Police to barricade the Benin Airport, where and at the time the President would arrive in Bendel State; he forgot or ignored advice that the Police is neither under his jurisdiction nor is it a State matter but an item on the Federal Exclusive Legislative list. The Federal Minister of Police Affairs, Professor Emmanuel Osamnor, immediately on the arrival with the President in Benin City, ordered the Police to open the Airport to the teeming several thousands who had defied the orders of the Governor and had come to welcome their President to their State. As *The Punch* and the *Daily Times* reported in their front pages, thousands defied UPN Governor Professor Ambrose Alli's ban on public procession and assembly, and swarmed to the Benin Airport to welcome President Shehu Shagari.<sup>99</sup> Even *The Nigerian Observer*, which the former Military Governor of Mid-West State, former Brigadier Samuel Ogbemudia, built into a nationally respected paper but which the UPN Bendel State Government has now turned into its mouth-piece, in bold front page headline reported that Bendelites accorded what the paper described as "a tumultuous welcome to President Shehu Shagari on his arrival at the Benin Airport."<sup>100</sup> It might have added, "despite the ban order."

Seeing the huge crowd barricaded from entering the airport, President Shagari instructed: "Call my people. I am their President, let them see me."<sup>101</sup> Later, the Presidential Adviser on Political Affairs, Dr. Chuba Okadigbo, described Governor Alli's ban order as "a violation of protocol and a disgrace."<sup>102</sup> He described Professor Alli's ban order on processions, rallies and public meetings in Bendel State as "a sign of irresponsibility and an insult to the people of this country."<sup>103</sup> Continuing, the Presidential Political Adviser said that the action of the Bendel State UPN Governor was a disgrace, not only to the people of the State but also to the Oba of Benin and his people because it was the first official visit of President Shagari to Bendel State,<sup>104</sup> during which the President was to confer a National Honour Award on the Oba. Dr. Okadigbo declared that "it is a pity that someone who is in

charge of a state should be unkind to his people."<sup>105</sup>

As if the Airport episode were not enough, Governor Ambrose Alli chose the occasion of a Cocktail Party he gave in honour of the President to accuse Alhaji Shehu Shagari of "not playing by the rules of the game." The UPN Bendel State Governor said that he was highly embarrassed by the action of the President at the Airport.<sup>106</sup> Professor Alli said that he respected Alhaji Shehu Shagari as Head of State and that he did not expect the President to ask the people to undermine his authority.<sup>107</sup> Continuing, Governor Alli said that he had consulted the President before he issued his order banning public processions. As Governor of Bendel State, Professor Alli claimed, he was responsible for law and order in his state. But from what had happened, he further said, it would appear that "both the Police and Armed Forces are merely forces of occupation in the State."<sup>108</sup> He described the situation as unfortunate.

Replying, President Shagari said that he was surprised that Governor Alli could raise the matter in public, at a Coctail Party which, ironically, the Governor was giving in honour of the President. "I expect the Governor to discuss such matter with me privately," President Shagari said.<sup>109</sup> He told Governor Alli what the *New Nigerian* in its bold front-page headline called "SOME HOME TRUTHS", when he reminded the Governor that he, Alhaji Shagari, "is not the President of the NPN, but the President of the entire nation."<sup>110</sup> "I have come here [to Bendel State] in my official capacity," President Shagari said, "to do my duty."<sup>111</sup> Continuing, President Alhaji Shehu Shagari stressed the need for Heads of Governments to distinguish between the responsibilities to their states and the nation in their capacities as Heads of Governments and their affiliation to their respective political parties. "After winning elections," the President further said, "we should engage seriously in government, and politicking should be left to party men."<sup>112</sup> He advised Governor Alli to lay aside politics on the occasion of his visit to Bendel State where he had gone to inspect the Aladja Steel Complex, at Aladja, in Ethiop Local Go-

vernment Area, on which the nation invested a huge sum of money for the industrialization and the economic growth of the nation. "Your Excellency", the President called on Governor Alli, "please, not now. Now we are Heads of Government, executives, and we should face our duties. Let political parties accuse one another, but let us join hands and work together and carry out our programmes",<sup>113</sup> Alhaji Shagari added.

Before his departure from the Benin Airport, President Shagari again advised State Governors not to allow themselves to be led by the nose, and to resist any form of pressure from their respective political parties.<sup>114</sup> He declared that when Governors as the executive Heads of their States mix politics with administration they are bound to have problems.<sup>115</sup>

In its front-page editorial which it called "Governor Alli's Stupidity," the *New Nigerian* said that

"The ostensible reason for banning public receptions in Bendel State coinciding with the visit of the President, was to nip in the bud any bid to public peace that the presence of the august guest may provoke. But the President is the Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces. He is therefore the epitome of security. If the Bendel State Governor, Professor Ambrose Alli, had any prior knowledge of a plan to disrupt the visit, he was free to pass this information to the Inspector-General of Police before the arrival of the President. But to pre-empt the Head of State's visit in such a way was, to say the least, an act of bad faith.

When this is viewed against the meeting of the nine governors [5 UPN, 2 PRP and 2 GNPP] in the Bendel State capital recently, Professor Alli's order becomes even more suspicious. It is carrying the hostility of the UPN too far. It is like Professor Alli was looking for confrontation where there is none. It is a serious pity that a man of Governor Alli's calibre can be used in this irresponsible way to settle a political score.

What has Governor Alli gained by the defiance to his ban? He stands ridiculed. His mentors may however jubilate that either way the Governor stood to gain. Let the experience of Benin be a lesson to all the states in the 'Benin accord' and outside.

Governor Alli's move is without precedent. Such ban would not have been possible during the Military [Administration]. But then the order makes nonsense of democracy. It is a perverted interpretation of the Governor's responsibility on security matters and control over the state. Governors are advised in the interest of cordiality and peace to desist from acts that will put them on a collision course with the Federal Government."<sup>116</sup>

Similarly in its editorial, *The Nigerian Herald* accused Governor Professor Ambrose Alli of attempting to deceive the public by his ban of public processions and receptions in Bendel State during the visit of the Nigerian President.<sup>117</sup> It further accused the Governor of contradiction since the Bendel State Government would itself later give the President a public reception. The paper, like the rest of the Nigerian public, wondered why the UPN Governor "did not nuture the same fear when Chief Awolowo", whom the paper called the "UPN god", was in Bendel state a few weeks earlier, "supposedly celebrating 25 years of free primary education."<sup>118</sup> "Professor Alli's ban on public procession on the eve of President Shagari's visit to Bendel," the *Nigerian Herald* further editorialized, "is stretching to a ridiculous end [the UPN's] intolerance of a differing political opinion."<sup>119</sup> Concluding its editorial, the paper appealed to Governor Alli "to make amends; it is the only way out of any crisis that the Governor purported to be preventing."<sup>120</sup>

In its own editorial, the *Nigerian Observer* naturally supported the stand of the UPN Governor, Professor Ambrose Alli. Among other issues, the paper accused the *New Nigerian* and the *Nigerian Herald* of editorialising on what the *Nigerian Observer* editorial called "seemingly trivial issue between two executives."<sup>121</sup> It did not seem to matter that the *Nigerian Observer* also carried an editorial on the same issue; so also did its sister UPN paper, the *Nigerian Tribune*.<sup>122</sup> carry an editorial on this "seemingly trivial issue between two executives." *The Nigerian Standard*,<sup>123</sup> published in Jos, Plateau State, also carried an edi-

"GOVERNOR ALLI BANS PUBLIC RALLIES AS SHAGARI GOES TO BENDEL"

— NEWS REPORT



"MR. PROFESSOR, LEARN TO USE YOUR EARS MORE AND YOUR MOUTH LESS.  
BY THE GRACE OF ALLAH, I'M YOUR BOSS"

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torial on this same "seemingly trivial issue", as also did *The Nigerian Chronicle*<sup>124</sup> and *The Nigerian Tide*<sup>125</sup> in their front page comments. Was the issue really "trivial"!

In a torrent of unabashed usage of language, the *Nigerian Observer* further accused the *New Nigerian* and the *Nigerian Herald* of what it called "a crude and self-submergence" of Nigerian journalism "into an abysmal depth of wrecklessness, irresponsibility, and criminal parochialism."<sup>126</sup> Going to the specific issue of confrontation, the clash of authority between Federal and State rights, the *Nigerian Observer* editorial stated that "In a federal democratic political system, there are those structurally defined executive responsibilities between the federal [centre] and the states. To maintain balance, harmony and co-existence, it is of paramount necessity that there should be frequent connection between the two units. While it is a cardinal feature that each tier should work within its constitutional bonds,"<sup>127</sup> the *Nigerian Observer* editorial continued, "there should be no attempt whatsoever by one to undermine the authority of the other. In contravening this basic constitutional principle, a situation of lawlessness and fluid conceptualisation of the entire political structure might be generated."<sup>128</sup> While the reading public hailed this observation in the *Nigerian Observer's* editorial, the same public also wondered why the paper was not honest enough in saying that the initial deployment of the Police to ensure that the Bendel public was barred from the airport was a usurpation of Federal authority. But that in itself is neither here nor there. The inevitable happened and the UPN Governor, Professor Ambrose Alli, lost in the confrontation between Federal authority and the proclamation of a State Governor.

In its own editorial, the *Nigerian Standard*<sup>129</sup> said, "Let us not mince words, [Governor Alli's] obnoxious action is, to say the least, a show of disregard for the Constitution and disrespect for the President of the country. In the first place," the paper continued, "public order and security are the responsibility of the Police. The Police Force is federally-controlled. In the circumstan-

ces, the governor is acting outside his powers and also in a manner that will suggest he does not mean well for the nation. He was anticipating chaos and breakdown of order so much so that it was almost easy to suggest that he was preparing the ground for them."<sup>130</sup> The editorial further said that Governor Alli should have realized that he was "acting *ultra vires*", and that it was unfortunate he had to face what the paper called "the disgrace of having his order reversed by the Minister of Police Affairs, Professor Osamor."<sup>131</sup> The constitutional legality of the action aside, the *Nigerian Standard* also said that the Governor "ought to have weighed its political implications and its effects on the legitimacy of his own leadership."<sup>132</sup> Continuing, the paper said that

"We do not want to think that [Governor] Alli's action is part of the UPN campaign of passive (now becoming active) resistance to federal authority. Certain things need to go down the brains of Alli and other UPN governors.

President Shagari was elected as President of the whole of Nigeria. It is also supposed to be platitudinal to say that every state in the country is a component of the one whole called Nigeria which President Shagari is leader of.

No reasonably sensible Nigerian will be convinced by the governor's purported desire to ensure the President's safety. Professor Alli's action smacks of political immaturity if not irresponsibility. No state governor can behave as if his state is an island. Professor Alli's apparently insurrectionary overtures must be condemned by all well-meaning citizens.

The people of Bendel State, irrespective of their political leanings, have a right to welcome their President and their Governor should uphold and not deny them that right."<sup>133</sup>

*The Nigerian Chronicle* in its front page editorial, which it titled "PETULANT NARCISSISM", wrote that "Ever since Professor Ambrose Alli got the mantle of the people of Bendel State as the Chief Executive, he has persistently behaved in a manner that is bound to be embarrassing to his people's good sense of pro-

portion and propriety."<sup>134</sup> The paper then catalogued earlier political improprieties of the Bendel State UPN Governor, which included the embarrassingly conspicuous absence of the official portrait of the President in public establishments in Bendel, as well as in other UPN states. On the issue of the ban on political rallies and public receptions during the visit of the President to Bendel State, *The Nigerian Chronicle* editorial stated that the ban order did not "reflect the true position in the State."<sup>135</sup> and Professor Alli "cannot claim, by that action, to have carried along with him the true feelings of the well-meaning people of Bendel State."<sup>136</sup> Continuing, the paper said that "the appeal by the Oba of Benin, Omo N'Oba Erediauwa, to the people of the State to come forward to grace the reception he had arranged in his palace for the President may properly be regarded as a reflection of the true feelings of the people of Bendel State. This is true," the editorial stated, "because the Oba is the traditional custodian of the wishes and aspirations of his peoples."<sup>137</sup> *The Nigerian Chronicle* believed that "the maintenance of peace and order in any state is not a matter of mere opinion of a governor but the direct responsibility of the law enforcement agencies, notably the Police and the Armed Forces whose constitutional Commander-in-Chief," the paper further said, "the President happens to be."<sup>138</sup> Continuing, the editorial stated that

"In any case, we cannot see how President Shagari's visit to any part of the country can provoke any disorder when, in fact, during the election campaigns, law and order did not break down anywhere inspite of the fierce clash of partisan political interests.

We would want to know how Professor Alli came to the conclusion that President Shagari's visit could provoke public disorders when, in fact, the recent visit to the State of Chief Obafemi Awolowo, his party's national leader, controversial as it was, did not.

*The [Nigerian] Chronicle* holds the opinion that Governor Ambrose Alli's action and calculated effort to ruin the President's visit was in bad faith and has left a sour taste in the mouth . . .

The ban hurriedly placed on public assemblies in the State by the governor when, in fact, there was no cause for it, was a rape on the people's constitutional rights of freedom of movement and peaceful assembly. In sum, we hold the view that by his uncontrolled utterances and actions, Governor Alli is behaving out of character with his age and educational background. At that level, nobody would expect him to be a conduit pipe through which power and directives flow by remote control.

His verbal war was uncalled for . . . *The [Nigerian] Chronicle* is happy that in the verbal war which raged on at the State Cocktail party in Benin City, President Shagari had taught Governor Alli how to be a statesman rather than a politician. Professor Alli needed that message. He should see himself as Governor of all Bendelites and not that of UPN, and therefore rise above party partisanship . . .

A stop must be put to this kind of petulant narcissism forthwith.<sup>139</sup>

Similarly in its front page editorial title, "BEYOND BOUNDS", the *Nigerian Tide* chastised the impolitic behaviour of Governor Alli whom the paper reminded that "The responsibility of the high office of Governor demands excellence in everything, including courtesy and self-control."<sup>140</sup> The paper referred to what it called "execrable" irresponsibility because, in its opinion, "the Governor flouted all rules of decency, civility and dignity"<sup>141</sup> in his confrontation with the President. Continuing, the *Tide* editorial said that "Governor Alli belongs to a political party that has studied contempt for the Present, primarily, we believe, on grounds of politics. But Alhaji Shehu Shagari was not in the Bendel State capital as the leader of the National Party of Nigeria (NPN) but as the President of Nigeria. He is the First Citizen of this Republic and he is perfectly entitled to be so treated by all Nigerians, in spite of political and other differences."<sup>142</sup>

Nigerian newspaper editorials, in chastising Professor Alli, wrote that the UPN Governor went to a ludicrous extent when he defied all rules of protocol, etiquette and courtesy during a Cock-

tail Party he gave in honour of the President at which he publicly confronted President Shagari. The President, of course, was magnanimous when he demonstrated an amazing degree of restraint, tolerance and leadership and in the process belittled Governor Alli by not condescending to the level of confrontation with the UPN Governor. What was particularly embarrassing to Bendelites was that their State had always demonstrated those qualities that foster the nation's unity and political integration as well as respect for constituted authority. There is no reason to believe that Bendelites as a people would do otherwise. Thus, the whole experience, in the final analysis, demonstrated the political inexpedience – and inexperience – of the UPN Governor who ended up politically condemned, while the rest of Bendel and the nation will continue to build on those issues which unite them as a people so that Nigerians can have a politically stable nation that will cater for the needs and aspirations of its peoples. Subsequent visits by President Shagari to other States and the rousing receptions he was given in those states (they too non-NPN states like Bendel) have again and again re-emphasized Governor Alli's political blunder.

The Alli political gaffe so tarnished the national image of the UPN that, according to the investigative reporting by "Grape Vine" of the *Daily Times*, there was the move even among the UPN members of the Bendel State House of Assembly to impeach Governor Ambrose Alli.<sup>143</sup> "Grape Vine" reported that Bendelites were particularly incensed by the "Alli Shuttle" out of Bendel State "so often to consult people who are not even Bendelites."<sup>144</sup> The Governor's incessant out-of-state shuttles to seek advice from his mentors on what next he should do meant that Bendel State was being ruled from outside the State, which the paper said Bendelites regarded as "an insult to their tested abilities."<sup>145</sup> Besides, Bendelites wondered why their state, and not any of the four hard-core UPN Yoruba states, was being used to launch attacks against President Shagari and the Federal Government.

Despite what was generally regarded as Governor Alli's gross

political irresponsibility and disrespect to the President, the UPN leader stated that Governor Ambrose Alli was too gentle to the President. To a question at a Press Conference of what he thought about the attitude of Professor Alli to President Shagari during the latter's visit to Bendel State, Chief Awolowo said that "In fact, Alli was too gentle for my liking. Shagari should have deserved more,"<sup>146</sup> the defeated UPN presidential candidate added. Nigerians were not amused.

The UPN further lost its national status when the Ogun State branch of the party publicly made it illegal for anybody to wear what it called "Shagari Cap" in Ogun State! The Deputy Chairman of the State Branch of the UPN and himself Deputy Governor of Ogun State, Chief Olusesan Soluade, while speaking at the opening ceremony of the second conference of the party's branch held at the Centenary Hall in Abeokuta, said that "after today [Monday, February 28, 1980, there would be] no more wearing of that cap called 'Shagari's cap' or style by members of the UPN in this [Ogun] State."<sup>147</sup> Calling the special attention of the newsmen around, Chief Soluade added: "Please take note, I did not speak of any other state; I said in Ogun State." The UPN, however, permitted what it called the "Awo Cap" worn by Chief Awolowo and the "Waziri Cap" – which the also defeated GNPP presidential candidate, Alhaji Waziri Ibrahim, wears – to be worn in the State. But as an NPN supporter pointed out, "It is Ekwueme Cap!" – because that particular type of cap was that often worn by the Vice President, Dr. Alex Ekwueme.

Indeed, it should be pointed out that what the UPN called "Shagari Cap" was made popular nationally by the late Alhaji Zana Buka Dipcharima, a Kanuri from Maiduguri and himself a staunch member of the old and later banned NPC. Although the cap is of Kanuri (Hausa?) origin, unquestionably made nationally popular by the late Alhaji Dipcharima, it has become part of the Nigerian national dress; it is worn across tribal frontiers and ethnic groupings, just as the Yoruba complete *agbada* dress for men is now internationally identified with Nigeria and hence it

has become a symbol of national oneness. Similarly, the Yoruba *aṣo oke* attire and the "up-and-down" attire of the Urhobo and Itshekiri peoples of Bendel State have also become the national dress of Nigerian women. The question Nigerians were asking was this: Did the UPN oppose the cap simply because President Shagari, the victorious NPN presidential candidate, wears it? Or, was it because the cap is of northern Nigerian origin, or that it is worn predominantly there? It seemed that the UPN ban was not based on the area or tribal origin of the cap but because the victorious President Shagari wears it. If so, then, the UPN ban of the cap was childish and pathetically petty. Thus, the UPN did not hurt the President by its ban on what it called "Shagari Cap" but portrayed itself as ludicrously petty and vindictive, and as a party opposed to one simple but subtly important national symbol which unites Nigerians as a people. One young Nigerian who said he did not like politics but that he had admired Chief Awolowo for the election campaign promises the UPN leader made, spoke for a large part of the silent dispassionate majority when he said he was "surprised by both the fact that the UPN could impose a ban on the type of hat an individual desires to wear, an act which is against the fundamental principle of freedom in the Constitution, and the fact that [he was] not aware that the UPN leadership even spoke against such wrecklessness."

The UPN bitterness for being rejected by the electorate was very severe. Rather than blame the electorate for denying the UPN the government of the nation, or re-examining the areas where their campaign strategies went foul, the UPN and its sympathisers repeatedly attacked the former Head of State, Gen. Olusegun Obasanjo, and the new Head of State, President Shehu Shagari. Indeed, some three months after the handing over to a civilian government, that is, after the Supreme Court decision and the President sworn in, Chief Awolowo himself still lashed at the elections and criticized Gen. Obasanjo and his Military Government. The UPN leader chose the occasion of his party's convention in Lagos in December 1979 to accuse Gen. Obasanjo and his

Military Government whom he said had "the inflexible determination to exclude all parties other than the NPN from power at all levels of Government of the Federation, and in particular to install Alhaji Shehu Shagari at all cost."<sup>148</sup>

Chief Awolowo mentioned "top functionaries" of General Obasanjo's Government whom he claimed conspired to arrest UPN polling and counting agents in the northern states. Chief Awolowo asked General Obasanjo: "Don't you know what top functionaries mean? The phrase includes you, the Chief of Staff (Supreme Headquarters) and others in and around Dodan Barracks. I am not including the Inspector General of Police", Chief Awolowo asked General Obasanjo: "Don't you know what top rocity." Chief Awolowo said that the "mass arrests by top functionaries" of the Federal Military Government was to give the NPN and FEDECO freedom to rig the elections in the northern states. His critics wondered if that was why he also lost in all the eastern states.

Further, Chief Awolowo claimed, among other issues, that the Military Government had consulted Alhaji Shehu Shagari in the selection of Mr. Justice Atanda Fatai-Williams as the Chief Justice of the Federation.<sup>149</sup> Mr. Justice Fatai-Williams is incidentally Yoruba, like Chief Awolowo and Gen. Obasanjo; the usual explanation of tribalism therefore was not tenable because Chief Awolowo could not accuse Gen. Obasanjo of tribalism. The Military consulting Alhaji Shagari on the appointment of Mr. Justice Fatai-Williams as the Chief Justice of Nigeria, as Chief Awolowo claimed, implied that the Military Government wanted and expected Alhaji Shagari to win the elections and hence it would appoint a new Chief Justice who would be acceptable to the new President, as the previous one was retiring. Chief Awolowo further accused Gen. Obasanjo that his Federal Military Government deleted the word "each" in the controversial clause about two-thirds of 19 states from the Constitution just before its exit;<sup>150</sup> the underlying assumption here is that the removal of the word "each", as the UPN leader claimed, made him lose the legal tussle

in the interpretation of what is "two-thirds of 19 states." Nor did Chief Awolowo spare the Federal Electoral Commission which he also accused of having been responsible for his defeat. He attributed his failure to what he called "the perfidy of the Federal Electoral Commission"<sup>151</sup> which supervised the elections, aided by what he claimed to be "the grand deception by the Federal Government."<sup>152</sup>

General Obasanjo said that he had no comment on Chief Awolowo's claim that FEDECO, its Chairman, and its Executive Secretary – Chief Michael Ani and Alhaji Kurfi, respectively – led all of us to believe that 2/3 of all the 19 states in the Federation is 13 "except that, as an experienced and articulate politician and a distinguished lawyer, you [Chief Awolowo] could not have been led by any man to believe less or more than the law stipulated". Some observers believed that there were those who were making a political issue from a purely legal interpretation of a constitutional provision. That was why Chief Richard Akinjide could comment after the Supreme Court ruling that while he "was talking law, Chief Awolowo was talking politics."

