

POLITICAL CORRUPTION AND THE
NIGERIAN CIVIL WAR

A Thesis

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by

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ABSTRACT

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Purpose

The purpose of this thesis was to describe instances of political corruption in post-independence Nigeria and to relate such instances and its contribution to the outbreak of civil war in 1966.

Method

The method of research was mainly library research. The Sam Houston University was used extensively. Other library facilities utilized include the following: Texas Southern University; University of Houston, and the Houston Public Library. Materials were also obtained from the University of Ife and the University of Lagos, both in Nigeria. Personal experience was also utilized

Findings

The fundamental error in post-independence Nigerian politics was that political parties were based on tribes. Because political officials owe their allegiance to the tribal groups, tribalism became a salient factor in the maintenance of politically corrupt relations. At the time under

study, it was found that political corruption in Nigeria had attained anarchial dimension. Political officials were elected into office by actually using force and coercion to obtain votes. Because the Judicial System was incapacitated in performing its constitutional obligation of protecting the rights of the public, the civilians consequently lost faith in the rules of law and Nigeria was thrust into a series of bloody crises which later precipitated the civil war.

Approved:

Billy W. Bramlett

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The Socio-Political Setting

Nigeria is situated at the eastern end of the Gulf of Guinea between the 4th and 14th parallels (north). Its total area is approximately 356,000 square miles, slightly more than the combined areas of France and both Germanys. Its name is derived from its main inland waterway, the river Niger, which flows some 2,600 miles from the hills of Sierra Leone to the enormous Fluvial complex of the Niger Delta.

Geographers distinguish three principal zones of vegetation: the swamp forests of the coast-belt, the high forests of the humid south, and the Savannas of the subhumid middle belt and north. There are two major seasons--a wet season (April-October) when rainfall in the coastal sector varies between 100-140 inches, and a dry season (November-March) when it lessens to 20 inches at the coast and zero in the north. By and large, temperatures vary between 70-80 degrees F. in the morning and from 90-100 degrees F. in the afternoon.

The population of Nigeria, estimated at about 60 million in 1962, exceeds the combined populations of all other states in the West African region south of the Sahara. When the Federation of Nigeria became an independent member of the Commonwealth of Nations on October 1, 1960, the total population of the United Kingdom dependencies the world over reduced

by about 45 per cent.

The Federation of Nigeria consists of three political regions--the North, the East, and the West. The northern region comprises over three-fourths of the area and contains about 54% of the population of the country. Each region is said to have a dual cultural makeup: a territorial "nucleus" inhabited by members of a cultured majority and a "peripheral zone" inhabited by cultural minorities. Majority and minority groups include both tribes and "nationalities." James S. Coleman has defined these terms thus;

Tribe: . . . a relatively small group of people who share a common culture and who are descended from a common ancestor. The tribe is the largest social group defined primarily in terms of kinship, and is normally an aggregation of clans.

Nationality: . . . the largest traditional African group, above a tribe which can be distinguished from other groups by one or more objective criteria (normally language).

In each region, a single "nationality" group of culturally related tribes is numerically preponderant--the Hausa in the northern region, the Ibo in the eastern region, and the Yoruba in the western region. Nigerians speak approximately 248 distinct languages. These include ten languages that are spoken by groups of more than 350,000; the Hausa-speaking people of the north number about 9 1/2 million, while Ibo and Yoruba are spoken by more than 5 million people each. English is the official language in every region, it is the principal language of commerce and the primary linguistic link between peoples of different nationalities.

In the northern region, where approximately 75% of the people profess the Islamic faith, literacy in Arabic Script was more than that in Roman Script (5.4 to 2.1%). English literacy was higher in the western and eastern region (17.3 & 15.6%) owing to the intensive activity of Christian missionaries in these areas for nearly a century.

In the western region, Christianity and Islam have an approximately equal number of adherents; in the eastern region, where Christianity is the exclusive religion, denominational differences are politically ~~sal~~vent.

Nigerian Culture and History

Only the barest outline of Nigerian culture and history is provided in this chapter to assist readers who are not generally familiar with relevant background.