Political observers were appalled that Chief Awolowo could make such claims, particularly he being one of those in the forefront of Nigerian politics and later a presidential candidate who had aspired to lead the entire nation. General Obasanjo himself replied Chief Awolowo whose claims and allegations, he said, were "untrue and unfortunate,"<sup>153</sup> and added that he appreciated the fact that "scapegoatism was an element of the Nigerian society."<sup>154</sup> General Obasanjo then considered the allegations point by point, adding that he was "impelled to answer the allegations in the interest of the nation."<sup>155</sup>

On the allegation about "installing Alhaji Shagari as president at all costs," General Obasanjo replied Chief Awolowo that he and members of the Supreme Military Council "had no plan to install any party or any individual to succeed us. And if we did," he added, "you know we were courageous enough and determined enough to have said so openly."<sup>156</sup> He then revealed how the Sup-

reme Military Council had removed Clause 207 of the Draft Constitution from the final Constitution. Clause 207 was intended to bar from taking part in any elections in the first four years of return to civilian rule "any person found guilty of corruption, unjust enrichment, or abuse of office by any tribunal or inquiry between the 15th January, 1966, and the date when this section [of the Constitution] comes into force unless that person satisfies the Federal Electoral Commission that the tribunal did not give him the opportunity of being heard on those allegations." General Obasanjo said that the clause was clearly intended to bar Chief Awolowo himself from participating in the first elections at the exit of the Military.<sup>157</sup> In its public reply to Chief Awolowo, Gen. Obasanjo further said that the Supreme Military Council removed the clause from the final Constitution because "Supreme Military Council members believed as fair-minded men that the clause offends against natural justice as we understood it, even at the risk of being stigmatised and being branded."<sup>158</sup>

It would have been far more convenient for the Supreme Military Council not to have removed Clause 207 from the Draft Constitution if Supreme Military Council members had wanted to bar Chief Awolowo from any arms of the government of this nation as the UPN presidential candidate alleged. It is pertinent to point out here that most of those people who produced the Draft Constitution did not later become members of the NPN; indeed, some are sympathisers and even members of the UPN. The same applies to Members of the Constituent Assembly who debated the Draft Constitution. Besides, the Draft Constitution had been subjected to public debate for a year in all forms, including public lectures, seminars and in the mass media. Yet, Clause 207 passed through all those stages before the Draft Constitution got to the Constituent Assembly and later to the Supreme Military Council.

The inferences the dispassionate observer could draw from the successful passage of Clause 207 through all those stages, particularly that of the Constituent Assembly, need not be belaboured

here except to "allege" that, perhaps, there were quite a substantial number of people who wanted certain political aspirants barred from participation in Nigerian politics at the return of the Military back to the Barracks. Had Supreme Military Council members not removed Clause 207, which as fair-minded men they found "offends against natural justice as they understood it," then, Chief Obafemi Awolowo would have been barred from the elections by the act, not of the Supreme Military Council but, of other people; consequently, members of the Supreme Military Council, perhaps, would have been spared the allegations by the UPN presidential candidate. The fact that the Supreme Military Council was honest and bold enough to remove Clause 207 from the Draft Constitution would seem to demonstrate that there was no attempt on the part of the Supreme Military Council members to bar anyone, including Chief Awolowo, from participation in the government of this nation at the exit of the Military. Indeed, it was on similar grounds that some political observers were particularly pleased that a Court in Anambra State ruled in favour of NPP presidential candidate Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe over his alleged incorrect or improper payment of his annual income tax, just as another court in Kano ruled on a similar issue in favour of the PRP presidential candidate, Alhaji Aminu Kano.

Similarly, on the question of the appointment of Mr. Justice Atanda Fatai-Williams as the Chief Justice of Nigeria, Gen. Obasanjo denied the allegation of the UPN leader. He said that the appointment was made by the Supreme Military Council without consulting anyone and that not only did well-meaning Nigerians and others congratulate the appointee but also applauded the appointment.<sup>159</sup> Perhaps it is pertinent to add that the new Chief Justice was perhaps selected before the 1979 elections, (as the retiring Chief Justice had given his notice of retirement some six months earlier) at which time no one expected what the results of the election would be nor had anyone a fore-knowledge that there would be a subsequent legal tussle over the meaning and the legal interpretation of the phrase "2/3 of 19 states." He became the new

Chief Justice on August 27, 1979. Further, even if the new Chief Justice had been acceptable to Chief Obafemi Awolowo and had voted in his favour during the Supreme Court decision on the meaning of the phrase "2/3 of 19", the Court would still have upheld the ruling of the Presidential Election Tribunal – by a vote of 5-2; and the NPN presidential candidate would still have won the legal battle which Chief Awolowo appealed to the Supreme Court. It was therefore not particularly surprising when Chief Obafemi Awolowo claimed in an answer to a question at a press conference that the Judiciary "still has my confidence, but that does not mean I have confidence in every member of the judiciary."<sup>150</sup> Was one to infer that the UPN leader had no confidence in the six Supreme Court judges who ruled against him?

In a public appeal to Chief Awolowo, Labanji Bolaji wrote that "since the highest court in Nigeria has ruled in favour of FEDECO's declaration of Alhaji Shagari, as the president-elect, one would have thought that Chief Awolowo as a distinguished lawyer and a Senior Advocate of Nigeria would accept the verdict and concentrate thenceforth on how to make the people realise that President Shagari is 'the wrong choice' and a 'pedestrian'".<sup>161</sup> Bolaji concluded that his appeal to Chief Awolowo was "not that the UPN leader should abandon his opposition to President Shagari's government. It is that, in his criticism of the Shagari Government, he should retain the great respect many people have for him at the same time as helping to retrieve the tottering moral health of the nation."<sup>162</sup>

Gen. Obasanjo's reply to Chief Awolowo's claim of the Supreme Military Council's removal of the word "each" was equally lucid and comprehensive, and perhaps the most damaging to the credibility of Chief Awolowo's accusation. The former Head of State drew the attention of Chief Awolowo to *Extraordinary Gazette*, No. 48, Vol. 66 of September 29, 1979, where the UPN leader, Gen. Obasanjo said, "would find the word 'each' *still included* [emphasis added] in the amended Constitution Decree 104, Section 6."<sup>163</sup> That assertion meant that Chief Awolowo had made a

false accusation against Gen. Obasanjo and members of the Supreme Military Council. As General Obasanjo himself put it, Chief Awolowo's claim that the Supreme Military Council removed the word "each" from the amendment in Decree 104 Section 6 "was either inadvertent falsehood or deliberate." It seems that what Chief Awolowo meant was the amendment to Section 126 which clears up the ambiguity that centred on the interpretation of the stipulation at sub-sections (1) (b) and (2) (b) that a candidate for an election to the office of President shall be deemed to have been duly elected if "he has not less than one-quarter of the votes cast at the election in *each* [emphasis added] of at least two-thirds of all the States in the Federation." The amended sub-section now has the word "each" deleted. (After the experiences of that election, the Supreme Military Council just a few days before its exit made certain amendments to the Constitution to remove ambiguities in order to avoid what it called "grave dangers" with which the provisions for an Electoral College were "fraught". The amendments took effect on October 1, 1979. Thus, it does mean that the removal of the word "each" could not have been responsible for Chief Awolowo losing his appeal to the Supreme Court.)

Having answered Chief Awolowo's accusation that his government removed the word "each" from the Constitution, Gen. Obasanjo then expatiated on the resolution of the legal dispute about what "two-thirds of 19 states" meant. He said that the Federal Attorney-General had advised that there were two possible interpretations. The first interpretation, he said, was "to give the ordinary grammatical meaning to the words of the Electoral Decree, in which case, two-thirds of 19 would be twelve and two-thirds. The second [meaning]," Gen. Obasanjo continued, "is to construe 'each' to convey the idea of an entity, in which case two-thirds of 19 would be aggregated to 13."<sup>164</sup> At that point, the former Head of State further said in his public reply to Chief Awolowo, the Federal Military Government did not want to be involved.<sup>165</sup> What General Obasanjo seemed to have meant by this was that it was only the judiciary that had the right to give the

legal and constitutional interpretation of the meaning of the phrase "2/3 of 19"; thus, he and the Supreme Military Council would not later be accused of interfering with justice. As we all know, the parties concerned took the issue of legality of the declaration up and fought it out at the law courts which, General Obasanjo said in his public reply to Chief Awolowo, "is also an essential and indispensable ingredient of democracy."

The decision of the Federal Military Government not to be involved in the interpretation of the phrase "2/3 of 19" has been regarded as tremendously praiseworthy because by this action the Supreme Military Council clearly demonstrated its respect for the separation of powers between the Legislature and the Judiciary. It would seem that some of its critics would have condemned the Supreme Military Council had that body given specific instructions on which of the two interpretations should be accepted. Indeed, as has been pointed out, the Supreme Military Council was even accused of interfering in the judicial process by allegedly removing the word "each" from the amended Constitution. It is a pity that no one, particularly Nigerian lawyers, throughout the long period of the public debate on the Draft Constitution seemed to have pointed out the ambiguity of the meaning of the phrase "2/3 of 19". It is even more regrettable that both the Constitution Drafting Committee and the Constituent Assembly which, respectively, wrote and debated the Draft Constitution, for whatever reason, failed to give a clear directive on the meaning of the phrase "2/3 of each of the 19 States."

Chief Awolowo, as has been pointed out, had also accused the Federal Electoral Commission of contributing to the victory of Alhaji Shagari and hence his own defeat. In his public reply to the UPN leader, FEDECO Chairman Chief Michael Ani explained the basis for the decision of FEDECO as has already been pointed out. Chief Ani emphasized that the purpose of his 'Friday Essay' in the *Daily Times*, in his words, was "not to attack anyone, as that would amount to flogging a dead horse."<sup>166</sup> He said he would restrict his comments "to the few very damaging allegations made

with such force and bitterness which even led one of the political leaders to descend to the depth of accusing the Electoral Commission of perfidy<sup>167</sup> in a manner, Chief Ani further said, "deliberately calculated to impugn the integrity of the Electoral Commission, which is most unfortunate."<sup>168</sup> Not only did Chief Ani thereafter explain "the logical basis of the decisions, actions and behaviour of the Electoral Commission all of which led to the verdict which the Supreme Court ratified",<sup>169</sup> but also responded to the allegation that FEDECO was under the control of the Federal Military Government and hence it colluded with Gen. Obasanjo's Supreme Military Council to install Alhaji Shehu Shagari as President. In his reply to this allegation, Chief Ani referred to a meeting which the four political leaders who lost the election held with the former Head of State, Gen. Obasanjo, after the elections.<sup>170</sup> The Owelle of Onitsha, Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe, the NPP presidential candidate who acted as the spokesman, compared FEDECO to the monster which Dr. Frankenstein created; the monster grew so powerful that in the end it devoured its creator.

Not only was the simile clear, Chief Michael Ani continued, but that the NPP presidential candidate charged Gen. Obasanjo of establishing an institution and endowing it with such wide powers that the former Head of State was unable to control it directly. Gen. Obasanjo was quoted as saying that he "could not control FEDECO even indirectly."<sup>171</sup> Indeed, Dr. Azikiwe reminded the former Head of State that the FEDECO chairman had "even tactlessly"<sup>172</sup> stated that the institution was not under the control of the Supreme Military Council, to which Gen. Obasanjo answered that in a sense the FEDECO chairman was correct.<sup>173</sup> Chief Ani in his "Friday Essay" in the *Daily Times* emphasized that the four leaders, "including the one who now alleges that the [Federal Electoral] Commission was under the control of the Federal Military Government,"<sup>174</sup> were all present at the meeting and "he said nothing which showed that he differed from the views"<sup>175</sup> expressed by the NPP presidential candidate who also lost the elections. Needless to dwell on the potential reaction and wrath of the

Nigerian public if Gen. Obasanjo and the Supreme Military Council had been able to control FEDECO. Besides, there seems to be no act, by commission or omission, which showed that the Federal Military Government dictated to FEDECO what it should do throughout the elections, and hence the allegation by the UPN presidential candidate was regarded by the dispassionate observer as an excuse to explain his defeat.

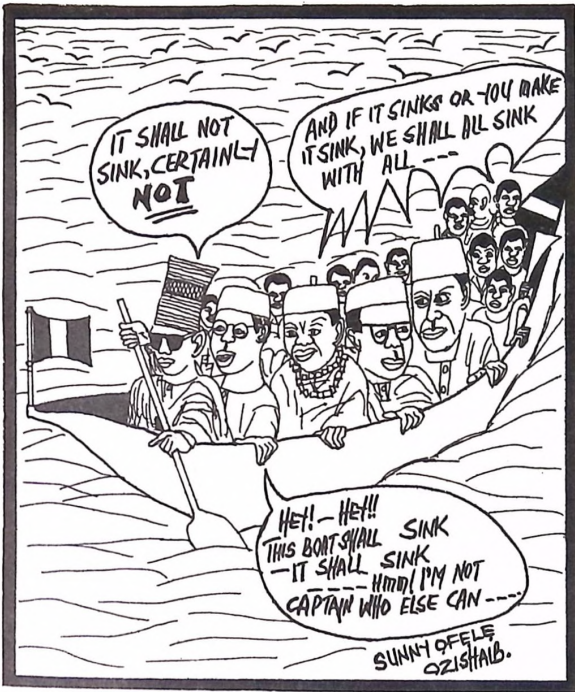
It was further impolitic for the defeated UPN presidential candidate, Chief Obafemi Awolowo, to have chosen the eve, Monday, April 28, 1980, of the OAU Economic Summit Meeting which President Shehu Shagari hosted in Lagos on Tuesday, April 29, 1980, to attack the Nigerian President and his Federal Government. At that Press Conference, Chief Awolowo said he had no respect for most of the African leaders attending the Summit because, he said, they were despots except for few whom he counted by his finger tips: "Ehrr, ehm, Nyerere; the other man, Kaunda; but Nyerere in particular."<sup>176</sup> The OAU, he said, barks a lot; he compared it to a domestic dog whose barking helps to drive visitors away!<sup>177</sup> His target of attack was President Shehu Shagari. Chief Awolowo said he called his conference to inform Nigerians and the world at large that "after six months, Alhaji Shehu Shagari had set a definite course for his Administration. There is abundant and unassailable evidence," Chief Awolowo continued, "for saying that this course bodes very ill for Nigeria and its people. Indeed, its incipient emanations have proved to be patently harmful to Nigeria and capable of inducing cancerous growth in our body politics," the UPN leader further said.<sup>178</sup>

Chief Awolowo's charges against the President included the deportation of Alhaji Shugaba Darman by the Federal Government; the appointment of Liaison Officers in the States; and, the direct involvement of the Federal Government in the construction of housing units in the States as the NPN had promised (rather than handing over the funds directly to the State Governments some of which were controlled by parties other than the NPN, which could obviously thereby claim credit in the eyes of the electorate

for the provision of the houses). He continued his attack against the President as he, the *Daily Times* said, "waded through the foggy terrains of facts, figures and economic theory and analysis in an attempt to finding",<sup>179</sup> in Chief Awolowo's opinion, lasting solutions to the nation's problems. The sincerity of Chief Awolowo's profuse use of figures and statistics to support his con-  
porter commented, "was however betrayed by the deliberate twist of facts by the Chief in his submissions"<sup>180</sup> contained in the 17-page rant the UPN leader distributed at the Press Conference. That commentator accused Chief Awolowo of "persistently laying claim to the monopoly of wisdom in this country."<sup>181</sup> It was also in a similar vein that another reporter asked Chief Awolowo at the Press Conference if the UPN leader thought he alone was capable of ruling this country effectively. Chief Awolowo admitted that there are many Nigerians who are capable of ruling the nation but added that "I am better than Shagari,"<sup>182</sup> the title "President" consistently absent anytime he referred to President Shehu Shagari.

In a *Daily Times* report titled "Washing our dirty linen in public", Nduka Nwosu commented that what must have come to Chief Awolowo as a surprise at that Press Conference was "that just as he [Chief Awolowo] did not take lightly seeing the ship of state driven to the rocks, some people also felt he was, through his Press Conference, helping to drive the ship of state to the rocks."<sup>183</sup> Chief Awolowo flatly refused to accept such a responsibility which one of the press reporters had attributed to him.

On its part, the National Party of Nigeria (NPN) accused Chief Awolowo of what it called "a deliberate attempt to embarrass the nation" at a time African leaders were attending the OAU Economic Summit holding in Lagos. In a statement in Lagos, the NPN said that "It is only a man who was totally strange to basic civility and breeding who will concentrate his energy to sling mud at President Shehu Shagari at this time."<sup>184</sup> Indeed, Gen. Obasanjo in his 18<sup>th</sup> Independence Anniversary celebration broadcast



© Nigerian Herald, Ilorin, February 13, 1980.

to the nation some 18 months earlier, on October 1, 1978, had appealed to Nigerian politicians, in the preparation for the return to civilian rule, that "Politics may entail hard work, toil and anxious moments, but it need not be accompanied with tears, bitterness, hostility and destruction". Continuing, General Obasanjo had said: "We can disagree among ourselves on policies, principles, and methods and still maintain an air of civility and a courteous attitude to one another." How prophetic! The NPN further said that the action of Chief Awolowo was "a calculated attempt to destroy the international confidence in the financial health of the country and also a way to ridicule the President before the assembly of the leaders of Africa."<sup>185</sup>

Besides what was generally believed to be the harshness of the language, the crudity of the comments against the President, and the untimely nature of the Press Conference itself, the UPN leader did not even refer to the President with any courtesy which the Presidency, the very office which Chief Awolowo ruthlessly fought for, deserves. Chief Awolowo's inordinate desire to rule the country at all costs reduced the UPN leader to the level where it was generally believed that it did not matter to him what happens to the nation in the process. Of course, Chief Awolowo had predicted doom for the country if he himself did not rule the nation.

And Nigerians were equally determined to ignore Chief Awolowo, or anybody for that matter, who believes that he has monopoly to rule this country. As Yoonus Abdulrahman pointed out in a post-mortem article on Chief Awolowo's Press Conference, "It is however wrong for the Chief, as it would be for anybody, to subordinate the interest of a whole nation to that of an individual."<sup>186</sup> Continuing, he wrote that "Chief Awolowo is already making himself irrelevant in the Nigerian political set up but before he becomes a material for the garbage heap of history, we appeal he co-operates to give peace a chance in Nigeria."<sup>187</sup>

In his own general criticism against the politics of Chief Awolowo, Mr. Sam Ikoku, National Secretary of the Peoples' Redemption Party (PRP) and who was himself Chief Awolowo's de-

puty for some two long decades before he parted company with the UPN leader, said that "Chief Awolowo's utterances, behaviour and attitude to the government of the day show that he is hell bent to destabilize the country and bring about another Military coup."<sup>188</sup> Continuing, Mr. Ikoku said that it was "an accepted operational principle all over the world that the beginning of bringing about an army coup was to discredit the ruling government,"<sup>189</sup> and that that was exactly what Chief Awolowo was doing.<sup>190</sup> Sam Ikoku further claimed that "Chief Awolowo is unfit to rule the country."<sup>191</sup> Continuing, the PRP National Secretary said that "All the A. B. C. of politics do not favour Chief Awolowo. He is not only a reknown tribalist, but a man blind to the political realities of the country."<sup>192</sup> The PRP scribe further stated that "the 1979 elections should have convinced Chief Awolowo that there was no way in the eastern states for the UPN leader to achieve his blind ambition"<sup>193</sup> because, Ikoku said, anything Chief Awolowo stood for was rejected by the people of those areas.<sup>194</sup>

One of the most remarkable criticisms of the UPN leader came from one of his former followers, Chief Olu Awotesu, who is a Yoruba like Chief Awolowo himself and a former Secretary of the London Branch of the defunct Action Group Party, but now Federal Minister of State in the Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Natural Resources. Describing the UPN leader as the "Hitler of the Yorubas," the former loyalist of Chief Awolowo warned that "Unless the Yorubas do something urgently to check the excesses and the futile ambition of Chief Awolowo, the generations yet unborn will regret the natural consequences of a Biafran-type of holocaust in Yorubaland."<sup>195</sup> Continuing, Chief Awotesu said that in Chief Awolowo's "blind ambition for power and his stubborn refusal to take a defeat, he [Chief Awolowo] has embarked on a course attempting to discredit General Obasanjo's regime and destroy the present administration which attempt has become counter-productive for the Yorubas."<sup>196</sup> Comparing the present plight which Chief Obafemi Awolowo is shaping for the Yorubas

to the leadership of Adolf Hitler among the Germans, the former scribe of the London Branch of the Action Group Party said that "We are all living witnesses of the defeat and the division of Germany just because of the personal ambition of the Führer. Hitler continued to see himself as the conqueror and leader of the whole of Europe until his own destruction and the humiliation of the Germans."<sup>197</sup> Condemning the inflammatory remarks of Chief Obafemi Awolowo, the Hon. Federal Minister of State, Chief Awotesu, further said that

"Ever since Chief Awolowo declared in a statement that those of us, his erstwhile loyalists, are now his personal enemies just because of political disagreement based purely on principle, some of us have decided to ignore the rantings of the man as the hallucinations of a dying old actor-politician who has refused to quit the stage when the ovation of Nigerian audience was loudest for him.

But his recent outburst [during his press conference on the eve of the OAU Economic Summit] and his calculated attempt to cause another crisis in this country call for total and unequivocal condemnation of the man who is now hell-bound to destroy the cause of the Yorubas as Hitler did for the Germans."<sup>198</sup>

The UPN attack against the President and anything his Government did was so widespread that it became almost a laughing issue among non-UPN sympathisers. Thus, for example, the UPN Senator and former Western Regional Minister in the proscribed Action Group Party, Chief Odebiyi, could claim that President Shagari's N 100.00 per month minimum salary for Nigerian workers was "a compromise" between the N 200.00 per month advocated by the UPN and the N 300.00 per month proposed by the Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC). As the *National Concord* hilariously and rhetorically asked in its "Thinking Corner", "Isn't somebody trying to be too clever with his mathematics?"<sup>199</sup>

The gross, uncamouflaged and impolitic bitterness which the

UPN exhibited was because their presidential candidate was defeated at the election. But as one elderly illiterate sage rhetorically asked, "Should a candidate who won 6 states be president instead of the person who won even 12 states, conceding the latter's victory in the 13<sup>th</sup> state because of the controversial interpretation of 'What is 2/3 of 19'?" It was also in a similar vein that the National Secretary of the Peoples' Redemption Party (PRP) said that "even if we left out the findings of the Election Tribunal and the Supreme Court, common sense dictates that the presidential victory should be awarded to President Shagari, for Shagari won more popular votes than Awolowo and won more States (twelve) than Awolowo (six)".<sup>200</sup>

The UPN critics expected that a statesman of the calibre Chief Awolowo claimed to be should have accepted the results of the elections. Indeed, it was in this spirit that Martin Dent, ever before the Supreme Court decision, observed in the London-based *West Africa* that "Chief Awolowo, of whose genuine patriotism as a Nigerian there can be no doubt, may decide that the verdict of the people in the Presidential election was so decisive that it would be better not to proceed further."<sup>201</sup> It is now history that Chief Awolowo proceeded further. So, too, is the decision of the Presidential Election Tribunal and, later, the ruling of the Supreme Court of Nigeria. Many observers felt that the UPN leader and his supporters were merely looking for a scapegoat to blame for Chief Awolowo's defeat. One would tend to agree with the FEDECO Chairman in his conclusion in his article on the allegations and charges against the victory of Alhaji Shehu Shagari – and the defeat of the UPN leader and his other three colleagues – when Chief Ani said that "Further comments are unnecessary" because that would "amount to flogging a dead horse."<sup>202</sup>

In retrospect, one could say that Chief Awolowo would have enhanced his sagging national prestige tremendously and nationwide had he accepted the results of the elections as well as those of the Tribunal and the Supreme Court of Nigeria; he should have accepted the verdict of the electorate with grace and be magnani-

mous in defeat as in victory. Instead of dissipating his energy on accusations and counter-charges, Chief Awolowo would have done far more for his image and his UPN party by re-organising his campaign strategy and appeal to the electorate, come 1983. Indeed, while lifting the ban on politics in September 1978, General Olusegun Obasanjo had pleaded that "From now on, let the game of politics be played according to the laid-down rules. Let all players be good sportsmen. No matter the result of the competition," General Obasanjo said, "let all players remain friendly and without bitterness, and look forward to another competition."<sup>203</sup> That was General Obasanjo in 1978 when he lifted the ban on politics. Then in June 1979, in a national broadcast on the screening of candidates for the 1979 elections, General Olusegun Obasanjo had again pleaded with the political leaders that "In the forthcoming elections, there are bound to be many losers but that should not be cause for unreasonableness. Neither should it be an excuse to want to threaten the orderly progress of our society out of frustration or lost hope. He who loses today may win next time."<sup>204</sup> Then, on July 6, 1979, on the eve of the elections, General Obasanjo again had reminded the political leaders and the nation as a whole of "an acceptance by the political leadership of the judgement and decision of the electorate."<sup>205</sup> Continuing, the exiting Head of State had said:

"Once [the decision of the electorate was] expressed, the will of the people must be respected and nothing should be done to trample on the wishes and desires of the majority of the electorate. When there are five candidates for one vacancy, it stands to reason that only one of the five candidates can occupy this available vacancy. Others like good sportsmen must learn to accept their defeat with equanimity."<sup>206</sup>

It is now history that Chief Awolowo ignored the verdict of the electorate and the declaration by FEDECO as well as the ruling of the Tribunal and therefore went to the Supreme Court which upheld the Tribunal's ruling by a vote of 6-1. The UPN leader,



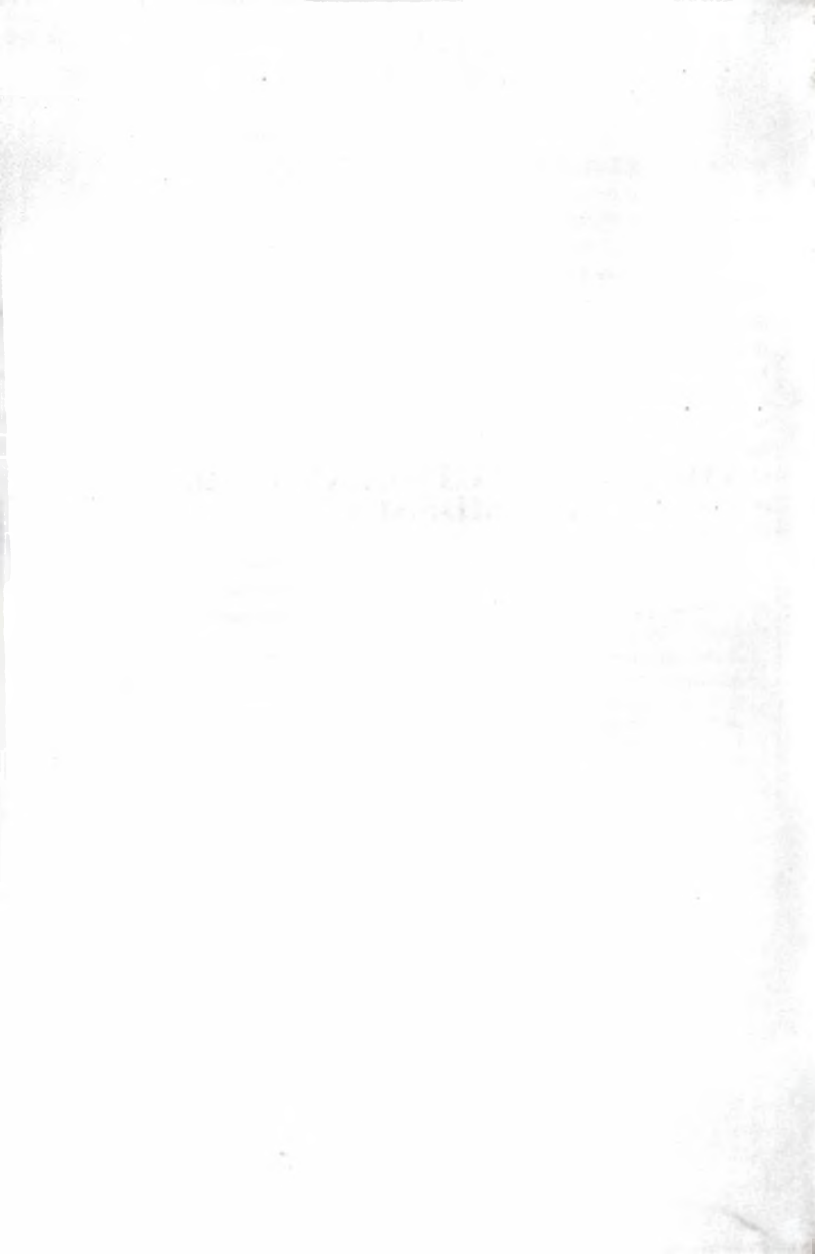
**President Shugu Shagari waving to the crowd at Tafawa Balewa Square after the searing-in ceremony.**

who won only in six states against Alhaji Shehu Shagari who won in 13 states, not only lost the elections at the polls but in the law courts as well. Alhaji Shehu Shagari emerged the winner, and the first Executive President of the nation. On October 1, 1979, he was sworn in as Nigeria's first Executive President at an impressive ceremony at the Tafawa Balewa Square, in Lagos, during Nigeria's 19th Independence Anniversary. One expected that the defeated UPN leader would have accepted the reality of the 1979 elections and the ruling of the courts, as his other colleagues who also lost the presidential election did. Indeed, one expected that the swearing-in-ceremony itself should have convinced Chief Awolowo of the futility of his obdurate stance. Not only did he refuse to accept the verdict of the electorate and the decision of the Courts, but he and hardcore UPN adherents, observers believed, were, in the words of one reporter, "driving the ship of State to the rocks." Some wondered whether the UPN leader believed he is a law on to himself. In his June 1979 national broadcast on the screening of the candidates, General Obasanjo had said:

"In accordance with the mutual agreement among the party leaders, I expect everyone to accept the verdicts of the elections process and the elections when they are held. In a decent and orderly society, no one can be a law on to himself and in this country the same rule applies."<sup>297</sup>

*Chapter Four*

**THE CONSTITUTION AND THE  
PRESIDENCY**



## THE CONSTITUTION AND THE PRESIDENCY

Alhaji Shehu Shagari, born in April 1925 of Fulani parentage in Shagari Village, Sokoto State, emerged as the victor in the new system of government under an executive president. In his maiden address to the nation on October 1, 1979, President Shehu Shagari said that his administration would translate his NPN political party slogan of "One Nation, One Destiny" into reality, and that "the Federal Government will give equal treatment to each state of the Federation regardless of the party in power in that State."<sup>1</sup> His party's agricultural programme, the "Green Revolution", he said, would transform Nigeria's agriculture to the point where Nigeria will be self sufficient in food production and that what he called "the current drain of foreign exchange on the importation of foodstuff" will stop and the money will be effectively utilized.<sup>2</sup> Not only would the Government devote more attention to manpower and technological resources to increase the country's agricultural productivity and expand its agro-based industries, he further said, but also that Nigeria will encourage joint ventures with foreign partners to establish farms as commercially profitable enterprises to produce food as well as raw materials. He also spoke of his government's plan to provide a good housing scheme for Nigerians, placed emphasis on qualitative education, and also stressed the need for technical manpower and rapid development of technology.<sup>3</sup>

Similarly, in his address to the National Assembly on October 16, 1979, President Shagari emphasized that his administration

would place high priorities on agriculture, housing, and education. Further, in the effort to build a truly great and unified Nigeria, the President in that address also pleaded with the politicians for the overriding needs of One Nigeria over their own personal and selfish interests. He blamed the failure of the first effort of the country to create a viable and democratically stable political process on what he called "the uncongenial atmosphere engendered by the uncompromising stance adopted by the political parties of the First Republic."<sup>4</sup> There was now a new opportunity, he said, to achieve national integration and "we must subjugate our political and other differences to the unrelenting pursuit of peace, unity and progress of our motherland."<sup>5</sup> Continuing, he told members of the National Assembly that "It is your duty, indeed, your sacred responsibility to ensure that our national unity and stability are not sacrificed on the altar of ego or fleeting political gains or expediency. More than anything else," he warned and pleaded, "there is great need for tolerance, understanding and trust. Inflammatory speeches and indulgences in polemics must not be allowed to becloud the real issues before you."<sup>6</sup>

Nigeria is now on the path to sustain a politically stable society whose foundation General Murtala Muhammed laid, a society that can provide for peace and stability and above all, as General Muhammed had said, the security of the individual.<sup>7</sup> This politically stable atmosphere is of importance in order to further develop and promote Nigeria's healthy economy for which the President has invited foreigners to participate in the genuine understanding of partnership in progress and in an atmosphere of world peace to the benefit of humanity. The several issues just mentioned were the pledges of the President at his inaugural address, pledges which he expected — and he was expected — to accomplish within the framework of the provisions of the new Constitution.

## THE CONSTITUTION: PRESCRIPTION FOR STABILITY

Political critics had argued that the old Constitution which prescribed, among other issues, the federal arrangement of three powerful regions for Nigeria was itself – more than the political actors who operated that document – responsible for the demise of that federal matrimony. This is because it was the tripartite federal structure, they maintained, which contributed most tremendously to the several political crises the nation went through during the First Republic. For example, General Murtala Muhammed said that “while it is evident that some of our difficulties may have been created by political leaders who operated the [old] Constitution, it is clear also that some of the provisions of the Constitution facilitated the periodic political crisis this country went through.”<sup>8</sup> Similarly, the then Chief of Staff, Supreme Headquarters, and later Head of State, General Olusegun Obasanjo, had also re-emphasized this point in a Lagos television interview on October 16, 1975, when he said that a lot of things were wrong with the old Constitution itself, short-comings which contributed to the political crises this nation incessantly went through.<sup>9</sup> One immediate example of the problems with the Constitution, observers noted, was the tripartite federal structure. The creation of 12 states in 1967 corrected or cured most of the ills inherent in the tripartite federal configuration, and in the process provided a good basis for political stability. This is because, firstly, the exercise fragmented the previously powerful regions whose strength had posed a threat to the larger whole at the centre; previously,

the regions were so powerful that real power did not lie with the Federal Government but with the regional governments at the periphery. The creation of more states weakened the power of the old regions. Secondly, the exercise removed or at least largely reduced the fear of domination: either of one region over another, or, of a section of a region over another section within the same region; the most severe example of this phenomenon was the Biafran secessionist political blunder which, perhaps emotionally excusable, is now history.

It was necessary that once the war ended, Nigeria needed to define and create new bases for political stability (such as a new political structure and the question of a new Constitution) and thus prevent a reoccurrence of the previous incessant political crises; these Gowon himself said he would do, but he did not. The leadership failed the nation, and he was removed. The successor Military Government of the late General Murtala Muhammed redefined a new federal structure for the country by creating more states in February 1976, an act which further enhanced the country's political stability. As General Muhammed himself put it when bequeathing this important and memorable achievement to posterity, "what we have done after our long deliberations is in the interest of the future stability of this country."<sup>10</sup> This is an impressive legacy, not only because a multi-sided or polygonous structure (that is, our 19-state structure) is a physically more stable edifice but also because, politically, the 19-state federal arrangement further weakened the power of the states to the point where state autonomy and secession have become unattractive. There are, besides, other advantages. The creation of States, however, was half the battle. To *sustain* the phenomenon of political stability is the second and major part of the problem; that is, the issue of a new Constitution which Nigeria needed in order to provide guidelines which would define the political parameters within which a new political system would operate, and thus foster, or at least sustain, the teething or emerging stable political order the nation was experiencing after the demise of Biafra. Unfor-

tunately, there was no obvious attempt or practical demonstration to institute such a constitution, from January 1970 when the war ended up to the time the regime which fought the civil war was toppled in the bloodless coup in July 1975 – a period of over 5 years. Then came General Murtala Muhammed who set up, immediately he became the Head of State, the Constitution Drafting Committee which would examine the provisions of a new Constitution.

In his address to the Constitution Drafting Committee (CDC) on October 18, 1975, General Muhammed gave some guidelines on what Nigeria's new constitution should be. He said that "the constitution which we need has to reflect our experience, while at the same time paying attention to the equally important fact that a good constitution must also be capable of influencing the nature and the orderly development of the politics of a people."<sup>11</sup> This is very much so for a country like Nigeria which is a plural society with a multiplicity of ethnic groups and in which each group could feel insecure. The simple constitutional act of creating more states, General Muhammed further said, removed the fear of the predominance of one region over another, and the country should therefore devise a constitution which would help to solve other problems that may arise in the future.<sup>12</sup> The Constitution Drafting Committee, he said, should therefore "explore how to create a new parliamentary system which will not arouse ecstatic tribal frenzies which were characteristic of the previous political atmosphere"<sup>13</sup> but which will transform politics from "its previous scenario of bitter personal wrangles into a healthy game of political argument and discussion."<sup>14</sup>

After a thorough post-mortem examination of the previous Constitution and the political chaos which destroyed the First Republic, General Murtala Muhammed then listed the guidelines his Supreme Military Council had agreed on, namely:-

- (a) We are committed to a federal system of government, and a free democratic and lawful system of government which guarantees fundamental human rights.

- (b) The Federal Military Government is committed to the emergence of a stable system of government through constitutional law. This we trust can best be achieved through the creation of viable political institutions which will ensure maximum participation and consensus and orderly succession to political power.
- (c) Considering our recent political experience, any constitution devised should seek to:-
  - (i) eliminate cut-throat political competition based on a system or rules of winner-takes-all. As a corollary, it should discourage electoral malpractices;
  - (ii) discourage institutionalised opposition to the government in power and, instead, develop consensus politics and government based on a community of all interests rather than the interest of a section of the country;
  - (iii) firmly establish the principle of public accountability for all holders of public Office. All public office holders must be seen to account openly for their conduct of affairs;
  - (iv) eliminate over-centralisation of power in a few hands, and as a matter of principle, decentralise power whenever possible, as a means of diffusing tension. The powers and duties of the leading functionaries of government must be carefully defined.
- (d) Taking the realities of our situation to account, we should evolve a free and fair electoral system which will ensure adequate representation of our peoples at the centre.
- (e) Considering our past difficulties over population counts, we should endeavour to devise measures which will have the effect of depoliticising population census in the country which, as we all know, has caused interminable dispute at home and grave embarrassment elsewhere on more than one occasion.

The Supreme Military Council went further to see how some of these principles could be implemented in practice and came to the conclusion that we require:

- (i) Genuine and truly national political parties. However, in order to avoid the harmful effects of a proliferation of national parties, it will be desirable for you to work out specific criteria by which their number would be limited. Indeed the Supreme Military Council is of the opinion that if, during the course of your deliberations and having regard to our disillusion with party politics in the past, you should discover some means by which Government can be formed without the involvement of political parties, you should feel free to recommend.
- (ii) An Executive Presidential system of Government in which:-
  - (a) the President and Vice-President are elected, with clearly defined powers, and are accountable to the people. We feel that there should be legal provisions to ensure that they are brought into office in such a manner as to reflect the federal character of the country; and
  - (b) the choice of members of the cabinet should also be such as would reflect the federal character of the country.
- (iii) An Independent Judiciary to be guaranteed by incorporating appropriate provisions in the Constitution as well as by establishing institutions such as the Judicial Service Commission.<sup>15</sup>

The Draft Constitution, submitted to General Muhammed's successor a year later, was then subjected to public debate in the press and news media, and in institutions and other places for a year. Thereafter, it was again considered – this time by a democratically elected Constituent Assembly made up largely of elected Nigerians from the Local Government level. Some members were also appointed to the Constituent Assembly to represent special interests; so too were the chairmen of all the subcommittees of the Constitution Drafting Committee. The Constituent Assembly debated the Draft Constitution for a year before the Supreme Military Council promulgated it into law on September 21, 1978. It

became operational on October 1, 1979. Drawing up the new Constitution was a unique experience in that it was constructed wholly by Nigerians and also because a wider cross-section of the population than ever before participated in drawing it up. These two points were lucidly expressed by the Hon. Sir Justice Udo Udoma as already discussed in the first chapter.<sup>16</sup> "Never in the history of Africa", commented *West Africa*, (one might add in the history of mankind – not even in the greatest of democracies, the USA), "have so many people been consulted so thoroughly about how they wished to be governed."

The experiences of the past had amply demonstrated that the old constitution failed because it was not suited to the needs of the country. The Federal elections of 1964 and, in particular, the Western Regional elections the following year in 1965 when opponents poured gasoline on one another and set each other on fire ("Operation *wet-ie*"), as well as the subsequent political issues and decisions, were some of the most dramatic examples of the failure of the old Constitution. These experiences and the debacles of the civil war had thus made it abundantly clear that the new Constitution must be an effective instrument that would not only preserve the unity and the federal characteristics of the nation, but also that would evolve a political leadership which would represent the will of the people, that is, a leader who would have not only the greatest popular support but also the widest spread of popular support. Thus, the political system could provide a leadership that would be the focus round which the resources of the country would be mobilized and, at the same time, be responsible and accountable to the electorate – as General Muhammed had stated in the guidelines he gave the Constitution Drafting Committee at its inaugural meeting on October 18, 1975. It was obvious, therefore, as General Muhammed had said, that the country needed "an executive presidential system of government in which the President and the Vice President are elected with clearly defined powers, and are accountable to the people."<sup>17</sup>

It was in view of all these factors and after a thorough exami-

nation of our experiences in the old – and our expectations from a new – political system that a new constitutional charter was produced. The document was later debated, and it became operational at the return to civilian rule in October 1979. The Constitution provided for an Executive Presidency. But it was obvious that the Constitution itself was not going to prevent the re-occurrences of instability; its efficiency, successful operation and usefulness depended on the integrity and maturity of the political leaders. General Olusegun Obasanjo, when lifting the ban on politics on September 21, 1978, had said that “There is need to remind ourselves and especially those aspiring to rule this country of the fact that no matter how good a constitutional document may seem to be, its ultimate and utilitarian goodness depends on the will, disposition and vision of its operators. Whether it is a vehicle of justice, fairness and progress or an instrument of oppression and tyranny”, General Obasanjo continued, “will depend on the maturity, the sense of purpose and responsibility of the political leadership. The fate of over eighty million people of this country today and of millions yet unborn depends on the co-operation, understanding and behaviour of these leaders.”<sup>18</sup>

That was General Obasanjo in 1978 when he lifted the ban on politics. A year later the constitution became operational. It soon became obvious, after only the first few months of introduction of the new system, that there was a tendency to confuse the real with the imagined executive presidency. Many people, particularly those critics who expected wonders from the new political system of executive presidency which they hoped would solve all their problems overnight, accused the President of being “slow in doing things.” This is because their imagined presidency is based on the exaggerated strength of the office, underestimating (or even ignoring) the limitations of the powers of the office. Because it is the centre of the new political system, the Presidency is also the centre of our expectations, with the belief that the occupant has unlimited powers to make proposals which the people believe will solve the ills of the nation. Professor Louis W. Koenig in his clas-

sis study, *The Chief Executive*, of the American presidential political system, to which the Nigerian presidential system is similar, put this phenomenon of "unlimited power to make proposals for action" quite well when he wrote that since the President "is elected by and responsible to a national constituency, he better than anyone can bring problems forward, define the possible solutions, and advocate the one most likely to achieve the chosen end."<sup>19</sup> Continuing, Professor Koenig adds,

"But woe to him if trouble does not fade and the clouds do not roll back. He often will fail because some of us expect him to do things he cannot do; to maintain a posture of victory in any war the country is associated with, to secure from the investment of foreign aid a return of friendship and loyalty and to organise an administration of invariable efficiency. The President cannot extract conformity to United States objectives with absolute success from traditional allies whose wealth, and therefore independence, is on the rise. He cannot, merely by his own acts, keep the economy whirring at high speed, puncture ballooning unemployment, and fasten tight the lid on inflation. He cannot, by a wave of his hand, assure Americans of a life of peace, contentment, and security. He does not, as Sidney Hyman has suggested, 'have God's autonomous powers to make mountains without valleys as the mood strikes him.' The difference between what some of us imagine the Presidency to be and what it really is leads to disappointment, frustration, and attack."<sup>20</sup>

### *The Presidency: Real and Imaginary*

For Nigeria that was adopting the executive presidential system for the first time, there were various utterances which seemed to indicate that the Nigerian public did not quite fully understand the essence and implications of the executive presidency and the attendant issue of understanding presidential leadership under the new system. From the much talked about "First 100 Days" Press Conference given by the President after his first one hundred days in Office, one had the impression that many Nigerians, par-

ticularly those whose sympathies lay with political parties other than the one in power at the Centre, believed that President Alhaji Shehu Shagari was "too slow in getting things done". But, then, what is spectacular about the first 100 days of any administration anyway? As Dele Giwa pointed out in his essay, "The First 100 Days Gimmick", in the Lagos *Daily Times*, the initial idea of the 'First 100 Days' "is an American thing, cut to fit an administration like the late John Kennedy's which was nurtured on glamour and make-believe. In fact, the One Hundred Days magic was created by John Kennedy's image-makers in 1961. They knew they were planning the celebration of John Kennedy's One Hundred Days in Office", Giwa continued, "thus they engineered a number of memorable actions in the first three months of the [Kennedy] Administration that was soon christened 'Camelot' by a gullible American press."<sup>21</sup> That was in 1961. Giwa might have also added, "a gullible Nigerian press – and Nigerian public – in 1980"!

It was obvious that there were those who expected the Nigerian President to have performed miracles even in his first day in office, or, at least to have accomplished feats little short of miracles, even if it meant that the President should pay little respect to the Constitution by assuming more power than is due him and hence his disregard for the rules of the game. It was also equally obvious that the President was not going to be cajoled into doing things contrary to the spirit of the Constitution. As he said in his first New Year Message to the nation on January 1, 1980, "The year 1980 will be a significant land mark in the historical evolution of this nation as a working democracy and as a test case for the ability and maturity of Nigerians to operate the new Presidential System of Government we have chosen for ourselves. The measures of our success in the years ahead," President Shehu Shagari further said, "will depend on our ability to respect the rules of the game inherent in this system."<sup>22</sup> Continuing, the President said that "It is obvious that our success as a democratic Nation will largely depend on our ability to respect and work through the institutions

we have inherited."<sup>23</sup> The President was emphatic that he would act within the dictates and constraints of the Constitution.