People of the Northern Region. More than two-thirds of the Northern people belonged to the six nationality groups as follows: about 6 million Hausa; 3.1 million Fulani; 1.3 million Kanuri, 1 million Tiv; half a million Yoruba and 350,000 Nupe. The remaining people include about 220 linguistic groups, most of whom inhabit the southerly half of the northern region where Hausa culture does not predominate. The Hausa nationality includes a number of tribes that are related by the Hausa language, the Islamic faith, and roughly similar physiognomic traits. M. G. Smith defines Hausa to mean "the entire settled Moslem, Hausa-speaking population." Two principal subdivisions need to be distinguished: the indigeneous Habe and the "settled" Fulani,

who have intermarried extensively with the Habe assimilating their language and customs. Apart from the "settled" or "town" Fulani, there are two other Fulani groups: pastoral nomads, called the Bush or Cattle Fulani, and intermediate group that is semi-pastorial and semi-agricultural. Each of the remaining major nationality groups of the northern region is identified with a particular territorial subdivision, thus: the Kanuri of Bornu Province, the Nupe of Southern Niger and eastern Ilorin, the Tiv of Benue Province and the Yoruba of southern Ilorin and western Kabba (see map).

The original Habe states, seven in number, appear to have been established in the territory of modern Hausaland about the tenth century. During the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, they were at least partially within the sphere of influence of the Islamicized Kingdom of Kanem--Bornu, unquestionably the dominant state in the central Sudan. Islam was introduced into Hausaland in the fourteenth century by Negro believers from the western Sudan.

While each of the leading Emirates in Hausaland and its periphery developed its own distinctive political system, certain principles of emirate rule are general. First, emirate rule is theocratic, involving the fusion of political and religious authority. Secondly, it is dynastic; normally, emirs are chosen by traditional electors subject to conditions that are peculiar to particular states, for example, as the presumptive heir of a single royal dynasty (Kanu) from a number of royal dynasties in rotation (Bida), from alternative

dynasties subject to the approval of an overlord (Zorie). Thirdly, emirs rule through aristocracies of birth and rank, most of the higher offices being restricted to men of noble birth. As M. G. Smith has observed: "status is conferred by birth and is a prerequisite of eligibility for rank and office, as the Hausa say, is the gift of Allah."

Finally, emirate rule exemplifies the principle of clientage, defined by Smith as "an exclusive relation of mutual benefit which holds between two persons defined as socially and politically unequal, which stresses their solidarity." In the colonial era, clientage was basic to the system of territorial organization. Fief-holders, residing at the capital of an emirate were clients of the emir; in turn, they were patrons of subordinate agents through whom they administered and exploited the subject communities within their jurisdictions. The emirs conferred both territorial and non-territorial titles upon members of Fulani families, fewer non-Fulani retainers, and senior functionaries of slave status. Major title holders were empowered to create subordinate titles which they allotted to clients within their jurisdiction. During the colonial period, new offices created for the conduct of administrative functions, e.g., education, agriculture, forestry, etc., were absorbed into the title system and converted to the traditional purposes of "Saranta" (The Hausa term for titled political office). Consequently, the modern elite of Hausaland has evolved mainly within the framework of traditional authority and value. This evolution is worth remembering since it will be instrumental

in explaining tribalism which has been used synonymously with corruptive practices by political officials in Nigeria after independence.

Peoples of the Western Region. Over 70 per cent of the people of the Western Region belonged to the Yoruba nationality. Nine tribal or territorial sections have been distinguished, eight in the Western Region and the Federal Territory of Lagos. The ninth in neighboring areas of the Northern Region. Non-Yoruba people inhabit the two Southern provinces of the region, termed the Mid-West. The greater number are Edo-speaking people; these include the Edo of Benin Province and the Urhobo of Delta Province. Ibo-speaking people inhabit easterly areas bordering on the Niger River; the Ijaw and the Itsekeri live mainly in the creek areas of Delta Province.

The Yoruba are believed to have migrated from northern eastern Africa into their present homeland about a thousand years ago. Ile-Ife is the cradle of Yoruba culture, but political pre-eminence was acquired by the city-state of Oyo which, by the late fifteenth century, had become the capital of a Yoruba Empire. To the South, Oyo power was checked by the extensive but centralized Kingdom of Benin.

Tribal legend ascribes the origin of the Yoruba to a deity, Oduduwa. The principal royal dynasties or lineages of the main tribal section were purported to have been founded by the deified grandsons of Oduduwa. Minor royal lineages were ramified from the Oduduwa branches and there were numerous kings,

great and petty in Yorubaland. "Oba" is the Yoruba term for king but most kings have titles which are unique to their chiefdoms. Oba, unlike the theocratic emirs of the north, are innately sacred because of their putative descent from Oduduwa and their identification with the mystical essences of their states. The preeminent spiritual Oba of the Oni of Ife; it is indicative of the vigor of tradition in the modern western region that in 1960 the incumbent Oni was designated as its first African Constitutional Governor.

Certain features of political organization are typical of the traditional Yoruba states. As Lloyd said, "the basic element of the Yoruba political system is the patrilineage, an exogamous descent group, whose members venerate a founding ancestor." In general, superior title holders are chosen from among the lineage elders. Specific titles may be vested in particular lineages, but the process of appointment involves both selection by the lineage and confirmation by the Oba (king). Customarily, the Sacred Oba of a Yoruba state is chosen from a royal lineage or clan (related villages) by a council of traditional chiefs, or "Kingmakers."

The classic illustration of Yoruba government is the Kingdom of Oyo. All decisions of Afafin (king) of Oyo required the approval of his council of chiefs. In former times, a gift of parrot's eggs from the leader of the council was a sign to the Afafin that his death was desired by the chiefs and the people. Invariably the Afafin complied by taking poison, so that the threat of a dread gift was a safeguard against tyrannical rule.

As remarked in an authoritative study, the proscription of this custom by the British "dislocated the checks and balances of the old constitution." In theory and in practice, the powers of the Yoruba kings were regulated by custom and limited institutionally by countervailing organs of the state. Unlike the northern emirates, the Yoruba monarchies were constitutional rather than despotic; fear of authority does not appear to have been a normally important factor in tribal government. Great kings lived in the midst of their people, and lesser chiefs, like the titled lineage heads who controlled the election of kings, were necessarily close to the people. Government was a communal interest and at some point every adult had a say.

In recent years the Yoruba institution of chieftaincy has been modernized and adapted to the requirements of democratic representative government. Socially, it has become the supreme symbol of achieved status. The traditional authorities regularly bestow "honorary" or "courtesy" titles of chieftain upon wealthy and otherwise prominent men and women in recognition of their personal achievements, and contributions to community development and welfare.

It is a basic cultural trait of the Yoruba for lineages to cluster "forming politically unified towns." Members of the lineage in town live together in compounds or multi-dwelling residential units "which normally house more than 100 people." Farm lands surrounding the towns belong to lineages and many persons divide their time between the family farm and a lineage compound town.

Probably the proportion of urban dwellers in Yorubaland is higher than among any other people in tropical Africa. Between 1956-62, nine of the eighteen cities in Nigeria with population exceeding 500,000 were predominantly Yoruba communities of pre-commercial origin. This traditional pattern of urban organization appears to have minimized the amount of social disorganization produced by secular forces. Yet the two principal cities of Yorubaland, Lagos and Ibadan, have not been spared the social traumas of modern urbanization. In both cities large cosmopolitan communities, populated mainly by Nigerians who are not sons of the soil, have arisen beside the traditional settlements. The juxtaposition of conflict with culture value systems in the brisk urban setting has been an active spring of political competition.

The political institutions of Benin differ from those of the Yoruba in fundamental respects, despite the fact that the royal dynasty of Benin was derived from the Yoruba dynasty of Ife. Benin chieftaincies, including the Sacred Kingship, are inherited by primogeniture and non-hereditary titles are bestowed by the Oba irrespective of lineage considerations.

Traditionally, the powers of the Oba of Benin are more absolute than those of a Yoruba king. Title holders in particular the senior town chiefs, do influence the Oba but they have no traditional rights of opposition. Elsewhere in the mid-west, among Edo, Ibo, and Ijaw-speaking people, traditional form of government are conciliar, with age-grades and title associations playing an important part.