For those Nigerians who expected that the executive presidential system will automatically solve their economic problems, provide them social benefits and improve on existing welfare services, it became apparent that it was false expectation. The expectations were understandable, and may even have been justified, in a retrospective look at the flood and multitude of campaign promises the various parties made as they vied for the coveted office; besides, the public now had a choice unlike in the Military period whose very nature made the idea of choice remote if not impossible. The politically matured ones and the realists, of course, understood that problems are not solved through rhetoric and by waving magic wands. No nation in this world has been able to provide its citizens the good things of life, particularly lasting ones, without proper prior planning, commitment to its programmes mapped out with deep cognisance of the economic realities and other factors which define its parameters. It was precisely in the attempt to caution the political leaders against raising the hopes of the public against unattainable goals that the exiting Nigerian Head of State, General Olusegun Obasanjo, had warned our leaders against what he called embarking "on the politics of deceit, false hopes, empty promises and unattainable goals which will eventually lead to unrealisable expectation, bitterness, discontent, and unhappiness of the electorate."<sup>24</sup> The expected fruits the new government would provide, particularly after 13 years of Military rule which the disgruntled and dissatisfied elements of the society are quick to accuse was responsible for the alleged denial to the Nigerian public not only of some civic liberties but also of some economic luxuries as well, were perhaps responsible for the exaggerated expectations. Thus, it was understandable that there were those critics who said that the new Government, and in particular the President, was not forth-coming in "delivering the goods." Aware of his limitations within the Constitution, and even more so of the realities of the nation's economic and finan-

cial positions, President Shagari pointed out in his 1980 New Year Message to the nation that "In the past few years, our country was faced with a lot of economic problems. In attempting to solve those problems," he continued, "decisions were hurriedly taken to the detriment of the national economy. Policies that contradict each other were implemented all in the interest of speedy discharge of government business."<sup>25</sup> "It is for these reasons," Alhaji Shehu Shagari further said, that his

"Administration will not succumb to any pressure to undertake projects or execute policies however superficially popular which are not based on sound calculations [and] long-term effects on the national economy and welfare of our people. The element of success of any nation lies not in just how fast policies are executed but also how well they are done."<sup>26</sup>

It is in this spirit of apparent taunted minimal government, or at least of caution, that many of the critics of the President accused him of being slow. Thus, for example, Professor Ayo Awojobi could compare the alleged tardy pace of the President to what he called "the dynamism of the Military," the very same administration he had repeatedly criticized. Professor Awojobi was quoted as saying that he was "missing the dynamism of the Military. Whatever you may say," he continued, "the Military rulers had their plans and when they come out with their plans, they make it without any iota of doubt where they are really going, to come through purposefully."<sup>27</sup> Continuing, he said that he does "not like static stability; I have been under conditions of dynamic stability in my own profession and that is the way I want to plunge this country," he added.<sup>28</sup> As if in anticipated reply to the likes of Professor Awojobi, President Shehu Shagari had said in his 1980 New Year Message that he does "not believe in playing to the gallery for the achievement of cheap popularity all in the name of 'dynamism'. I believe in serving the Nation with sincerity and within the context of its resource availability."<sup>29</sup> Continuing, Alhaji Shehu Shagari said:

"It is only by balanced planning that lasting benefits could be achieved. I believe that telling the nation the truth is the key to sustaining the national confidence. Realistic planning is the answer to social and economic problems of our country. In that connection, the National and State Assemblies will be well advised not to form the habit of passing Resolutions for provision of amenities or which entail public expenditure without ascertaining that the resources of the Government concerned can adequately accommodate the financial liability arising from such Resolutions. The consequences of raising public hope in vain include frustration and growing public disrespect for the Government, both of which must be avoided at all cost."<sup>30</sup>

Indeed, a note of caution had been sounded during one of the interviews with Alhaji Waziri Ibrahim in the *New Times Magazine* when the GNPP presidential candidate, while answering a question on what he expected to accomplish in his first 100 days as the president of this nation, replied that "We shall by all means avoid haste because haste is one of man's greatest enemies. The GNPP Government will make haste slowly. We shall not make haste to impress the people of the world because we may make many costly mistakes, the results of which may not be easily erased."<sup>31</sup> That pre-election statement from the GNPP presidential candidate became very meaningful for his victorious opponent, President Alhaji Shehu Shagari. Among a series of questions *West Africa* submitted to the Nigerian President was one in which the popular periodical referred to an article by the *Daily Times* columnist, Stanley Macebuh, which criticized President Shagari's Government for what the columnist called "minimal government" and *West Africa* wanted to know how the President reacted to that comment.<sup>32</sup> President Shagari replied that "Those who use the term 'minimal government' in describing my administration are trying to say, I think, that compared with the military administration, there has been a change in style."<sup>33</sup> Continuing, President Shagari said that "That was only to be expected. We are a democratically elected Government and we feel an obligation to consult the people before decisions affecting them are taken, and

this is naturally a slower process. We do not feel that the people should be pushed around and dictated to as was the case during the 13 years of military rule.”<sup>34</sup>

What was perhaps responsible for the misconception about the alleged lack of dynamism of the President was the failure of the critics to fully appreciate the powers the Constitution confers on him as the executive head of the nation. Indeed, it could be argued that those who expected the President to act “big and presidential” were inadvertently goading him to assume more powers than the Constitution confers on the Presidency. Perhaps, they expected lofty presidential declarations. Flamboyant pronouncements may make the headlines and result in thunderous applause from the gallery, particularly those proclamations which involve huge and impressive public expenditure. But what if the Government considers that the repercussions resulting from such expenditure are far more overwhelming? Thus, for example, the nation is at present suffering from the agonies of public expenditure on the exaggerated increases in salaries recommended in “the Udoji exercise,” a recommendation which the then government accepted and implemented. On the other hand, what happens in our new executive presidential system if the National Assembly does not provide the funds for the execution of such proclamations which could be realized only if the funds were available? Let us consider an example. The 1980 budget which the President presented had not yet been approved by the end of May. Naturally, the President was worried because of the delay. He agreed, at an interview with editors of two national newspapers, that Members of the National Assembly would like to spend a lot of time considering the budget and they could consider it objectively only if they spent some time on it. “But”, the President continued, “I think we cannot afford to drag the budget for too long, especially since the current budget is only for nine months and it was since the end of March that I presented this budget and we are now at the end of May.”<sup>35</sup> He was worried that, perhaps, by the time the National Assembly finished considering his budget proposal, the-

re would be only six months left. "So you find that some of the projects and programmes will suffer," he said, "because if you drag it too long, by the time you approve and the project starts, the period is already gone."<sup>36</sup> Continuing, the President said that "even when Members [of the National Assembly] were talking of inadequacy of certain provisions, they seemed to forget that even if they want an increase and they did not pass it now, it would not be possible for the government to implement" the project.<sup>37</sup>

That was an example of the normal budget proposal to the National Assembly and the delay it met. Pronouncements which lead to unsatisfied expectations are like a keg of gun-powder sitting under our young democracy where any presidential misadventure could be disastrous. Until Nigerians appreciate more fully their rights and responsibilities in the democratic process, until such a time when they are politicized enough to understand that rhetoric and polemics – particularly from those not in power – cannot solve their problems, it will be far more advantageous to have a president who governs with restraint, tolerance and respect for the Constitution.

The encouragement to prop and guide the infant nation taking its first few steps is not a recommendation for inaction, or even tardiness for that matter; rather, it is the necessary belaboured plea for understanding so that the teething problems of nationhood do not destroy our emerging stability which is still very fragile. The dynamism of General Murtala Muhammed, in contrast, was necessary, particularly after the period of lethargy, drift and decadence of the preceding regime. It was a period which required drastic solutions to the problems which confronted the nation then. What is needed most now in this period after the bases of stability have already been laid by the Murtala/Obasanjo Government, is the sustenance of that stability to the point where the average Nigerian is politicized enough to realize that the political development of this nation is his business and of utmost concern to him; that he should be fully involved in the democratic process. Thus, for example, the 1979 elections in which Nigerians parti-

icipated with enthusiasm and excitement may have demonstrated some large measure of the democratic process, particularly as the elections lacked large-scale abuses characteristic of the pre-Military political and electioneering experiences. The 1979 exercises, however, do not provide a guarantee that there would not be a reversal to the old order. It is necessary, therefore, to re-emphasize that what Nigeria needs most now is not so much a president who dances to the gallery and makes headlines, but a presidential leadership whose *presence* would be felt constantly at the helms of Government and by the Nation. Such presidential leadership exudes tolerance, restraint, persuasion and compromise for the national good, not flamboyance and polemics which could corrode and erode our stability. The new leadership in the new system should have an ear for the views of others, and not pursue the old dogma of "those who do not see an issue the way I see it are against me." And this is what President Shehu Shagari seems to be doing.

One should not expect much more than this at this stage of the nation's infancy, particularly with its present complexity and several forces which threaten the existing fragile cohesion. What the nation needs most now is political stability, because it is perhaps the most important prerequisite for the realization of a successful democratic process. General Obasanjo had indeed told political candidates during the electioneering period that "our first pre-occupation as a nation must be unity and stability, and this more so in the immediate post-military era. For we must survive before we can succeed."<sup>38</sup> It was the same objective of political stability that President Shehu Shagari assured the nation he was determined to accomplish. Indeed, it was in the same spirit of providing stability that the President invited nominations for Cabinet posts from the other political parties so that he would include Nigerians of other political parties other than the NPN in his government. But, as he told a joint session of the National Assembly on October 16, 1979, his invitation must not be misunderstood for an All-Party Government.<sup>39</sup>

The President's soft demure, particularly not being reactionary

and not reacting erratically to criticisms, most of which seem to be criticisms for the heck of it, all contribute to his endeavours to achieve his major objective — which also happens to be the major objective of the nation at this stage — and not illusionary and flamboyant proclamations, exaggerated claims and over-dramatizations about solving the social and economic problems of this nation. No human being anywhere in this country — or even in the world as a whole — no matter the amount of power the Constitution confers on him as President, can solve the problems of this nation (or of any other nation for that matter) in his entire first term in office, let alone in only his first 100 days in office. Any latent illusions about a President's limitless capabilities, therefore, should be completely wiped out from our minds particularly when we realize that the occupant of the presidential office, no matter what party he belongs to, has his powers restrained. The first kind of circumscribed powers within which the President operates is that defined by the Constitution, which we shall later look at in more detail. As at now, what is important is to understand the rationale behind the initial concept of limiting the powers of the president as contained in the American political system to which ours is similar.

The experiences of the American colonies under the British Crown had endowed them with a distaste for autocratic rule of the English monarchy — and by extension, any such institution in their independent country. Thus, after the American Revolution when the American Founding Fathers were attempting a new form of contrivance under which they would manage their affairs in their newly won independence, they sought an institution which could tightly limit the powers of whoever was to “rule” them for fear of a repetition of their experiences as colonies under the English monarchy which they believed was tyrannical. Thus, the fear of tyranny and the distrust of power (for the fear that “power corrupts, and that absolute power corrupts absolutely”), the American Founding Fathers devised a Constitution which not only shared but also separated the powers under which the young

nation would be governed. Indeed, they went one step further: that not only would the powers be shared and separated, but that the different depositories of such powers should check one another, neither of which was to become the dominant force. James Madison, who stands as one of the heroes of the Philadelphia Convention, put this quite well in the *Federalist Papers* No. 51, when he stated that "the great security against a gradual concentration of the several powers in the same department consists in giving to those who administer each department the necessary constitutional means and personal motives to resist encroachments of the others. Ambition," he wrote, "must be made to counteract ambition."<sup>40</sup> This underlying philosophy in drawing up the American Constitution, as President Woodrow Wilson later remarked, was a reflection of "the Whig Theory of political dynamics, which was a sort of unconscious copy of the Newtonian Theory of the universe".<sup>41</sup>

The American Founding Fathers in their quest for the separation of powers, had the hindsight of the English Constitution, as well as benefit from the philosophical thoughts contained in John Locke's *Two Treatises of Government* and William Blackstone's *Commentaries on the Laws of England* all of which regarded the concentration of power in one individual or institution as an invitation to tyranny. Thus, to avoid tyranny and preserve liberty, which was the underlying motivation for the American Revolution, power should be dispersed. And hence indeed John Adams regarded constitution-making as essentially the establishment of "a multitude of curious and ingenious inventions to balance in their turn, all those powers [entrusted to the various institutions], to check the passions peculiar to them and to control them from rushing into the exorbitancies to which they are most addicted."<sup>42</sup> After a lot of soul-searching, the American Founding Fathers produced a constitution which separated the powers of government into the Executive, Legislative and the Judiciary. The Nigerian Constitutional Drafting Committee, which operated within the parameters of our own social and political experiences.

benefitted from the deliberations and the experiences of the American Founding Fathers who had also been entrusted to draw up a constitutional contrivance with which to manage the affairs of their young nation.

What this meant in the context of our own experience of constitution-making was also a separation of powers among the three areas of government namely: the Presidency (Executive Branch), the National Assembly (Legislative Branch) and the Judiciary. The Constitution in our system also restricts the powers of the Executive Branch as well as of the other branches. Thus, for example, the President did not immediately start his presidency with a Cabinet because the power of confirmation of his choices of people for Cabinet posts rested with the Senate. The process of confirmation by the Senate of his ministerial choices lasted nearly a month. It became obvious that the President – and indeed, the nation – could not do much until the National Assembly gave Alhaji Shagari a Cabinet. Secondly, the situation was particularly more so because the President's party, the National Party of Nigeria (NPN), did not control a majority vote in the Senate which is the body empowered to confirm or reject nominees of the President for ministerial appointments and other posts. The case of PRP Governor Musa Balarabe of Kaduna State, whose State House of Assembly is controlled by the NPN, is an exaggerated or extreme example of the resultant messy situation where an executive head does not have control over the institution which ratifies his choices for ministerial appointments. Thirdly, even the restraints and constraints which Alhaji Shehu Shagari had to contend with within his own party in making his choices of party members for ministerial appointments were believed to be quite enormous. It is in view of all these factors which tend to define or limit the performance of the President, contrary to the exaggerated expectation of what President Shagari could or should have done, that the general characteristics of the institution of the Presidency in such presidential political systems should be briefly mentioned.

In nations, such as the United States of America, where the presidential system has been in existence for sometime, the presidency has developed into a respected institution. But whether in the U.S.A. where the presidential system has a long tradition or in Nigeria where it is still in its infancy, there are some general characteristics which include the permanence of the office, not the individual, because presidents come and go but the institution remains. There is also the uniting nature of the Presidency, a factor which acts as a focus around which the nation mobilizes its resources and its hopes and aspirations — and hence the office is not only the focal point of the political system but also the focus of leadership and leadership qualities. Another characteristic of the office is its lack of rigidity, a flexibility which inadvertently allows the occupant to retain his individuality; he may thus emerge as a placid and lukewarm president who shuns conflicts, confrontations and decisive actions, or, as a dynamic and purposeful leadership who sees and uses the office for the maximum good for the largest number of people. Another characteristic is the issue of the limitations of the office, because the constitution in an executive presidential system shares power among the three arms of Government, namely, Legislative, Judicial and the Executive Branch itself; hence, the presidency enjoys but does not monopolize power and thus operates within a world of limitations. As America's late President Lyndon B. Johnson once said while remarking on the limitations of the presidency, "I do have disappointments and moments of distress, as I think every President has had."<sup>43</sup>

This question of limitation of the presidency means that the institution, and hence the occupant, is quite often faced with critical problems it cannot solve despite its impressive powers. In a way, this is another form of limitation — the power of public opinion — which will make a president take action either for or against a particular opinion because of his own personal (usually political) wishes in consideration for the interests of a particular sector of the electorate whose support he seeks or respects. Thus, for example, an American presidential candidate may consider the effect

of a particular opinion on the American Jewish community or the Black American electorate whose vote he seeks. Similarly, the weight of national public opinion could influence a presidential action. Thus, the American public was shocked when, at the end of his prepared speech in a national broadcast, the late President Lyndon B. Johnson announced that he would not seek re-nomination for the 1968 presidential election. American opinion against the Vietnam War was believed to be largely responsible. Similarly, former President Richard Nixon who was a strong advocate of the total military defeat of Vietnam and who actually intensified the war, was the same person who bowed to American public opinion and pulled America out of that military fiasco in Southeast Asia.

Similarly, here in Nigeria, Alhaji Shehu Shagari had to contend with the power blocs within his own party, and even outside his party. When he was asked by a group of *Daily Times* journalists during the election campaigns on his views of the role of the President of this nation, Alhaji Shagari had said that the President, as the Chief Executive, "should be a real symbol of national unity and national cohesion."<sup>44</sup> Continuing, he said that "The President should regard every constituency as his own, and while we now fight among ourselves with the various political parties to attain power, after all said and done, a President should no longer lean towards favouring his party at the expense of others; as long as anything is agreed, everything is in the national interest. The national interest should be paramount in his heart rather than the partisan interest or sectional interest," Alhaji Shagari added.<sup>45</sup> Thus, a president quite often may have to subdue his own personal desires, no matter how lofty they may appear to him – and even to others – because of extenuating factors operating within the political system. President Jimmy Carter of the U.S.A., another example, also realized that the existence of several power blocs provided effective limits against his expectations of achieving his almost evangelical crusade for human rights, whether the benefactors were Soviet Jews in Communist Russia, Palestinians in

the Middle East or even disprivileged Americans in his own country.

A respect for this doctrine of the separation of powers could mean a rigid adherence to the limited interpretation of the powers of the President. This literalist view was best expressed by President William H. Taft when he said that "The true view of the Executive function is . . . that the President can exercise no power which cannot be fairly and reasonably traced to some specific grant of power or justly implied and included within such express grant as proper and necessary to its exercises."<sup>46</sup> Continuing, Taft, in formulating the operative belief of the rigid adherence to the letter of the Constitution, said that "such specific grant must be either in the Federal Constitution or in an act of Congress passed in pursuance thereof. There is no undefined residuum of power which he can exercise because it seems to him to be in the public interest."<sup>47</sup> Several decades later another American President, President Eisenhower, echoed the same doctrine when he told the Convention of the National Young Republican Organization in 1953 that the American presidential system "is in peril unless each branch willingly accepts and discharges its own clear responsibilities — and respects the rights and responsibilities of the others."<sup>48</sup> The practical demonstration of this interpretation, it has been suggested, results in "little taste for innovation in social policy"<sup>49</sup> and "abdicates action to passivity" because this interpretation "excessively neglects the President's independent powers, which again and again have been a mighty sword in times of crisis and change."<sup>50</sup>

At the other end is the kind of definition which arrogates power to the Presidency with maximum liberality. The President in such circumstances is seen acting "big and presidential", and he uses his presidential power to great ends. Such a president emerges more often at the time of crisis. Drawing on the liberal interpretation of the executive powers of the Presidency can perhaps be traced to the latent acceptance that the institution has an edge over the triumvirate of equal powers. This was largely due to the towering

presence of George Washington who was assumed would be the President of the new republic at the Convention. As Pierce Butler, representing South Carolina at the Convention put it, the executive powers of the Presidency would not "have been so great had not many members cast their eyes toward General Washington as President; and their shaped ideas of the Powers to be given the President, by their opinions of his Virtue."<sup>51</sup>

Whatever the interpretation of the powers of the executive branch is regarded to be, a President wants his bills passed and his administration a successful one. He must therefore be able to persuade the Legislative Branch, in our case the National Assembly, to assist him obtain his objectives of a great nation that can cater for the aspirations of its peoples. Hence, one may tend to agree with President Harry S. Truman of the U.S.A., whose own deep experiences on the limitations of the Executive Branch made him remark that "The principal power that the President has is to bring people in and try to persuade them to do what they ought to do without persuasion. That's what I spend my time doing. That's what the powers of the President amount to."<sup>52</sup> It is the same thing that Professor Richard Neustadt also echoes in his statement that what the American White House wants members of the American Congress to do "is what they ought to do for their sake and on their authority."<sup>53</sup> What about our system and our State House?

## THE CONSTITUTION AND THE PRESIDENCY

The process of preparation of the Constitution took two stages: first, the 49-member Constitution Drafting Committee which produced the Draft, and the Constituent Assembly which debated it before it was promulgated into law by the Supreme Military Council in 1978. The Constitution, which is supreme and whose provisions have binding force on all authorities and persons throughout the country, has as its aims the promotion of good government and welfare of all persons in the country "on the principles of freedom, equality, and justice and for the purpose of consolidating the unity of our people." It provides for an elected Executive President who is also the Commander-in-Chief of the country's Armed Forces. To qualify for election to the office of the President, a candidate must be a citizen of Nigeria and at least 35 years old. A candidate is deemed to be duly elected as President if he wins a majority of the votes cast at the presidential election *and* not less than one quarter of the votes in not less than two-thirds of the States. Where no candidate meets the above requirements, the Federal Electoral Commission (FEDECO) shall within seven days of the result of the election arrange for another. The President cannot hold office for more than two terms of four years each.

The Constitution also provides for a National Assembly which is vested with the legislative powers of the nation; it is empowered to make laws for the peace, order and good government of the nation. The National Assembly is made up of the Senate and the

House of Representatives. It has a life period of four years from the commencement of the first seating of each House; both Houses must each seat for a period of not less than 181 days in a year. The Senate has 95 members made up of five elected Senators from each of the 19 States. To qualify for membership of the Senate, a person, besides satisfying other requirements, must be a Nigerian citizen and must be at least 30 years old. The House of Representatives on the other hand has 450 members, and representation in it is based on the population of each State. A member must be at least 21 years old. The legislative body at the State level is the House of Assembly whose total number of seats is three times the total number of seats that state has in the House of Representatives. Each State House of Assembly must also seat for at least 181 days in a year. The Constitution also provides for each of the 19 states a Governor as the Chief Executive.

The most immediate apparent differences between the new Constitution and the Westminster parliamentary system in pre-civil war Nigeria are the fact that the President and his Ministers, unlike the Prime Minister and his Cabinet, are not members of the National Assembly and are normally absent from debates. Also, elected representatives are outside the real centre of power since the Executive President and his ministers make the big decisions. It would thus appear that the Assemblies could be regarded as what *West Africa* called "talking shops."<sup>54</sup> But the mix-grill realities of the National Assembly where no one party (particularly that of the President) enjoys a preponderance majority means that there is no room for automatic rubber-stamping. This notwithstanding, the President has wide powers under the Constitution.

He is not only the Head of State, but also the Chief Executive of the Federation and Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces of the country. As the Chief Executive, the executive powers of the Federation are vested in him; this is an important provision which could ensure effective political leadership. The President himself can exercise such powers directly or through the Vice President

and his Federal Ministers or Officers in the public service of the Federation. His executive powers, according to Part II, Section 5(1)(b) of the Constitution, also "extend to the execution and maintenance of this Constitution, all laws made by the National Assembly and to all matters with respect to which the National Assembly has for the time being power to make laws." The President, however, cannot declare a state of war between Nigeria and any other country except with the sanction of a resolution of both Houses of the National Assembly sitting in a joint session. The President cannot also deploy any member of the Armed Forces on combat duty outside Nigeria except with the prior approval of the Senate.

The Constitution at Chapter VI Part I Section 140 provides for the establishment of certain Federal executive bodies. These Federal Commissions and Councils include the Council of State, Federal Civil Service Commission, Federal Electoral Commission, Federal Judicial Service Commission, National Defence Council, National Economic Council, National Population Commission, National Security Council, and, the Police Service Commission. Except in the case of *ex-officio* members or where other provisions are made in the Constitution, the Chairman and members of any bodies so established are to be appointed by the President subject to the confirmation by the Senate; but there are some exceptions. For example, in appointing a person Chairman or member of the Council of State, the National Defence Council, or the National Security Council, the President is not required to obtain confirmation by the Senate. Similarly, the President is not required to obtain confirmation of the Senate for the appointment of the National Federal Judicial Service Commission or the National Population Commission; but he shall consult the Council of State. The Constitution at Part I Chapter VI Section 157 also invests the President with the power to appoint and remove from office the Secretary to the Federal Government, the Head of the Federal Civil Service, Ambassadors, High Commissioners and other Principal Representatives of Nigeria abroad. Other similar appoint-

ments include Federal Ministers, Special Advisers to the President, Federal Permanent Secretaries, or Chief Executives in any Federal Ministry or Government department, as well as any office of the personal staff of the President. Appointments by the President of Nigeria's Ambassadors and other Principal Representatives abroad, as well as of the other posts, should reflect the Federal character of the nation as well as the need to promote national unity; their appointments are subject to confirmation by the Senate. Other presidential appointments include the Chief Justice and other judges of the Supreme Court of Nigeria, the President of the Federal Court of Appeal, Chief of Defence Staff and, the Inspector-General of the Nigeria Police.

As Chief Executive, the President at Section (75) 2 is required to present to each House of the National Assembly at any time in each financial year estimates of the revenues and expenditures of the Federation for the following year. The heads of the expenditure contained in the estimates expenditure is then included in a bill, called the Appropriation Bill, which provides "for the issue from the Consolidated Revenue Fund of the sums necessary to meet the expenditure and the appropriation of those sums for the purposes specified therein." Even though the powers of the National Assembly include votes on the budget, there is a constitutional contrivance that will prevent the Assembly from starving the President of funds. This particular section of the Constitution, at Part II, Chapter V (E) Section 76, states that

"If the Appropriation Bill in respect of any financial year has not been passed into law by the beginning of the financial year, the President may authorise the withdrawal of money from the Consolidated Revenue Fund of the Federation for the purpose of meeting expenditure necessary to carry on the services of the Government of the Federation for a period not exceeding 6 months or until the coming into operation of the Appropriation Act, whichever is the earlier;

Provided that the withdrawal in respect of any such period shall not exceed the amount authorised to be withdrawn from the

Consolidated Revenue Fund of the Federation under the provisions of the Appropriation Act passed by the National Assembly for the corresponding period in the immediately preceding financial year, being an amount proportionate to the total amount so authorized for the immediately preceding financial year."

The above constitutional provision for finance in running the affairs of the country under the peculiar circumstance is quite different from the usual provision which, according to Section 74 (4) of the Constitution, requires approval by the National Assembly.

Another important issue is the question of a State of Emergency. The Constitution empowers the President to declare a State of Emergency under specified conditions by causing this to be published in the Official Gazette of the Federal Government. This provision, at Section 265 of the Constitution, is restricted by qualifications in subsequent sub-sections which require that the President must submit the order proclaiming a State of Emergency to the President of the Senate and to the Speaker of the House of Representatives for approval by two-thirds of each House of the National Assembly. A State of Emergency, once it has been declared may last for a period of six months and may be extended for a further 6-month period by a resolution passed by the National Assembly in like manner. The State of Emergency is to lapse within two days when the National Assembly is in session or 10 days when it is not, if the extension is not agreed upon or where the original proclamation was not approved by the two-thirds majority vote.

The Constitution at Section 265 (4) also provides that the President can declare a State of Emergency in any of the States of the Federation if the Governor of such a State, with the sanction of a resolution supported by two-thirds majority of the State House of Assembly, requests him to do so "because there is actual breakdown, or a clear and present danger of an actual breakdown, of public order and public safety." However, the Constitution also specifies that the President does not have the power to rule by dec-

ree or remove the Governor of a State during the period of State of Emergency, nor does the National Assembly have the power to legislate for such a State when the nation is not at war and the State Government can still meet to transact government business. This is an important provision which contrasts with what obtained during the First Republic when the Federal Government could not only suspend the Premier and the Government but could also legislate for and directly administer the affairs of that State. A classic example was in 1962 when the NPC-NCNC Federal Government declared a State of Emergency in the Western Region whose government the federal authorities suspended and appointed Dr. M. Majekodunmi its Administrator. As many dispassionate political observers believed, that exercise was a means to destroy, or at least to weaken, the institutional foundations of the Action Group Party. It was further believed that the State of Emergency in the Western Region made it possible for the NPC-NCNC Federal Government to excise the Mid-West Region from the West, thereby reducing the strength and size of the home-base of the Action Group Party. The provisions in the new Constitution on this question of a State of Emergency in a State will prevent a repetition of the past experience should a party (or parties) in power at the centre attempt to suppress another political party in power in one of the States of the Federation.

It would appear that the Constitution has given the President vast amount of powers. To a large extent, this is true. But the powers are not without limitations. For example, the Constitution has delineated the affairs of the nation into three categories, namely, Executive, Legislature and Judiciary. Thus, though executive powers are vested with the President, he cannot legislate since it is only the National Assembly that can make laws. Further, the National Assembly is empowered to set up investigating committees into alleged abuses of public funds and into the execution of the laws. Such committees and sub-committees, like the National Assembly itself, have the power to summon anyone to appear before them and, with some limitations, such as the plea of national

security, subpoena any document. Though latent, these powers of the National Assembly could provide deterrence and checks against an over-ambitious president.

Another restriction on the powers of the President is that the Senate has to ratify certain presidential appointments. Further, such appointments should reflect the federal character of the nation. Indeed, while the President is empowered to make appointments to specified organs or institutions, such appointments are insulated from executive control by the constitutional provision that such presidential appointees cannot be removed from office by the President but by a resolution to that effect by the National Assembly. Thus, for example, Section 145 (1) specifies that "In exercising its powers to make appointments or to exercise disciplinary control over persons, the Federal Civil Service Commission, the Federal Judicial Service Commission and the Federal Electoral Commission shall not be subject to the direction or control of any other authority or person."

There is also another provision in the Constitution which limits the powers of the President. It is possible that a president on whom a Constitution confers excessive powers could use his position to entrench himself in office. The Nigerian Constitution has taken care of this by emphasizing in its very first provision at Part I Section 1 its supremacy over *all* authorities *and* persons in the country, that is, including whoever is the President himself. It states that "This Constitution is supreme and its provisions shall have binding force on all authorities and persons throughout the Federal Republic of Nigeria." Still in this effort of preventing a President from entrenching himself in office, the Constitution at Section 128 (1) (b) limits the tenure of office of the President to two terms of four years each.

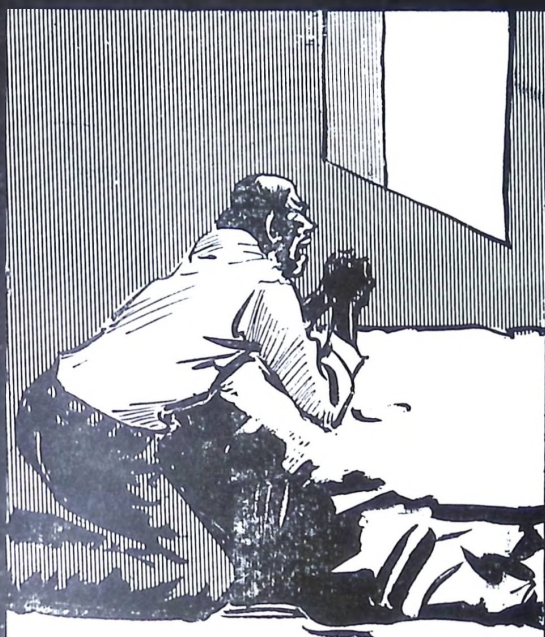
Another limitation on the President is the latent threat of impeachment as provided for in the Constitution in its Section 132 (2) - (11). Indeed, consequences to the President for his infringement of the Code of Conduct also provide limitation on his actions. Lastly, one has to emphasize that the division of the func-

tions of Government into three branches — Executive, Legislative, and Judicial — means that the other two arms of Government can limit the powers of the President. A few examples of limitations by the Legislative Branch have been given; so also are a few examples of limitations from the Judiciary. But perhaps the most important limitation by the Judiciary is the interpretation of any legislative bills or executive acts. Thus, the Constitution provides the Supreme Court the jurisdiction to determine the constitutionality of any legislative act of the National Assembly or executive act by the President.

Even though there are restraints here and there, the executive powers conferred on the President are so vast that a political leader who means well could do a lot for the country. For one thing, the President as the Chief Executive is free from quite a few restraints of either the National Assembly or his political party — unlike what it was during the First Republic. The new conditions are very attractive and not surprisingly there were many aspirants to the presidency, wooing the electorate with all sorts of promises. There was also a proliferation of political parties; over 50 political associations were formed with the lift of the ban on politics in September 1978. The Federal Electoral Commission (FEDECO), under the Chairmanship of Chief Michael A. Ani, screened them to find out which of all these parties could contest the elections. The test was the “federal character” of each of the parties. This meant that a political party had to have executive members from at least two-thirds of the 19 states and offices in an equal number of States. The additional constitutional requirements at Part III (D) Section 202 (a) — (f) as well as Part III (D) Section 204 would mean that the tribal pattern of any political party which expects to control the National Assembly, as in the First Republic, has now been greatly discouraged.

The Constitution, which became operative on October 1, 1979, has provided Nigeria guidelines with which her leaders will run the affairs of their country. While the success of the new political system will depend a lot on the integrity of those who operate the

JOSY AJIBOYE ON SUNDAY



...AND SO LORD, GIVE US A GOOD  
PRESIDENT.... BUT NOT  
'PRESIDENT FOR LIFE'!

Constitution, one must also emphasize that the document has been able to plug those loop-holes which made a mockery of the politics in pre-civil war Nigeria. Its architects certainly were able to produce a document that transcended the past, recognized the present realities of the country's non-homogeneous political culture and social bearings, and to some extent have anticipated the future progress of our political and national development. In the process, it should create, in the words of General Muhammed to members of the Constitution Drafting Committee, "viable political institutions which will ensure maximum participation and consensus and orderly succession to political power;"<sup>55</sup> it should eliminate "cut-throat political competition" and instead "develop consensus politics and government based on a community of all interests rather than the interest of a section of the country."<sup>56</sup>

## APPENDIX



*Appendix A*

**GOVERNORS OF THE RESPECTIVE STATES**

	Governor	Party
1. Anambra	Mr. Jim. I. Nwobodo	NPP
2. Bauchi	Alhaji A. Tatar Ali	NPN
3. Bendel	Prof. Ambrose Alli	UPN
4. Benue	Mr. Aper Aku	NPN
5. Borno	Alhaji Mohammed Goni	GNPP
6. Cross River	Dr. Clement N. Isong	NPN
7. Gongola	Alhaji A. A. Barde	GNPP
8. Imo	Mr. Sam Mbakwe	NPP
9. Kaduna	Alhaji Balarabe Musa	PRP
10. Kano	Alhaji Mohammed A. Rimi	PRP
11. Kwara	Alhaji Adamu Atta	NPN
12. Lagos	Alhaji Lateef K. Jakande	UPN
13. Niger	Alhaji M. Anwar Ibrahim	NPN
14. Ogun	Chief V. O. Onabanjo	UPN
15. Ondo	Chief Michael A. Ajasin	UPN
16. Oyo	Mr. Bola Ige	UPN
17. Plateau	Mr. Solomon Lar	NPP
18. Rivers	Chief Melford O. Okilo	NPN
19. Sokoto	Alhaji Shehu Kangiwa	NPN

**SUMMARY OF GOVERNORSHIP  
OF EACH PARTY**

1. NPN	7
2. UPN	5
3. NPP	3
4. GNPP	2
5. PRP	2
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>19</b>

Appendix B

LIST OF ELECTED SENATORS IN THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

<i>State</i>	<i>Constituency</i>	<i>Name of Member</i>	<i>Political Party</i>
1. Anambra	Anambra South	Anah, Chief N. N.	NPP
	Anambra North	Ani, Engr Isaiah Nnamani	NPP
	Anambra East	Nwali, Dr Offia	NPP
	Anambra West	Obi, Prince Onyeabo	NPP
	Anambra Central	Okwu, Chief Basil Charles	NPP
2. Bauchi	Bauchi South-East	Ahmed, Alhaji Mohammed Uba	NPN
	Bauchi South	Dimis, Alhaji Ibrahim	NPN
	Bauchi Central	Rufa'i, Alhaji Ahmadu Damyama	NPN
	Bauchi North	Saleh, Alhaji Abdul- Kadir Yalwaji	NPN
	Bauchi East	Waziri, Alhaji Ibrahim Jalo	NPN
3. Bendel	Bendel Central	Akpata, Chief Emmanuel Idahosa Oluwafemi	UPN
	Bendel Delta	Atake, Justice F. O. M.	UPN
	Bendel South	Dafinone, Mr David Omueya	NPN
	Bendel East	Ikpo, Mr Nosike	UPN
	Bendel North	Umolu, Chief John Osiomele	UPN
4. Benue	Benue North- Central	Abogede, Mr Andrew	NPN
	Benue West	Ali, Col. Dr Ahmadu Adah C. O. N.	NPN
	Benue East	Suemo-Chia, Mr	NPN

<i>State</i>	<i>Constituency</i>	<i>Name of Member</i>	<i>Political Party</i>
	Benue South-Central	Ebute, Mr Ameh	NPN
	Benue East Central	Farka, Chief Joseph Sarwuan	NPN
5. Borno	Borno East	Bama, Mallam Umara Lawan	GNPP
	Borno North-Central	Kadi, Alhaji Idrisa	GNPP
	Borno North-West	Lawan, Alhaji Mohammed Girgiri	NPN
	Borno South	Mangga, Mr Ja'Afar Jarafu	GNPP
	Borno West	Sanda, Mr Bukar	GNPP
6. Cross River	Eket Calabar	Akan, Mr Victor Ansa, Prince Joseph Oqua	NPN GNPP
	Oyo	Daniel, Mr George Asuquo	GNPP
	Ikot Ekpene	Etiebet, Mr Donald Dick	NPN NPN
	Ogoja	Wayas, Dr Joseph	NPN
7. Gongola	Wukari Numan Mubi Adamawa Muri	Audu, Mr Iliya Galiya Gilama, Mr Gayus Kajal, Mr Bitrus Bzigu Waziri, Mr Mahmud Zing, Pastor Luka Zanya	NPN UPN GNPP GNPP UPN
8. Imo	Owerri Okigwe	Anyanwu, Chief Tony Echeruo, Mr Emeka Patrick	NPP NPP
	Orlu	Emezie, Dr Elijah Ebonine	NPP
	Umuahia	Ojukwu, Mr Simeon Mba	NPP

<i>State</i>	<i>Constituency</i>	<i>Name of Member</i>	<i>Political Party</i>
	Aba	Wachuku, Dr Jaja Anucha	NPP
9. Kaduna	Katsina/ Dutsinma Malumfashi/ Funtua Ikara/Zaria/ Birnin Gwari Daura/ Mani/Kankiya	Ali, Alhaji Abba  Bakori, Mr Bello  Barau, Alhaji Ibrahim  Daura, Alhaji Yusuf Aliyu	NPN  PRP  PRP  NPN
	Kachia/ Jemaa/Saminaka	Madaki, Mr Jacob Kure	NPN
10. Kano	Kano North-Central  Kano South Kano South-West Kano North-East Kano Central	Danbatta, Alhaji Usman Alto Gaya, Alhaji Adamu  Musa, Alhaji Hamisu Zakari, Alhaji Ahmed Zuwo, Alhaji Sabo Bakin	PRP PRP  PRP PRP PRP
11. Kwara	Kwara South Kwara Central  Kwara North  Kwara South-East Ilorin/Asa	Obaro, Mr Isa Adebayo, Mr Cornelius Olatunji Gani, Mr Aliyu Mohammed  Olu, Mr Justus Olabode Saraki, Dr Abubakar Sola	NPN  UPN  NPN  UPN NPN
12. Lagos	Ikorodu  Ikeja	Abiru, Alhaji Mubashir Akanbi Olatunji Ajayi, Mr Adeyiga Omopenu	  UPN  UPN

<i>State</i>	<i>Constituency</i>	<i>Name of Member</i>	<i>Political Party</i>
	Epe	Ayantuga, Dr Obafemi	UPN
	Badagry	Durosimi, Mr	UPN
	Lagos	Abayomi Adeyosola Shitta-Bey, Alhaji Sikiru Ayodeji	UPN
13. Niger	Minna/Kagara	Dada, Col. Garba Musa	NPN
	Bida	Kolo, Alhaji Ibrahim	NPN
	Suleja, formerly Abuja	Magaji, Alhaji Abubakar	NPN
	Kontagora	Mu'azu, Alhaji Abdullah	NPN
	Agaie/Lapai	Salihu, Alhaji Jibrin	NPN
14. Ogun	Ijebu North/East	Adesanya, Mr Abraham A.	UPN
	Ijebu-Ode/Ijebu Remo	Ladega, Mr Daniel A.	UPN
	Egbado	Odebisi, Chief Jonathan Akinremi O.	UPN
	North/South		
	Abeokuta/Ifo/ Otta	Oyero, Chief Kunle	UPN
	Odeda/ Obafemi/Owode	Sogbein, Chief Samuel O.	UPN
15. Ondo	Ondo Central	Akintoye, Prof. Stephen Adebanji	UPN
	Ondo North	Fasanmi, Mr Ayo	UPN
	Ondo East	Ogunleye, Chief Emmanuel Kayode	UPN
	Ondo West	Oke, Prof. David Olatunbosun	UPN
	Ondo South	Onunkun, Mr Michael Atijosan Emmanuel	UPN
16. Oyo	Oyo	Adegoke, Mr Ademola	UPN
	Oshun I	Adeoye, Dr Christopher 'Laogun	UPN
	Oshun II	Adeleke, Chief Ayoola	UPN
	Ibadan	Adesina, Mr Olalere	UPN
	Ife/Ilesha	Ilori, Dr Christopher Oladosu	UPN

<i>State</i>	<i>Constituency</i>	<i>Name of Member</i>	<i>Political Party</i>
17. Plateau	Lafia/ Akwanga/Awe	Agwai, Mr Muhammed Musa	NPN
	Shendam	Hoomkwap, Mr George Baba	NPN
	Keffi Pankshin/ Mangu/Kanam	Yepwi, Mr Thomas Matta, Mr Garba	NPP NPP
	Jos	Pam, Mr John Wash	NPP
18. Rivers	Rivers V (Degema)		NPN
	Rivers II- (Ahoada)/ Ikwerre/Etche)	Ellah, Mr Francis John	NPP
	Rivers IV (Bonny/Bori)	Nunieh, Barrister Cyrus Nwidonane	NPN NPP
	Rivers I (Phalga) Rivers III (Brass/Sagbama/ Yenogoa)	Wali, Dr Obi	NPP
		Zuofa, Mr Amatari	NPN
19. Sokoto	Sokoto East	Abdulkarim, Mr Muhtari	NPN
	Sokoto North	Gada, Alhaji Barba	NPN
	Sokoto Central	Kware, Alhaji Garba	NPN
	Sokoto West	Muza, Alhaji Haruna	NPN
	Sokoto North	Zuru, Alhaji Hassan	NPN

#### SUMMARY OF POSITION OF PARTIES

NPN	36
UPN	28
NPP	16
GNPP	8
PRP	7
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>95</b>

Appendix C

HON. MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

<i>State</i>	<i>Constituency</i>	<i>Name of Member</i>	<i>Political Party</i>
1. Anambra	Awka	1. Adigwe, Mr F. C.	NPP
	Abakaliki East-Central	2. Alo-Nwokeocha, Mr. Martins Godwin	NPP
	Ezza	3. Chima, Mr I. U.	NPP
	Njikoka South	4. Echetabu, Mr E. O.	NPP
	Onitsha South	5. Emekekwe, Dr E. C.	NPP
	Anambra North	6. Emeka, Chief J. C.	NPN
	Uzo-Uwani	7. Eze, Mrs J. C.	NPP
	Nnewi	8. Ezeoke, Mr E. Ume	NPP
	Onitsha North-East	9. Modebe, Mr C. A.	NPP
	Ihiala	10. Ndukwe, Mr F. E.	NPP
	Isi-Uzo	11. Ngwu, Mr J. C.	NPP
	Oji-River/Agwu South	12. Nwandison, Mr F. N. C.	NPP
	Ishielu East	13. Nwangbo, Mr Nwegede	NPP
	Abakaliki North/West	14. Nwankwo, Mr A. O.	NPP
	Nkanu	15. Nweke, Mr E. N.	NPP
	Igbo-Etiti	16. Ogbobe, Engineer Aka	NPN
	Idemili	17. Ojukwu, Mr J. C.	NPP
	Ikwo	18. —	—
	Agwu North/ East/West	19. Okeke, Mr Peter C	NPP
	Ezega	20. Okoli, Mr Joseph	NPP
	Aguata South	21. Okoye, Mr J. O.	NPP
	Njikoka North	22. Okoye, Mr M. C.	NPP



<i>State</i>	<i>Constituency</i>	<i>Name of Member</i>	<i>Political Party</i>
	Toro	17. Toro, Mr Isa Yakubu	NPN
	Gamawa	18. Tuggar, Mr Abubakar	NPN
	Dukku West	19. Yarima, Alhaji Adamu	GNPP
	Yamultu-Deba	20. Zambuk, Mr Y. G.	NPN
3. Bendel	Bomadi	1. Abeki, Mr C. F.	UPN
	Oshimili	2. Agbamuche, Mr M. A.	NPP
	Okpe	3. Ayomanor, Mr A. E.	NPN
	Akoko Edo	4. Balogun, Mr J. B.	UPN
	Isoko	5. Egbuwoku, Mr T.	UPN
	Ethiope South	6. Gbinije, Chief P. A.	NPN
	Ughelli	7. Ideh, Mr P. E. S.	NPN
	Ika	8. Iduwe, Mr A. N.	UPN
	Okpebho	9. Iyayi, Mr F. O.	UPN
	Etsako	10. Momodu, Mr Z.	UPN
	Ndokwa	11. Nwose, Chief M.	UPN
	Oredo	12. Ogida, Mr P. Eguaseki	UPN
	Owan	13. Okun, Mr M. O.	UPN
	Warri	14. Omoruwa, Chief Bon	UPN
	Orhionmwon	15. Owie, Mr Roland	UPN
	Ethiope North	16. Sowho, Dr E. J.	NPN
	Agbazilo	17. Uneh, Mr R. I.	UPN
	Ovia	18. Uwagboe, Mr B. I.	NPN
	Aniocha	19. Uwechue, Mr G. N.	NPP
	Burutu	20. Zuokumor, Mr J. M.	NPN
4. Benue	Bassa/Dekina	1. Abu, Mr J. O.	NPN
	Ankpa South	2. Abutu, Alhaji A.	NPN
	Okpokwu West	3. Adoyi, Mr S. O.	NPN
	Gboko East	4. Afaityo, Mr D.	NPN
	Oju	5. Agi, Mr David Okwoche	NPN

<i>State</i>	<i>Constituency</i>	<i>Name of Member</i>	<i>Political Party</i>
	Idah South	6. Atanu, Dr E. Y.	NPN
	Okpokwu East	7. Attah, Mr David	NPP
	Gwer West	8. Awuna, Mr P. O.	NPN
	Katsina-Ala	9. Chaha, Mr B. A.	NPN
	Otukpo	10. Ejiga, Mr E.	NPN
	Idah North	11. Idakwo, Mr S. I.	NPN
	Makurdi	12. Iortim, Mr V.	NPN
	Kwande East	13. Kor, Mr Peter	NPN
	Vandeikya West	14. —	—
	Kwande West	15. Swem, Mr E. K.	NPN
	Gboko West	16. Tarka, Mr S. M.	NPN
	Gwer East	17. Ugo, Mr J. K.	NPN
	Ankpa North	18. —	—
	Vandeikya East	19. Uyeh, Mr J. U.	NPN
5. Borno	Bama	1. Ali, Alhaji Abba	GNPP
	Fune	2. Ali, M. Bulama	GNPP
	Maiduguri	3. Ali, Mr Ibrahim M.	GNPP
	Gujba	4. Alhaji, Gambo	GNPP
	Ngala East	5. Bukar, Mr Omar	GNPP
	Nguru Central	6. Dagari, Alhaji Muhammadu	GNPP
	Damaturu	7. Damaturu, Alhaji Kachalla	GNPP
	Fika South	8. Gadaka, M. Barde	GNPP
	Monguno	9. Haruna, Alhaji Jidda	GNPP
	Dambo'a	10. Juggal, M. Mohammed Zanna Waziri	GNPP
	Konduga	11. Konduga, Alhaji Sanda	GNPP
	Ngala West	12. Lawan, Mr Tijani	GNPP
	Geidam South	13. Lawan, Mr Umar	GNPP
	Kukawa North-West	14. Limambe, Mr Bukar	GNPP
	Kukawa South-East	15. Ma'aji, Mr Maina	GNPP

<i>State</i>	<i>Constituency</i>	<i>Name of Member</i>	<i>Political Party</i>
	Gwoza	16. Mbicho, Mr Audu	GNPP
	Matchina	17. Mele, Mr M. Bukar	GNPP
	Biu South	18. Mshelia, Mr Paul K. D.	GNPP
	Biu North	19. Nganjiwa, Mr Hamza M.	GNPP
	Kaga	20. Omar, Mr Lawal	GNPP
	Bade	21. Suleiman, Mr A. A.	NPN
	Fika North	22. Tikau, Alhaji Idrissa Madi	GNPP
	Askira Uba	23. Waba, Mr Agwana Apagu	NPN
	Geidam North	24. Yusuf, Mr Kolo Lawan	GNPP
	6. Cross River	Ogoja	1. Adoga, Mr Charles A.
Obubra I		2. Agbor, Mr Cornelius Okpa	NPN
Uyo II		3. Akpabio, Mr Michael J.	GNPP
Eket II		4. Awa-Ekpo, Prince A. U.	NPN
Eket I		5. —	—
Ikot Ekpene I		6. Eddy, Mr Okon A.	NPN
Odukpani		7. Efiom, Mr Efiom Ita	NPN
Oron III		8. Effiong, Mr Martin O.	UPN
Uyo I		9. Ekpenyong, Mr Okon John	GNPP
Uyo III		10. Ekpo, Mr Edet Asuquo	NPN
Ikot Abasi I		11. Ekpo, Mr V. U.	NPN
Ukanafun I		12. Eshiet, Chief D. J.	NPN
Oron II		13. Etienam, Mr Edet Bassey	NPN
Eket III		14. Etuk, Chief Thomas Ekpo	NPN

<i>State</i>	<i>Constituency</i>	<i>Name of Member</i>	<i>Political Party</i>
	Calabar	15. Eyo, Chief Asuquo E.	NPN
	Etinan II	16. Idang, Dr Gordon J.	GNPP
	Etinan I	17. Ikpatt, Mr Ime J.	NPN
	Akamkpa	18. Ikpeme, Chief Okon	NPN
	Ikot Abasi II	19. Inoh, Mr A. A.	GNPP
	Ikono	20. Inyang, Mr Edet Udo Umo	NPN
	Ikom	21. Ojogu, Mr Ekok	NPN
	Obubra II	22. Okoi, Mr Lekam Ofem	NPN
	Oron I	23. Ononokpono, Mr Effiong	UPN
	Ukanafun II	24. Ukpanah, Mr A.	NPN
	Itu	25. Ukpong, Mr David Akpan	NPN
	Abak	26. Ukpong, Dr M. B.	NPN
	Ikot Ekpeni II	27. Umorem, Mr A. Akpan	NPN
	Obudu	28. Utande, Dr Emmanuel A.	NPN
7. Gongola	Wukari	1. Agbujoro, Mr Agya	NPN
	Maiha	2. Diko, Alhaji Hamman	GNPP
	Guyuk	3. Falu, Mr Barnabas	UPN
	Fufore	4. Furo, Mr Bello Dauda	NPN
	Mayo-Balwa	5. Gambo, Mr Hassan	NPN
	Gombi	6. Garkida, Alhaji A. Sani	NPN
	Takum	7. Gba'aondo, Mr David H.	GNPP
	Numan	8. Gowono, Mr M. G. Aeneas	UPN
	Bali	9. Hamman-Liman, Mr Dahiru	NPN
	Hong	10. Hong, Alhaji Iliyasu	GNPP
	Jalingo	11. Kamai, Mr D. B.	GNPP

<i>State</i>	<i>Constituency</i>	<i>Name of Member</i>	<i>Political Party</i>
	Sawa	12. Lanko, Mr Abdul K.	UPN
	Karim Lamido	13. Mabrama Jen, Mr B. M.	UPN
	Michika	14. Magiri, Pastor	NPP
	Yola	15. Mahmud, Mr Aliyu	NPN
	Madagali	16. Medugu, Idirisu N.	GNPP
	Gembu	17. Nzalak, Mr James M.	GNPP
	Ganye	18. Saraso, Mr David	UPN
	Song	19. Sunday, Mr Amos	GNPP
	Mubi	20. Wahu, Mr B. D.	GNPP
	Zing	21. Yakoko, Mr Dominic Vontih	UPN
8. Imo	Ohaozara East	1. Agwu, Mr Agwu N.	NPP
	Afikpo	2. Alu, Engr. Sam O.	NPN
	Owerri North	3. Amadi, Lt-Col. P. O.	NPP
	Oru	4. Amasiatu, Mr T. C.	NPP
	Ihitte Uboma	5. Anukwuem, Mr G. I.	NPP
	Okigwe North	6. Chukwu, Mr E. O.	NPP
	Ohaji Egbema		
	Oguta	7. Chukwu, MR P. U.	NPP
	Mbano East	8. Ebo, Mr E. C.	NPP
	Agbaja/Uvuru	9. Eburuche, Dr J. E.	NPP
	Obowo	10. Eleke, Mr P. O.	NPF
	Obioma Ngwa	11. Erondu, Mr Clement	NPP
	Nkwerre	12. Ihekweazu, Mr S. M. C.	NPP
	Ezinihitte	13. Imo, Chief A. O.	NPP
	Mbano West	14. Iwuagwu, Mr Jonas O.	NPP
	Ikwoano		
	Umuahia	15. Kanu, Mr E. N.	NPP
	Isiala Ngwa	16. Njoku, Mr Appolos N.	NPP
	Isu	17. Nnaji, Mrs V. O.	NPP
	Okigwe South	18. Nwokoro, Mr Cletus	NPP
	Orlu	19. Nwosu, Mr Kevin	NPP
	Ahiazu Mbaise	20. Obasi, Mr Isidore	NPP

<i>State</i>	<i>Constituency</i>	<i>Name of Member</i>	<i>Political Party</i>
	Owerri South	21. Obihara, Dr Chikwe H.	NPP
	Ideato	22. Obioha, Mr K. R.	NPP
	Ikeduru	23. Ochiama, Mr T. N.	NPP
	Bende	24. Ogwe, Mr Ogwe Kalu	NPP
	Ohaozara West	25. Oje, Mr Michael Amechi	NPP
	Ohafia	26. Oke, Mr Oke U.	NPP
	Arochukwu	27. Oreh, Dr Onwuka O.	NPN
	Mbaitoli	28. Uwandu, Mr E. D. N.	NPP
	Ukwa	29. Wachuku, Mr H. M. J.	NPP
	Aba	30. Wanganga, Mr S. U.	NPP
9. Kaduna	Zaria		
	North-East	1. Abba, Mr Saleh	PRP
	Tsagero	2. Abdullahi, Alhaji B.	NPN
	Dutsinma	3. Abubakar, Mr Gambo	NPN
	Daura East	4. Abubakar, Mr Manzo	NPN
	Zangon Katab	5. Allah-na-Magani, Mr S. B.	NPP
	Mashi Dutsi	6. Alti, Mr Umaru	NPN
	Mani	7. Bujawa, Alhaji Dado	NPN
	Bindawa	8. Bindawa, Alhaji Yusufu	NPN
	Daura West	9. Daura, Alhaji L. N.	NPN
	Kachia	10. Gajere, Mr M. A.	NPN
	Musawa	11. Garba, Alhaji Rilwanu	NPN
	Bakori	12. Hayin-Gada, Mr Ibrahim	PRP
	Jama'a South	13. Ibrahim, Mr I. C.	NPN

<i>State</i>	<i>Constituency</i>	<i>Name of Member</i>	<i>Political Party</i>
	Rimi		
	Batagarawa	14. Ibrahim, Alhaji Sule	NPN
	Kankiya	15. Imam, Mr Sanusi	NPN
	Makarfi	16. Isa, Alhaji Aliyu	PRP
	Zaria		
	North-West	17. Jaji, Alhaji Tanko	PRP
	Kaita	18. Kaita, Alhaji Muhammedu Ali	NPN
	Kankara	19. Kankara, Alhaji Magaji	NPN
	Kaduna	20. Kantoma, Mr Bala	NPN
	Malumfashi	21. Malumfashi, Alhaji Datti M. A.	PRP
	Jibiya	22. Musa, Mr Garba	NPN
	Lere	23. Nagodiya, Mr Ibrahim	PRP
	Ikara-Kubau	24. Paki, Mr Abdu	PRP
	Batsari	25. Ruma, Alhaji Shehu	NPN
	Safana	26. Runka, Alhaji Shehu Y.	GNPP
	Funtua	27. Sabiu, Mr Rabi	PRP
	Kaduna South	28. Umar, Alhaji Mohammed Kabir	NPN
	Faskari	29. Yamma, Mr Badamasi U.	PRP
	Chawai Kauru	30. Yunusa, Mr Abubakar	NPN
	Ingawa	31. Yusufu, Alhaji Ahmed Tijani	NPN
	Zaria Central	32. Zailani, Mr Ibrahim	NPN
	Jemmandth	33. Zubairu, Mr Danjuma A.	NPP
10. Kano	Roni	1. Abubakar, Alhaji Sani	NPN
	Dawakin-Tofa	2. Abubakar, Mr S.	PRP
	Ungogo	3. Adamu, Mr Aliyu	PRP
	Dutse	4. Adamu Mr M. Mutari	PRP

<i>State</i>	<i>Constituency</i>	<i>Name of Member</i>	<i>Political Party</i>
	Dawakin-Kudu	5. Adamu, Alhaji Sarki	PRP
	Tudun Wada	6. Alasan, Mr Musa A.	PRP
	Danbatta	7. Ali, Mr Sidi H.	PRP
	Bichi	8. Bichi, Alhaji Y.	PRP
	Gwaram	9. Fagam, Mr Muhammed Ahmed Tukur	PRP
	Takai/Kachako	10. Gambo, Alhaji Sarki	GNPP
	Kabo	11. Gammo, Mr Musa	NPN
	Malam Madori	12. Gajango, Mr Hussein A.	PRP
	Kura	13. Garba, Mr Nasidi	PRP
	Garki	14. Garki, Mr Uba Iliya	PRP
	Shanono	15. Garo, Mr Umaru Sule	PRP
	Gaya North	16. Gaya, Alhaji Yusifu Nadabo	PRP
	Gabasawa	17. Gumawa, Mr M. Isyaku	PRP
	Birniwa	18. Hadejia, Mr Muhammed Danjani	PRP
	Kiru	19. Harith, Mr A. Sadiq	PRP
	Kiyawa	20. Ibrahim, Alhaji Sa'idu	PRP
	Minjibir	21. Isyaku, Mr Garba	PRP
	Rano	22. Ja'e, Mr A. Abdulkadir	NPN
	Hade	23. Kanti, Alhaji Saidu	NPN
	Babura	24. Kanya, Mallam Salisu M.	NPN
	Auyo/Kaugama	25. Kaugama, Mr Mohammed Shu'aibu	PRP
	Birnin Kudu	26. Lamido, Mr Sule	PRP
	Bagwa	27. Maihula, Mr S.	PRP

<i>State</i>	<i>Constituency</i>	<i>Name of Member</i>	<i>Political Party</i>
	Gumel South	28. Matoya, Alhaji Adamu	NPN
	Gumel North	29. Mohammed, Alhaji Umaru	NPN
	Kafin/Hausa/ Salangu	30. Mohammed, Mr Hassan	PRP
	Jahun Kunchi/ Isanyawa	31. Mohammed, Mr Isa	PRP
		32. Mohammed, Mr Lawan	NPN
	Gezawa	33. Mattama, Alhaji Ado	PRP
	West Ward	34. Muhammed, Dr Junaidu S.	PRP
	Rimingado	35. Muhammed, Mr Mustapha	PRP
	Gaya South Karaye	36. Mustahpa, Mr M. I.	PRP
		37. Na-Rogo, Mohammed Lawal	PRP
	Kumbotso	38. Sadiq, Mr Umaru	PRP
	Bunkure	39. Salihu, Mr A. Musa	PRP
	Ringim	40. Sha'aibu, Mr M. Rabiu	PRP
	Suma'ila	41. Sitti, Alhaji Bako	PRP
	Gwarzoo	42. Tabako, Alhaji Rabiu	PRP
	South East	43. Tanko, Alhaji Labaran	PRP
	Kazaure	44. Usman, Alhaji Tanko	PRP
	Waje/Nasarawa	45. Wada, Mr Muhammadu A. T.	PRP
	Wudil	46. Wudil, Alhaji B.	PRP
<i>II. Kwara</i>	Oyi	1. Abodunde, Mr Stephen Bamidele	UPN

<i>State</i>	<i>Constituency</i>	<i>Name of Member</i>	<i>Political Party</i>
	Okene	2. Amoka, Mr Yusuf A.	NPN
	Ilorin East	3. Yahaya, Mr Aremu	NPN
	Okehi-Isunwe	4. Atima, MR Salawu	NPN
	Borgu	5. Inuwa, Alhaji Musa	GNPP
	Okehi Adavbi	6. Damisa, Mr Jimoh	NPN
	Edu	7. Julde, Alhaji Shuaibu	NPN
	Ifelodun	8. Lawal, Mr Adewara Toyin	UPN
	Ilorin West	9. Muhammudu Sanda, Mr Oma-Eko	NPN
	Moro	10. Muhammed, M. Yusuf Ibn	UPN
	Irepodun	11. Obaoye, Mr Peter Olayemi	UPN
	Oyun	12. Olaleru, Mr Isaac Ayodeji	UPN
	Kogi	13. Umaru, Alhaji Abdulahi	NPN
	Asa	14. Yunusa, Mr Folorunsho	NPN
12. Lagos	Shomolu	1. Adesida, Prince Samuel	UPN
	Ikeja	2. —	—
	Lagos South I	3. Alli, Mr L. Adekunle	UPN
	Ikorodu	4. Amzart, Alhaji M. A.	UPN
	Mushin Central II	5. Babatope, Mrs Abiola	UPN
	Mushin Central I	6. Badejo, Mr T. O.	UPN
	Badagry	7. Fayemi, Mr Dele	UPN
	Lagos North-East	8. Ijaola, Mr Olugbolahan	UPN

<i>State</i>	<i>Constituency</i>	<i>Name of Member</i>	<i>Political Party</i>
	Lagos South II Lagos South Epe Lagos North-Central	9. Ogunseye, Mr Akin 10. Olusi, Prince T. O. 11. Sadiku, Mr G. B.  12. Shitta-Bey, Mr Rasheed A.	UPN UPN UPN  UPN
13. Niger	Magama  Bida South  Lavun  Minna North Mariga  Abuja  Agaie/Lapai  Bida North  inna South Rafi	1. Aliyu, Alhaji Suleiman 2. Doko, Mr Muhammed Gana 3. Enagi, Alhaji Abdurrahamani Hassan 4. Ibrahim, Alhaji Idris 5. Isah, Alhaji Abdullahi 6. Is'haq, Alhaji Mohammed Rabiu 7. Madaki, Alhaji Ibrahim 8. Mustapha, Alhaji M. B. 9. Paiko, Alhaji Yinusa 10. Ushama, Alhaji Ahmed Tanko	NPN  NPN  NPN NPN  NPN  NPN  NPN NPN  NPN
14. Ogun	Oke-Ona/Owre/ Gbagura Egbado Ifoyin Ilaro Ijebu North Ifo/Ota Ijebu East Ijebu Remo Egbado North Odcda	1. Akinboro, Mr O.  2. Bankole, Chief D. O. 3. Mako, Mr A. 4. Oduntan, Chief S. A. 5. Ogunfuyi, Mr S. A. 6. Ogunkoya Dr O. 7. Ogunsiji, Dr O. 8. Ogunsiyi, Mr T.	UPN  UPN UPN UPN UPN UPN UPN UPN

<i>State</i>	<i>Constituency</i>	<i>Name of Member</i>	<i>Political Party</i>
	Ado Igbesa	9. Olaewe, Mr S. A.	UPN
	Ipokia	10. Olukoya, Mr M. A.	UPN
	Ijebu-Ode	11. Omidiji, Mr Fola	UPN
	Egba Alake	12. Oni, Mr M. O.	UPN
	Obafemi/Owode		UPN
15. Ondo	Ekiti East	1. Abegunde, Mr B. J.	UPN
	Ero North	2. Adeagbo, Mr S. A.	UPN
	Ijero	3. Adeola, Mr A.	UPN
	Owo	4. Adetula, Chief Z. O. K.	UPN
	Ekiti North District	5. Adu, Mr E. D.	UPN
	Ifesowopo	6. Akinbisehin, Mr F. A.	UPN
	Owo	7. Akinbode, Mr T. O.	UPN
	Ondo	8. Akinyosoye, Mr I. F.	UPN
	Ekiti South	9. Fajobi, Mr Faji	UPN
	Ekiti Central	10. Falayi, Mr G. A.	UPN
	Akure	11. Fegbamigbe, Mr Olaiya	UPN
	Idanre/Ifedore	12. Kayode, Mr B. E.	UPN
	Akoko North	13. Ogunleye, Mr J. A.	UPN
	Ekiti West	14. Ola, Professor O.	UPN
	Akoko South	15. Olagunju, Mr R. A.	UPN
	Ero South	16. Olofinlade, Mr Olu	UPN
	Ikale	17. Olowu, Mr S. O.	UPN
	Ekiti South-West	18. Oluwatusin, Mr C. A.	UPN
	Ilaje/Ese	19. Omonira, Chief Olusola	UPN
	Ekiti Central	20. Osekita, Mr F. A. O.	UPN
	Ekiti South	21. Owoseni, Mr J. O.	UPN
	Ekiti North	22. Rotimi, Mr Akintunde	UPN
16. Oyo	Ifelodun East	1. Abiona, Mr J. A.	UPN

<i>State</i>	<i>Constituency</i>	<i>Name of Member</i>	<i>Political Party</i>
	Ifelodun Central	2. Abolade, Mr Tunji S.	UPN
	Ibarapa	3. Adegoke, Mr R. O.	UPN
	Ede North	4. Adejare, Mr I. A.	UPN
	Iseyin	5. Adekunle, Mr S. A.	UPN
	Ibadan East	6. Adelu, Mr David	UPN
	Ibadan South	7. Adesina, Mr L. O.	UPN
	Kajola	8. Adesina, Mr Samuel A.	UPN
	Osogbo South	9. Adewumi, Mr Gbadebo A.	UPN
	Oyo East	10. Afolabi, Mr Olusola	NPN
	Oyo Central	11. Afonja, Mr A.	UPN
	Ibadan North	12. Akande, Mr Debo	UPN
	Ejigbo	13. Akinloye, Mr S. A.	UPN
	Ogbomoso		
	Central	14. Akintola, Chief Yomi	NPN
	Oluyole	15. Akintunde, Mr J. O.	UPN
	Lagelu South	16. Akinwale, Chief Supo	UPN
	Ifedapo	17. Apalara, Mr Razaq O.	UPN
	Oranmiyan South	18. Ayanbeku, Mr Moses A.	UPN
	Odo Otin	19. Dairo, Mr Amos O.	UPN
	Ila	20. Fadeyi, Mr John K.	UPN
	Ilesha	21. Famuyide, Hadji Saliu	UPN
	Akinyele North	22. Fatola, Mr Johnson O.	UPN
	Irewole West	23. Ibrahim, Mr Dauda A.	UPN
	Obokun	24. —	—
	Iwo East	25. Kataiyejanjue, Prince Lateef Bakare	UPN

<i>State</i>	<i>Constituency</i>	<i>Name of Member</i>	<i>Political Party</i>
	Irewole East	26. Labiyi, Mr Ladipo	UPN
	Iwo West	27. Laosebikan, Mr S. G.	UPN
	Atakumosa	28. Obiyemi, Mr Olakanmi	UPN
	Ogbomoso		
	South	29. Odebunmi, Mr J. O.	NPN
	Osogbo North	30. Odetoyinbo, Mr Stephen Ade	UPN
	Irepodun	31. Ojo, Mr Michael A.	UPN
	Ogbomoso		
	North	32. Olabode, Mr B. O.	UPN
	Akinyele West	33. Olaniran, Mr L. B.	UPN
	Irepodun	34. Olaniyan, Mr Oladepo	UPN
	Oranmiyan		
	North	35. Olarewaju, Mr Olubisi	UPN
	Oranmiyan		
	Central	36. Omisore, Mr A. O.	UPN
	Ibadan West	37. Omole, Mr Babatunde	UPN
	Iwo North	38. Opakanmi, Mr J. Oyedeji	UPN
	Lagelu North	39. Otegbeye, Mr Olatinwo	UPN
	Oyo South	40. Oyatobo, Mr Oluwole	UPN
	Ibadan Central	41. Raji, Alhaji B. O.	UPN
	Ede South	42. Shiyabola, Mr S. A.	UPN
17. Plateau	Jos North	1. Ali, Mr Inuwa	NPN
	Nasarawa	2. Aliyu, Alhaji M. S.	NPP
	Shendam West	3. Dafuan, Mr D. D.	NPP
	Jos South	4. Dalyop, Mr S. F.	NPP
	Barakin-Ladi	5. Deme, Mr P. C.	NPP
	Shendam East	6. Gapsuk, Mr Ambrose	NPP

<i>State</i>	<i>Constituency</i>	<i>Name of Member</i>	<i>Political Party</i>
	Pankshin	7. Gutus, Mr Christopher K.	NPP
	Lafia	8. Husaini, Alhaji A. Yakubu	NPN
	Keffi	9. Idakula, Mr Amos Bez.	NPP
	Awe	10. Ityo, Mr Iortim	NPP
	Langtang	11. Laven, Mr John L.	NPP
	Akwanga	12. Mallo, Mr J. Y. M.	NPP
	Racha	13. Racha, Mr Hogan Chowe	NPP
	Kanam	14. Shuabu, Mr Mohammed D.	NPN
	Mangu	15. Wetkum, Mr Felix M.	NPP
	Wase	16. Zakari, Mr Abdukadir	NPP
18. Rivers	Ikwerre/Etche I	1. Alete, Chief Stephen	NPP
	Bonny I	2. Asuk, Mr Shem E.	NPN
	Sagbama	3. —	—
	Degema II	4. Bob-Manuel, Mr Tubo O.	NPN
	Yenagoa	5. Egberipou, Dr P. I.	NPN
	Port Harcourt I	6. Ejoh, Mr E.	NPP
	Bori II	7. Giadom, Mr Kemte	NPN
	Brass	8. Mac-Eteli, Mr Ingo	NPN
	Ahoadia	9. —	—
	Ikwerre/Etche II	10. Nwala, Dr Eze O. A.	NPP
	Degema I	11. Princewill, Mr Dagogo	NPN
	Bori I	12. Sangha, Prince J. S.	NPN
	Bonny II	13. Sekibo, Dr J. Taribo	NPN
	Port Harcourt II	14. Wodi, Mr Godwin	NPP
19. Sokoto	Tangaza	1. Altine, Mr M. Mammam	NPN
	Argungu	2. Bachaka, Alhaji M.	NPN

<i>State</i>	<i>Constituency</i>	<i>Name of Member</i>	<i>Political Party</i>
	Binji-Silame	3. Binji, M. Ahmadu Wali	NPN
	Bungudu-Kotorkoshi	4. Bungudu, Alhaji Bello Dala	GNPP
	Dakin-Gari	5. Dakin-Gari, Mr Atahiru Makeri	GNPP
	Sakaba/Wasagu Anka	6. Daudu, Alhaji I 7. Dorawa, Alhaji Ashiru Ruwan	NPN GNPP
	Durbawa/Kware	8. Durbawa, Mr Umaru Aliyu	NPN
	Gada Sabon Birni	9. Gada, Alhaji Usman 10. Garba Bakwai, Alhaji Ibrahim	NPN NPN
	Goronyo Tambawal Gummi	11. Garu, Mr Umaru 12. Gizori, Mr Garba 13. Gummi, Mr M. Aliyu	GNPP GNPP NPN
	Gwadabawa	14. Gwadabawa, Alhaji J.	NPN
	Sokoto Jega Maiyama	15. Hamzat, Mr Shehu 16. Jega, Alhaji Garba 17. Jega, Mr Musa Abdullah	NPN NPN GNPP
	Bunza-Kalgo	18. Kalgo, Mr Sani Dandare	NPN
	Bagudo	19. Kaoje, Mr Umaru Farouk	NPN
	Bodinga	20. Ladan, Alhaji Mohammadu	NPN
	Gusau	21. Lugga, Alhaji Aliyu M.	NPN
	T/Mafara	22. Mafara, Mr Abdulmumini	NPN
	Chafe	23. Mijinyawa, Alhaji M.	NPN

<i>State</i>	<i>Constituency</i>	<i>Name of Member</i>	<i>Political Party</i>
	Zurmi-Moriki	24. Mohammed, Alhaji Abdullahi	NPN
	Illela	25. Mohammed, Alhaji Bello	NPN
	Gandi/Rabah	26. Rabah, Mr Aliyu Mohammed	NPN
	Isa	27. Rilwanu, Alhaji Isa	NPN
	Dabai-Fakai	28. —	—
	K/Namoda	29. Shehu, Alhaji Ali Na Alhaji	NPN
	Birnin-Kebbi	30. Shera, Alhaji Muhammadu	NPN
	Arewa-Dandi	31. Shuaibu, Alhaji Ibrahim	NPN
	Dange-Shuni	32. Shuni, Alhaji Umaru A.	NPN
	Aghida/Wurno	33. Sudan, Mr Ibrahim	NPN
	Maradun	34. Tambari, Mr Garba M.	NPN
	Cumbi-Wamakko	35. Wamakko, Mr Ahmed T.	NPN
	Yabo	36. Yabo, Mr Maiturare	NPN
	Yauri	37. Yelwa, Alhaji Mohammed A.	GNPP

#### SUMMARY OF STRENGTH OF PARTIES

NPN	167
UPN	110
NPP	77
PRP	47
GNPP	44
TOTAL	445

## FOOT-NOTES

### Chapter One

#### THE NATIONAL POLITICAL BACKGROUND

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- <sup>2</sup> Stanley Macebuh: "Princes and Principalities", *Daily Times*, Lagos, Thursday, July 19, 1979; p. 3.
- <sup>3</sup> James S. Coleman: "The Politics of Sub-Saharan Africa", in Gabriel A. Almond and James S. Coleman, (eds) *The Politics of the Developing Areas*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1960; p. 367.
- <sup>4</sup> Nnamdi Azikiwe: *Zik: A Selection of Speeches of Nnamdi Azikiwe*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1961; pp. 205-6.
- <sup>5</sup> Kalu Ezera: *Constitutional Development in Nigeria*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1964; p. 264. Also see Azikiwe, *op. cit.*: pp. 206-207.
- <sup>6</sup> *NCNC Election Manifesto*, Lagos, 1951.
- <sup>7</sup> Obafemi Awolowo: *AWO: The Autobiography of Chief Obafemi Awolowo*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1960, pp. 309-10.
- <sup>8</sup> *House of Representatives Parliamentary Debates*, Lagos, November 19, 1961. Also, see *Daily Times*, Lagos, November 30, and December 1, 1961.
- <sup>9</sup> Chief Obafemi Awolowo: *Philosophy for Independent Nigeria*, Western Nigeria Agent General Office, London, 1961; pp.9-19.
- <sup>10</sup> *West Africa*, London, June 6, 1962.
- <sup>11</sup> Nduka Onum: "And Who Expected Any Change?", *The Punch*, Lagos, July 17, 1979.
- <sup>12</sup> Okoi Arikpo: *Development of Modern Nigeria*, Penguin Books, Baltimore, Maryland, 1967.

- <sup>13</sup> Margery Perham: "Reflections on the Nigerian Civil War," *International Affairs*, London, April, 1970.
- <sup>14</sup> *Africa and the World*, London, July 1967.
- <sup>15</sup> M. T. Dent; "The Military and Politics: A Study of Relations Between the Army and the Political Process in Nigeria," in R. Melson and H. Wolpe: *Nigeria: Modernization and Politics of Communalism*, University of Michigan Press, Ann Arbor, Michigan, 1971; p. 377.
- <sup>16</sup> *Daily Times*, Lagos, January 27, 1966.
- <sup>17</sup> *West Africa*, London, January 21, 1967; p. 67.
- <sup>18</sup> *Guardian*, London, October 13, 1967.
- <sup>19</sup> *Op. cit.*
- <sup>20</sup> *Press Release No. F. 188*, Federal Ministry of Information, Lagos, February 21, 1966.
- <sup>21</sup> *West Africa*, London, June 4, 1966.
- <sup>22</sup> *Press Release No. 723*, Ministry of Information, Kaduna, June 2, 1960.
- <sup>23</sup> *Press Release No. F. 686*, Federal Ministry of Information, Lagos, June 8, 1966.
- <sup>24</sup> *West Africa*, London, June 25, 1966.
- <sup>25</sup> *Nigeria Handbook*, 1970, Federal Ministry of Information, Lagos, 1970; p. 196.
- <sup>26</sup> *West Africa*, London, May 27, 1967. Also see *Africa and the World*, London, July, 1967.
- <sup>27</sup> *African Digest*, London, October 1966.
- <sup>28</sup> Lt. Col. Yakubu Gowon in a nationwide broadcast on August 1, 1966.
- <sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>30</sup> *African Digest*, London, October 1966.
- <sup>31</sup> *Observer*, London, October 23, 1966.
- <sup>32</sup> *Verbatim Report of Proceedings of Supreme Military Council at Aburi, Ghana, January 4-5, 1967*, ENIS Corporation, Enugu, 1967; p. 19.
- <sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*; p. 22.
- <sup>34</sup> *Press Release, No. 152*, Federal Ministry of Information, Lagos, February 3, 1976.
- <sup>35</sup> Major Nzeogwu in an interview with Denis D. Ejindu, in *Africa and the World*, London, May, 1967.
- <sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>37</sup> *Nigerian Crisis, Vol. IV: The Ad Hoc Conference*, Government Printed, Enugu, 1966; p. ii.
- <sup>38</sup> "Col. David Ejoor Addresses Leaders-of-Thought in the Mid-West," in A. H. M. Kirk-Green (ed): *Crisis and Conflict in Nigeria: A Documentary Source Book, 1966-1967 Vol. 1*, Oxford University Press,

- London, 1967; pp. 272–277.
- <sup>39</sup> See also the speech of Col. David Ejoor, Military Governor of the Mid-West Region, on August 3, 1966, in support of the new military government after the coup of July 29, 1966. *Daily Times*, Lagos, August 4, 1966; *New Nigerian*, Kaduna, August 4, 1966.
- <sup>40</sup> Kirk-Greene, *op. cit.*
- <sup>41</sup> *Verbatim Report of Proceedings of Supreme Military Council at Abu-ri*, *op. cit.*, p. 27.
- <sup>42</sup> *West Africa*, London, May 6, 1967.
- <sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>44</sup> Quoted in Walter Schwarz: *Nigeria*, Frederick A. Praeger, Publishers, New York, 1968; p. 228.
- <sup>45</sup> "Gowon's Broadcast to the Nation, dividing Nigeria into Twelve States," *Crisis and Conflict in Nigeria*, Kirk-Greene, *op. cit.* pp. 444–449.
- <sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>47</sup> *West Africa*, London, August 27, 1967.
- <sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*
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- <sup>50</sup> *Sunday Times*, Lagos, April 11, 1976.
- <sup>51</sup> "Text of a Broadcast by His Excellency Brigadier Murtala Muhammed, Head of the Federal Military Government, Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces, on Wednesday, July 30, 1975," *News Release No. 820*, Federal Ministry of Information, Lagos, July 31, 1975.
- <sup>52</sup> *Daily Times*, Lagos, August 2, 1975; p. 1.
- <sup>53</sup> *New Nigerian*, Kaduna, August 1, 1975; p. 1.
- <sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>55</sup> *Nigerian Tribune*, Ibadan, August 1, 1975; pp. 1–3.
- <sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>59</sup> *Daily Express*, Lagos, May 9, 1974.
- <sup>60</sup> *Daily Times*, Lagos, June 8, 1974.
- <sup>61</sup> *Daily Sketch*, Ibadan, May 10, 1974.
- <sup>62</sup> *Nigerian Herald*, Ilorin, April 19, 1974.
- <sup>63</sup> "Text of a Broadcast by His Excellency Brigadier Murtala Muhammed, Head of the Federal Military Government, Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces, on Wednesday, July 30, 1975," *News Release No. 820*, Federal Ministry of Information, Lagos, July 31, 1975.
- <sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*

- <sup>65</sup> *News Release, No. 152*, Federal Ministry of Information, Lagos, February 3, 1976.
- <sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>71</sup> Gen. Murtala Muhammed, 1976 New Year Message, Lagos, January 1, 1976.
- <sup>72</sup> *News Release, No. 1209*, Lagos, October 18, 1975.
- <sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>74</sup> *News Focus, No. 26*, Federal Ministry of Information, Lagos, March 2, 1979.
- <sup>75</sup> *News Release, No. 330*, Federal Ministry of Information, Lagos, March 11, 1976.
- <sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>79</sup> *Daily Times*, Lagos, May 18, 1976.
- <sup>80</sup> *News Release, No. 596*, Federal Ministry of Information, Lagos, May 15, 1976.
- <sup>81</sup> *New Nigerian*, Kaduna, May 18, 1976.
- <sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>83</sup> "Broadcast to the Nation by His Excellency Lt. General Olusegun Obasanjo, Head of the Federal Military Government, Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces on Saturday, May 15, 1976," *News Release, No. 596*, Federal Ministry of Information, Lagos, May 15, 1976.
- <sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>86</sup> Charles de Gaulle: *Memoirs, Vol. III*, Simon and Schuster, New Yorks, 1960; p. 75.
- <sup>87</sup> Herbert Simon: *Administrative Behavior*, Macmillan and Co., New York, 1947; p. 134.
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- <sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>90</sup> Lewis J. Edinger (ed): *Political Leadership in Industrialized Societies*, John Wiley & Sons, Inc., New York, 1967; p. 5.

- <sup>91</sup> *Ibid*; p. 15.
- <sup>92</sup> E. Victor Wolfenstein: "Some Psychological Aspects of Crisis Leadership," in *Ibid*; pp. 155–181.
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- <sup>94</sup> *Ibid*.
- <sup>95</sup> *Ibid*.
- <sup>96</sup> *Ibid*.
- <sup>97</sup> General Murtala Muhammed, 1976 New Year Message, Lagos, January 1, 1976.
- <sup>98</sup> L. E. Scott-Emuakpor: (ed): *A March of Progress: Collected Speeches of Lt. Gen. Olusegun Obasanjo*, Federal Ministry of Information, Lagos, 1979; pp. 185–190.
- <sup>99</sup> *Ibid*.
- <sup>100</sup> *Ibid*.
- <sup>101</sup> *News Release, No. 1314*, Federal Ministry of Information, Lagos, September 15, 1978.
- <sup>102</sup> *News Release, No. 1782*, Federal Ministry of Information, Lagos, October 6, 1977.
- <sup>103</sup> *Ibid*.
- <sup>104</sup> *Ibid*.
- <sup>105</sup> *Ibid*.
- <sup>106</sup> *Ibid. No. 1786*, October 6, 1977.
- <sup>107</sup> *Ibid. No. 530*, April 19, 1978.
- <sup>108</sup> *Ibid*.
- <sup>109</sup> *Ibid*.
- <sup>110</sup> *Ibid*.
- <sup>111</sup> *Ibid.; No. 1285*, September 11, 1978.
- <sup>112</sup> *Ibid*.
- <sup>113</sup> *Ibid*.
- <sup>114</sup> *Ibid*.
- <sup>115</sup> *Ibid*.
- <sup>116</sup> *Ibid*.
- <sup>117</sup> *Ibid.; No. 1306*, September 14, 1979.
- <sup>118</sup> *Ibid*.
- <sup>119</sup> *Ibid*.
- <sup>120</sup> *Ibid*.
- <sup>121</sup> *Ibid*.
- <sup>122</sup> *Ibid*.
- <sup>123</sup> *Ibid*.
- <sup>124</sup> *Ibid.; No. 1314*, September 15, 1978.

- <sup>125</sup> *Ibid.*  
<sup>126</sup> *Ibid.*; No. 1325, September 18, 1978.  
<sup>127</sup> *Ibid.*  
<sup>128</sup> *Ibid.*  
<sup>129</sup> *Ibid.*  
<sup>130</sup> *Ibid.*  
<sup>131</sup> Alhaji Shehu Shagari: *Collected Speeches of President Shehu Shagari*, State House, Lagos, 1980; pp. 5–6.  
<sup>132</sup> *Ibid.*

## Chapter Two

### PROFILES OF THE PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATES

- <sup>1</sup> L. E. Scott-Emuakpor (ed.); *A March of Progress: Collected Speeches of Lt. General Olusegun Obasanjo*; *op. cit.*; p. 331.  
<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*; p. 332.  
<sup>3</sup> *New Nigerian*, Kaduna,  
<sup>4</sup> *West Africa*, London, March 29, 1979.  
<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*  
<sup>6</sup> *Daily Times*, Lagos, June 11, 1979.  
<sup>7</sup> *The Punch*, Lagos, Wednesday, January 23, 1980.  
<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*  
<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*  
<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*  
<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*  
<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*  
<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*  
<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*  
<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*  
<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*  
<sup>17</sup> *New Times*, Lagos, Mid-July 1979; pp. 4–21; 59–60.  
<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*; p. 18  
<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*; p. 19.  
<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*  
<sup>21</sup> Schwarz, *op. cit.*; p. 159.  
<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*  
<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*  
<sup>24</sup> *Nigerian Outlook*, Enugu, May 1, 1962.

- <sup>25</sup> *Economist*, London, July 28, 1962; p. 347.
- <sup>26</sup> *Daily Express*, Lagos, August 2, 1962.
- <sup>27</sup> *New Times Magazin*, *op. cit.*; p. 17.
- <sup>28</sup> *Daily Times*, Lagos, Monday, July 9, 1979.
- <sup>29</sup> *Nigerian Tribune*, Wednesday, March 28, 1979. Also see *The Nigerian Observer*, Benin City, Saturday, March 31, 1979.
- <sup>30</sup> *Daily Times*, Lagos, Monday, July 9, 1979.
- <sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>33</sup> *Op. cit.*; p. 1.
- <sup>34</sup> K. A. B. Jones-Quartey: *A Life of Azikiwe*, Penguin Books, Harmondsworth and Baltimore, 1965; p. 142.
- <sup>35</sup> Schwarz, *op. cit.*; p. 97.
- <sup>36</sup> Michael Crowder: *A Short History of Nigeria*. Frederick A. Praeger, Publishers, New York, 1966; p. 272.
- <sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>38</sup> James S. Coleman: *Nigeria: Background to Nationalism*. University of California Press, Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1958, p. 238.
- <sup>39</sup> K. O. Dike: *100 Years of British Rule in Nigeria*. Lagos, 1957; p. 43.
- <sup>40</sup> Schwarz, *op. cit.*; p. 105.
- <sup>41</sup> *Ibid.* p. 97.
- <sup>42</sup> Ezera, *op. cit.*; p. 91. Also see the *West African Pilot*, July 8, 1949. Also see *AWO*, *op. cit.*; pp. 133–159, in which Chief Awolowo goes into some of the details of Dr. Azikiwe's examples of tribalism.
- <sup>43</sup> *AWO*, *op. cit.*; p. 172.
- <sup>44</sup> Cited in Schwarz, *op. cit.*; p. 97.
- <sup>45</sup> *AWO*, *op. cit.*; p. 172.
- <sup>46</sup> Quoted in Ezera, *op. cit.*; p. 165.
- <sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>48</sup> "Why the UPN Lost," an interview with Chief M. C. K. Ajuluchukwu in *The New Nation*, Lagos, Vol. 3, No. 11, February/March, 1980; p. 7.
- <sup>49</sup> Zik, *op. cit.*; pp. 205–206.
- <sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>52</sup> Ezera, *op. cit.*; p. 264. Also see Azikiwe, *op. cit.*; p. 207. Also see *Daily Times*, Lagos, July 25, 1964; p. 13.

<sup>53</sup> *Sixteen Days of Political Crisis* (also known as *State House Diary*) published in the *Daily Express*, Lagos, January 13, 1965; pp. 4–5.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*

It is significant to note that the Solicitor-General of the Eastern Region, the late Justice Dan Ibekwe, was forced to resign because of "organized hostility" against him at Enugu for "the honest legal opinion tendered," he said, "to the President, at his request, during the recent crisis." It happened that the advice of the Solicitor-General was contrary to the prevalent desire in Enugu. (See *Daily Express*, Lagos, January 13, 1965.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>59</sup> Arikpo, *op. cit.*; p. 135.

<sup>60</sup> *New Nigerian*, Kaduna, Tuesday, November 28, 1978; p. 7.

<sup>61</sup> Cmd. 51, *Report of the Foster-Sutton Tribunal*, p. 42.

<sup>62</sup> Schwarz, *op. cit.*; p. 34.

<sup>63</sup> Robert I. Rotberg: *A Political History of Tropical Africa*, Harcourt, Brace & World, New York, 1965; p. 358.

<sup>64</sup> Obafemi Awolowo, *AIVO*, *op. cit.*; p. 172.

<sup>65</sup> *The Constitution of the Egbe Omo Oduduwa*, Ijebu-Ode, 1948; pp. 5–6. Also see Coleman, *op. cit.*, pp. 344–345.

<sup>66</sup> *West Africa*, London, June 6, 1962.

<sup>67</sup> Nduka Onum: "And Who Expected Any Change?", *The Punch*, Lagos, July 17, 1979.

<sup>68</sup> Richard L. Sklar: "Nigerian Politics: The Ordeal of Chief Obafemi Awolowo, 1960-65," in Gwendolyn M. Carter (ed): *Politics in Africa*, Harcourt, Brace & World, N. Y. 1966; p. 219.

<sup>69</sup> Ezera, *op. cit.*, p. 273.

<sup>70</sup> *West Africa*, London, December 24/31, 1979; p. 2367.

<sup>71</sup> *New Nigerian*, Kaduna, Thursday, January 24, 1980; p. 3.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>74</sup> *Sunday Star*, Ibadan, Sunday, March 9, 19

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>76</sup> Olusegun Obasanjo: "Towards Compulsory Primary Education in Nigeria," in *A March To Progress: Collected Speeches of Lt. Gen. Olu-*

- 77 *segun Obasanjo*, Federal Ministry of Information, Lagos, 1979; p. 170.
- 78 *Sunday Concord*, Lagos, May 4, 1980.
- 79 *Ibid.*
- 80 *Ibid.*
- 81 *Ibid.*
- 82 *Ibid.*
- 83 *Ibid.*
- 84 *Ibid.*
- 85 Cited in *Ibid.*
- 86 *Ibid.*
- 87 *Ibid.*
- 88 *Ibid.*
- 89 *West Africa*, London, May 6, 1967.
- 90 *Ibid.*
- 91 *Ibid.*; August 19, 1967; p. 1071.
- 92 *Ibid.*
- 93 *Ibid.*; March 26, 1979; p. 526. Also see Ajuluchukwu's "Why the UPN Lost", *op. cit.*, p. 7
- 94 "Why the UPN Lost", *op. cit.*; p. 7.
- 95 *Ibid.*
- 96 *West Africa*, London, March 26, 1979; p. 526.
- 97 *Ibid.*
- 98 *Ibid.*
- 99 *Ibid.*; p. 526.
- 100 Adamu Ciroma: "Politics to me is Unavoidable," interview in *The New Nation*, Lagos, Vol. 3, No. 11, February/March, 1980; p. 23.
- 101 *Ibid.*
- 102 *Ibid.*
- 103 Jean Herskovits: "Democracy in Nigeria," *Foreign Affairs*, Winter 1979-80; p. 319.
- 104 "Why the UPN Lost," *op. cit.*; p. 9.
- 105 Stanley Macebuh: "Limits to Tribal Loyalty in Nigeria," *West Africa*, London, January 7, 1980; pp. 13-14.
- 106 *Daily Times*, Lagos, Thursday, May 31, 1979.
- 107 *West Africa*, London, September 10, 1979; p. 1633.
- 108 *Ibid.*
- 109 *Ibid.*

- <sup>110</sup> *National Concord*, Lagos, Monday, May 12, 1980.
- <sup>111</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>112</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>113</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>114</sup> *Ibid.*, Thursday, May 15, 1980; p. 1.
- <sup>115</sup> *Daily Times*, Lagos, Tuesday, May 13, 1980; p. 32.
- <sup>116</sup> *The Punch*, Lagos, Tuesday, May 13, 1980; p. 1.
- <sup>117</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>118</sup> *Nigerian Tribune*, Ibadan, Tuesday, May 13, 1980; pp. 1 & 15.
- <sup>119</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>120</sup> *New Nigerian*, Kaduna, Tuesday, May 13, 1980; p. 3.
- <sup>121</sup> *Nigerian Tribune*, Ibadan.
- <sup>122</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>123</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>124</sup> *Nigerian Herald*, Ilorin, Saturday, May 17, 1980; p. 12. Also, see *New Nigerian*, Kaduna, Saturday, May 17, 1980.
- <sup>125</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>126</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>127</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>128</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>129</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>130</sup> *National Concord*, Lagos, Wednesday, July 9, and Thursday, July 10, 1980; *Daily Sketch*, Ibadan, Monday, July 7, 1980; *Nigerian Tribune*, Ibadan, Monday, July 7, 1980; *Nigerian Observer*, Benin City, Thursday, July 10, and Friday, July 11, 1980; *Nigerian Herald*, Ilorin, Friday, July 11, 1980. *The Punch*, Lagos.
- <sup>131</sup> *National Concord*, Lagos, Wednesday, July 9, 1980; pp. 8–9.
- <sup>132</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>133</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>134</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>135</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>136</sup> *Ibid.*, Monday, July 14, 1980; p. 2.
- <sup>137</sup> *Ibid.*, Thursday, July 10, 1980; p. 2.
- <sup>138</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>139</sup> *Ibid.*, Friday, July 11, 1980; p. 2.
- <sup>140</sup> *Ibid.*, Monday, July 14, 1980; p. 2.
- <sup>141</sup> *Ibid.*; pp. 8–9.
- <sup>142</sup> *Ibid.*

- <sup>143</sup> *Daily Times*, Lagos, Thursday, July 10, 1980; p. 3.
- <sup>144</sup> *National Concord*, Monday, July 14, 1980; pp. 8–9.
- <sup>145</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>146</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>147</sup> *Daily Times*, Lagos, Thursday, July 10, 1980; p. 3.
- <sup>148</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>149</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>150</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>151</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>152</sup> *The Punch*, Lagos, Wednesday August 6, 1980; p. 16.
- <sup>153</sup> *National Concord*, Lagos, Monday, May 19, 1980; p. 1.
- <sup>154</sup> *Ibid.*; Tuesday, May 20, 1980; p. 1.
- <sup>155</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>156</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>157</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>158</sup> *Report on Six Statutory Corporations in Western Nigeria*. Ibadan, 1962, Vol. 1, p. 3. Also, see *Comments of the Federal Government on the Report of Coker Commission of Inquiry into Affairs of Certain Statutory Corporations in Western Nigeria*. Sessional Paper No. 4, Lagos, 1962. The reports should be read in the context of the political situation at the time.
- <sup>159</sup> *West Africa*, London, March 26, 1979; p. 526.
- <sup>160</sup> *Ibid.*; London, July 22, 1967. Also see A. O. Ojigbo: *The Nigerian Crisis*, Nigerian Students Association Publication. University of California, Berkeley, 1967.
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- <sup>162</sup> Immanuel Wallerstein: *Africa: The Politics of Independence*. Vintage Books, Random House, New York, 1961; p. 88.
- <sup>163</sup> Lloyd Garrison: "The Ibos Go It Alone". *The New York Times Magazine*, N. Y., June 11, 1967; p. 30.
- <sup>164</sup> *West Africa*, London, August 26, 1967.
- <sup>165</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>166</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>167</sup> John de St. Jorre: *The Brothers' War: Biafra and Nigeria*. Houghton – Mifflin Company, Boston, 1972; p. 242.
- <sup>168</sup> *Ibid.*; p. 241.
- Also see pp. 235–252 for the role of the Christian Churches and relief

organizations in saving lives, and indirectly sustaining secessionist Biafra.

<sup>169</sup> *Tribune*, January 18, 1946.

<sup>170</sup> *New York Times*, New York, September 11, 1968.

<sup>171</sup> *The Tablet*, London, December 7, 1968.

<sup>172</sup> *West Africa*, London, July 22, 1967.

<sup>173</sup> October 31, 1968.

<sup>174</sup> November, 1968.

<sup>175</sup> John de St. Jorre: *The Brothers' War*, *op. cit.*; p. 216.

<sup>176</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>177</sup> Michael Nok: *Biafran Journal*, Time-Life Books, New York, 1969; p. 95.

<sup>178</sup> October 31, 1968.

<sup>179</sup> John de St. Jorre: *The Brothers' War*, *op. cit.*; p. 216.

<sup>180</sup> *Biafran Journal*, *op. cit.*; p. 95.

<sup>181</sup> John de St. Jorre, *op. cit.*; p. 323.

<sup>182</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>183</sup> *Ibid.*; p. 324.

<sup>184</sup> A. Okion Ojigbo: *200 Days to Eternity: The Administration of General Murtala Ramat Muhammed*, Tokion (Nigeria) Company, Lagos, 1979; p. 147.

<sup>185</sup> *Observer*, London, December 8, 1968.

These remarks are even more pertinent when we bear in mind that both the *Observer* and Colin Legum had been generally sympathetic to the Biafran cause. Indeed, the most detailed report of the gruesome massacres against Ibo civilians in Northern Nigeria in September 1966 was written for the *Observer* by Colin Legum. That article won international sympathy for Biafran secessionists.

<sup>186</sup> *The Washington Post*, Washington, D. C., April 12, 1969.

<sup>187</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>188</sup> December 7, 1968.

<sup>189</sup> A. Okion Ojigbo: "Plea for Peace", *Christian Science Monitor*, Boston, March 1969.

<sup>190</sup> U. S. Congress Committee Print, Washington, D. C. March 12, 1969.

<sup>191</sup> Ralph Uwchue: *Reflections on the Nigerian Civil War: Facing the Future*. Africana Publishing Corporation, N. Y., 1971; p. XXVI

<sup>192</sup> Jean Herskovits: "One Nigeria", *Foreign Affairs*, January, 1973; p. 398.

- <sup>193</sup> Cited in *Ibid.*
- <sup>194</sup> Shehu Shagari: *My Vision of a New Nigeria*, Lagos 1979, at p. 13 of a pamphlet on an interview with *Daily Times* panel. Also see *Daily Times*, Lagos, June 1979.
- <sup>195</sup> *Ibid.*; pp. 13–14.
- <sup>196</sup> *Ibid.*; p. 14.
- <sup>197</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>198</sup> *Proceedings of the Constituent Assembly. Official Report*, Lagos, Monday, May 20, 1976; pp. 5464–65.
- <sup>199</sup> Shehu Shagari: *My Vision of a New Nigeria. op. cit.*, p. 17.
- <sup>200</sup> *Ibid.*; pp. 17–18.
- <sup>201</sup> *Ibid.*; p. 6.
- <sup>202</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>203</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>204</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>205</sup> *Ibid.*; pp. 6–7.
- <sup>206</sup> Kwame Nkrumah: *Africa Must Unite*. Heinemann, London, 1963; p. 130.
- <sup>207</sup> *West Africa*, London, March 29, 1979; p. 526.
- <sup>208</sup> Shehu Shagari: "Forward to Peace and Unity: Shagari Appeals to Voters," a leaflet, Lagos, July 1969; p. 3. Also see *Federal Military Government's Views on the Report of the Federal Assets Investigation Panel*, 1975. Federal Ministry of Information, Lagos, 1976.
- <sup>209</sup> Shagari: *My Vision of a New Nigeria. op. cit.*; p. 7.
- <sup>210</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>211</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>212</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>213</sup> *Ibid.*; p. 15.
- <sup>214</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>215</sup> *Ibid.*; pp. 15–16.
- <sup>216</sup> *Ibid.*; p. 8.
- <sup>217</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>218</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>219</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>220</sup> Herskovits, *op. cit.*; 1979; fn. p. 320.
- <sup>221</sup> Cited in Richard Sklar: *Nigerian Political Parties*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, N. J., 1963; p. 94.
- <sup>222</sup> *Times International*, published by the Daily Times group of compa-

- nies, Lagos, January 14–20, 1980; p. 12.  
223 *New Nigerian*, Kaduna, Tuesday, November 21, 1978.  
224 *Ibid.*, Tuesday, November 21, 1978.  
225 *Ibid.*; October 6, 1977.

### Chapter Three

#### ELECTION 79: RETURN TO CIVILIAN RULE

- <sup>1</sup> *Press Release No. 948*, Federal Ministry of Information, Lagos, June 23, 1979.  
<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*  
<sup>3</sup> *Daily Times*, Lagos, Tuesday, July 2, 1979.  
<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*  
<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*  
<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*  
<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*  
<sup>8</sup> *Press Release No. 556*, Federal Ministry of Information, Lagos, April 9, 1979.  
<sup>9</sup> *Daily Times*, Lagos, Saturday, July 7, 1979.  
<sup>10</sup> Okoi Arikpo: *Development of Modern Nigeria*, Penguin Books, Baltimore, Maryland, 1967; p. 141.  
<sup>11</sup> *The Nigerian Standard*, Jos, Thursday, July 5, 1979; p. 1.  
<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*  
<sup>13</sup> *Sunday Standard*, Jos, Sunday, July 8, 1979; p. 16.  
<sup>14</sup> *Daily Times*, Lagos, Monday, July 9, 1979.  
<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*  
<sup>16</sup> *Sunday*, July 8, 1979.  
<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*  
<sup>18</sup> *The Punch*, Lagos, Monday, July 9, 1979.  
<sup>19</sup> *New Nigerian*, Kaduna, Monday, July 9, 1979; p. 1.  
<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*; p. 28.  
<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*  
<sup>22</sup> *Sunday Standard*, Jos, Sunday, July 8, 1979.  
<sup>23</sup> *New Nigerian*, Monday, July 9, 1979.  
<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*; p. 28.  
<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*  
<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*  
<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*  
<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*

- <sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*  
<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*  
<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*  
<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*  
<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*  
<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*  
<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*  
<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*  
<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*  
<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*  
<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*  
<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*  
<sup>41</sup> *Sunday Tide*, Port Harcourt, Sunday, July 8, 1979.  
<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*  
<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*  
<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*  
<sup>45</sup> *The Punch*, Lagos, Monday, July 9, 1979.  
<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*  
<sup>47</sup> *Daily Times*, Monday, July 9, 1979; p. 32.  
<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.* p. 1.  
<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*  
<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*  
<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*  
<sup>52</sup> *Sunday Standard*, Jos, Sunday, July 8, 1979.  
<sup>53</sup> *The Punch*, Lagos, Monday, July 9, 1979; p. 24  
<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*  
<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*  
<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*  
<sup>57</sup> *Daily Times*, Lagos, Friday, July 13, 1979.  
<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*  
<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*  
<sup>60</sup> *West Africa*, London, September, 10, 1979; p. 1633.  
<sup>61</sup> *New Nigerian*, Kaduna, Monday, July 30, 1979; p. 3  
<sup>62</sup> *Return to Civil Rule*, op. cit.; p. 54.  
<sup>63</sup> *New Nigerian*, Kaduna, Monday, July 30, 1979; p. 3.  
<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*  
<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*  
<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*  
<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*  
<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*  
<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*

- <sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>71</sup> *West Africa*, London, December, 24/31, 1979; p. 2368.
- <sup>72</sup> *Financial Times*, London, Monday, October 1, 1979.
- <sup>73</sup> Margery Perham: "Reflections on the Nigerian Civil War," *International Affairs*, London, April, 1970.
- <sup>74</sup> "Politics to me is Unavoidable," interview with Alhaji Adamu Ciro-ma, *The New Nation*, Vol. 3, No. 11, Lagos. February/March, 1980; p. 23.
- <sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>76</sup> "Forward to Peace and Unity: Shagari Appeals To Voters," Lagos, July, 1979.
- <sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>78</sup> *Daily Times*, Lagos, Friday, August 17, 1979; p. 1.
- <sup>79</sup> *West Africa*, London, September 17, 1979; p. 1711.
- <sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*; p. 1680.
- <sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*; p. 1761.
- <sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*; p. 1680.
- <sup>83</sup> Chief Michael O. Ani, "The True Facts," *Daily Times*, Friday, January 18, 1980. Also see *West Africa*, London, January 28, 1980; p. 141.
- <sup>84</sup> Quoted in *Ibid.*
- <sup>85</sup> "The True Facts", *op. cit.*
- <sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*
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- <sup>90</sup> *West Africa*, London, September 17, 1980; p. 1680.
- <sup>91</sup> Supreme Court of Nigeria, SC. 62/1979, Lagos.
- <sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>93</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>95</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>96</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>97</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>98</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>99</sup> *Tuesday*, February 19, 1980; p. 1.
- <sup>100</sup> *Nigerian Observer*, Benin City, Tuesday, February 19, 1980; p. 1.
- <sup>101</sup> *The Punch*, Lagos, Tuesday, February 19, 1980.
- <sup>102</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>103</sup> *The Nigerian Standard*, Jos, Tuesday, February 19, 1980.
- <sup>104</sup> *Ibid.*

- <sup>105</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>106</sup> *Daily Sketch*, Ibadan, Wednesday, February 20, 1980; p. 1. Also see  
*Nigerian Tribune*, Wednesday, February 20, 1980; p. 1.
- <sup>107</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>108</sup> *Ibid.*
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- <sup>110</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>111</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>112</sup> *Ibid.*; p. 25.
- <sup>113</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>114</sup> *Ibid.*; Thursday, February 21, 1980.
- <sup>115</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>116</sup> *Ibid.*; Wednesday, February 20, 1980.
- <sup>117</sup> *Nigerian Herald*, Tuesday, February 19, 1980; p. 5.
- <sup>118</sup> *Ibid.*
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- <sup>121</sup> *Nigerian Observer*, Benin City, Thursday, February 21, 1980.
- <sup>122</sup> *Nigerian Tribune*, Ibadan, Thursday, February 21, 1980; p. 3.
- <sup>123</sup> Thursday, February 21, 1980; p. 3.
- <sup>124</sup> *The Nigerian Chronicle*, Calabar, Friday, February 22, 1980; p. 1.
- <sup>125</sup> *The Nigerian Tide*, Port Harcourt, Friday, February 22, 1980; p. 1.
- <sup>126</sup> Thursday, February 21, 1980.
- <sup>127</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>128</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>129</sup> *Nigerian Standard*, Jos, Thursday, February 21, 1980; p. 3.
- <sup>130</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>131</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>132</sup> *Ibid.*
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- <sup>134</sup> *The Nigerian Chronicle*, Calabar, Friday, February 22, 1980; p. 1.
- <sup>135</sup> *Ibid.*
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- <sup>138</sup> *Ibid.*
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- <sup>140</sup> *The Nigerian Tide*, Port Harcourt, Friday, February 22, 1980; p. 1.
- <sup>141</sup> *Ibid.*
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- <sup>144</sup> *Ibid.*

- 145 *Ibid.*
- 146 *Ibid.*; Saturday, May 3, 1980; pp. 16–17.
- 147 *The Punch*, Lagos, Friday, February 28, 1980; p. 1.
- 148 *Nigerian Tribune*, Wednesday, December 12; 1979.
- 149 *Ibid.*
- 150 *Ibid.*
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- 152 *Ibid.*
- 153 *Daily Times*, Lagos, Friday, December 17, 1979. Also see *Tribune*, Friday, December 14, 1979 and *Tribune*, Monday, December 17, 1979.
- 154 *Ibid.*
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- 158 *Ibid.*
- 159 *Ibid.*
- 160 *Daily Times*, Saturday, May 3, 1980; pp. 16–17.
- 161 *National Concord*, Lagos, Tuesday, May 13, 1980; p. 11.
- 162 *Ibid.*
- 163 *Op. cit.*
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- 176 Nduka Nwosu: “Washing our dirty linen in public,” *Daily Times*, Lagos, Saturday, May 3, 1980; p. 7; pp. 16–17.
- 177 *Ibid.*
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- 181 *Ibid.*

- 182 *Daily Times*, Lagos, Saturday, May 3, 1980; pp. 16–17.
- 183 *Ibid.*
- 184 *Ibid.*; Wednesday, April 30, 1980; p. 2.
- 185 *Ibid.*
- 186 “Awo’s Malady”, *op. cit.*
- 187 *Ibid.*
- 188 *National Concord*, Lagos, Monday, May 5, 1980; p. 1.
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- 200 *Nigerian Tribune*, Ibadan, Monday, May 12, 1980; p. 5.
- 201 *West Africa*, London, September 20, 1979; p. 1633.
- 202 “The True Facts”, *Daily Times*, *op. cit.*
- 203 *Press Release*, Nos. 1362–1365, Federal Ministry of Information, Lagos, September 21, 1978.  
Also see *Towards Civil Rule: Speeches of His Excellency General Olusegun Obasanjo in Preparation for Changing over To Civilian Government in 1979*. State House, Lagos, 1978; p. 58.
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- 205 *Ibid.*; No. 1035, July 6, 1979.
- 206 *Ibid.*
- 207 *Ibid.*; No. 948, *op. cit.*

#### Chapter Four

### THE CONSTITUTION AND THE PRESIDENCY

- <sup>1</sup> *Press Release*, No. 1484., Federal Ministry of Information, Lagos, October 1, 1979.
- <sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*
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- <sup>4</sup> *Press Release*, No. 1543-48, Federal Ministry of Information, Lagos,

October 16, 1979.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>7</sup> General Murtala Ramat Muhammed: "1976 New Year Message by His Excellency General Murtala Ramat Muhammed," Federal Ministry of Information, Lagos, January 1, 1976,

<sup>8</sup> *News Release No. 1209*, Federal Ministry of Information, Lagos, October 18, 1975.

<sup>9</sup> L. Scott-Emuakpor (ed.): *A March of Progress: Collected Speeches*, Federal Ministry of Information, Lagos, 1979; pp. 9–10.

<sup>10</sup> *News Release, No. 152*, Federal Ministry of Information, Lagos, February 3, 1976.

<sup>11</sup> *News Release, No. 1209*, Federal Ministry of Information, Lagos, October 18, 1975.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>16</sup> *News Release No. 1786*, Federal Ministry of Information, Lagos, October 6, 1977.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid; No. 1209*, October 18, 1975.

<sup>18</sup> L. E. Scott-Emuakpor (ed): *A March of Progress, op. cit.*; p. 329.

<sup>19</sup> Louis W. Koenig: *The Chief Executive*, Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc., New York, 1968; p. 4.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>21</sup> *Daily Times*, Lagos, Friday, January 11, 1980; p. 7.

<sup>22</sup> *Press Release No. 2016–2023*; Federal Ministry of Information, Lagos, December 31, 1979.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>24</sup> *Towards Civil Rule, op. cit.*; p. 57.

<sup>25</sup> *Op. cit.*

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>27</sup> Quoted in Henry Atenaga's "Democracy Consolidates: Progress Report", *Times International*, a weekly magazine by the *Daily Times*, Lagos, Monday, January 14, 1980; p. 8.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>29</sup> *Op. cit.*

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>31</sup> *New Times Magazine*, Lagos, Mid-July 1979; p. 7.

<sup>32</sup> *West Africa*, London, March 24, 1980; p. 515.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*

- <sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>35</sup> *Daily Times*, Tuesday, May 27, 1980; pp. 1 & 11.
- <sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>38</sup> *Times International*, Lagos, Vol. 7, No. 24, January 14–20, 1980; p. 8.
- <sup>39</sup> *Press Release No. 1543-48*, Federal Ministry of Information, Lagos, October 16, 1979.
- <sup>40</sup> "Federalist Papers, No. 51," in B. F. Wright (ed.): *The Federalist*. Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Mass, 1961.
- <sup>41</sup> Woodrow Wilson: *Constitutional Government in the United States*. New York, 1911, pp. 54–55.
- <sup>42</sup> John Adams: *Defence of the Constitution of the United States of America against the Attack of Mr. Turgot*.
- <sup>43</sup> *New York Times*, New York, February 3, 1967.
- <sup>44</sup> Shehu Shagari: *My Vision of a New Nigeria*. *op. cit.*: p.
- <sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>46</sup> William Howard Taft: *Our Chief Magistrate and His Powers*. Columbia University Press, New York, 1915. p. 144.
- <sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>48</sup> Dwight D. Eisenhower: *Mandate for Change*. Garden City, N. Y. 1963; p. 193.
- <sup>49</sup> Koenig, *op. cit.*: p. 11.
- <sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>51</sup> Douglas Southall Freeman: *Patriot and President*. Vol. 6, (*George Washington*), New York, 1954; p. 117.
- <sup>52</sup> Cited in Richard E. Neustadt: *Presidential Power*. John Wiley & Sons, New York, 1960; p. 12.
- <sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*; p. 34.
- <sup>54</sup> *West Africa*, London, October 15, 1979.
- <sup>55</sup> *Op. cit.*
- <sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*

## OKION OJIGBO

Major-General Shehu Musa Yar'Adua in his Foreword to Mr. Okion Ojigbo's *200 Days to Eternity* wrote that "Since my assumption of the Office of Chief of Staff, Supreme Headquarters, in February 1976, I have had the pleasure of working in close association with a small core of brilliant and hard-working young civil servants whose commitments to our country was a constant inspiration to me. Tony Ojigbo was one of these young men". The author of that excellent, vivid, lucid and well-researched book which will remain valid for all time as an authoritative and well-documented study of the Administration of the late General Murtala Muhammed and of the political history of that important period in the political evolution of Nigeria, has written another brilliant study on Nigeria's return to civilian rule.

Mr. Okion Ojigbo, author of several scholarly articles in international journals, was born at Aladja in the Delta area of Bendel State. He attended Government College, Ughelli, where he did his West African School Certificate and Higher School Certificate. Thereafter, he attended the University of California, Berkeley, California, where he graduated with Bachelors and Masters Degrees in Political Science. He also did post-graduate studies in Journalism at the same university, and taught courses in African and American history and politics. Returning to Nigeria after his studies in the United States of America, Mr. Okion Ojigbo served briefly at the Federal Ministry of Establishments before he was posted to the State House after the change of Government in 1975, where he served at the Senior Assistant Secretary under the late Nigerian Head of State, Ge-

neral Murtala Muhammed, and later as the Principal Private Secretary to his successor, General Olusegun Obasanjo.

Author of *200 Days to Eternity*, Mr. Ojigbo's *Nigeria Returns to Civilian Rule* is another excellent and lucid book that also should have historical permanence. These two books are essential and necessary for any scholar, student, politician or layman interested in Nigeria's twenty years' political history from 1959–1979.