In Western Region, 37 per cent of the population professed Christianity, 33 per cent espoused Islam, and 30 per cent

followed indigenous animistic creeds. Over 96 per cent of the Muslims and 84 per cent of the Christians were located in Yorubaland where the two faiths co-exist in amicable rivalry. Such interfaith tension as exists is largely a consequence of the superior educational and political opportunities which have been enjoyed by Christian elements in the past.

Peoples of the Eastern Region. Among the 7.2 million people of the Eastern Region in 1963, about 5 million or 61 per cent belonged to the Ibo nationality which comprises some 30 territorial sections. Non-Ibo peoples inhabit the southern and eastern sectors of the region. The largest groups are the Ibibio and the Annang who jointly total some 15 per cent of the regional population. The 75,000 Efik people of Calabar in the Cross River Estuary have given their name to the language of the Ibibio-Annang who are classed, with peoples of the Cross River Basin, as Efik-speaking. Ijaw people, numbering about 265,000, inhabit the coastal creeks of the Niger Delta, while the easterly Ogoja Province presents a linguistic medley which is yet undocumented in its entirety.

Most of the region is thickly forested and densely populated--269 persons per square mile is the average density as compared with 148 in the West and 67 in the North. In the Ibo heartland, population densities average about 450 to the square mile. Largely as a result of population pressures on the land, many Ibo people have migrated to urban areas in all parts of Nigeria. Of the five major urban centers in Iboland, only the Niger River city of Onitsha has a traditional nucleus of any

political importance. Port Harcourt, the second seaport and petroleum capital of Nigeria, Enugu, an administrative and coal mining center, Aba, and Umuahia are all essentially non-traditional cities.

As a rule, traditional systems of authority and land tenure among the Ibo are based on patrilineal kin groups. Typically, the Ibo village chief is the head of a specified lineage; the chief of a senior village in a group may "preside" at meetings of the village-group. In some cases, village-group heads enjoy great prestige, but their authority never extends beyond the village-group. Indeed there are parts of Iboland where chieftaincy is virtually unknown and "tribal government is thought of as the collective rule of the senior age grades." The dispersed power system of the Ibo is characterized by a high degree of popular participation in the making of public decisions. Ibo culture magnifies the value of individual achievement, yet the Ibo people are known for their cooperative propensities as well, exemplified both by their enthusiasm for community development and by the multitude of voluntary improvement associations, e.g., town unions, clan unions, divisional unions, etc., that provide loans and perform many other services of a political and communal nature. Ibo women's organizations are probably unexcelled on the African continent in their cohesion and ability to exert political influence. Finally, the Ibo people are famous for their exceptional "receptivity to change."

There are two culturally marginal Ibo groups that merit special mention in this account because of their extraordinary

influence on recent Ibo history. First, the Onitsha indigenes, numbering about 10,000 people, who live mainly in the traditional sector of that great Niger River metropolis. The Onitshas are thought to have migrated from Benin in the 17th century; their traditional ruler, the Obi of Onitsha, is a sacred chief whose traditional political status in the eyes of his people is probably unmatched in Iboland.

Twentieth-century Onitsha is the leading market town on the Niger. Men of initiative have flocked to Onitsha from the Ibo hinterland. Diocesan headquarters were established there by the Anglican and the Roman Catholic missions; schools flourished, and education became the order of the day for Onitsha youth. Today non-traditional boom towns have outstripped the Onitshan rate of growth, but the city on the Niger remains the cultural capital of Ioland and its educational eminence is unexcelled. The proverbial Onitsha lawyer has earned an auspicious niche in the political history of Eastern Nigeria.

Another group, the Aros, are thought to have migrated from the north to their homeland in Enyong Division adjacent to the Ibo and the Ibibio. Some Aro people affirm Ibo nationality while others deny it. K. Onwuka Dike observes that Aro power emerged during the period of the slave trade which they dominated by establishing colonies along the trade routes and procuring hapless Ibos for sale as slaves to the chiefs of the coastal city-states, who sold them in turn to European traders. The Aro system was based on an oracle known as Aro Chuku (God of the Aros) that was feared and respected throughout Iboland as a sacred court

of appeal. Dike writes:

The Oracle, directed by the Aros, was the medium through which the slaves exported from Delta ports were largely recruited. As the highest court of appeal, this deity was supposed to levy fines on convicted individuals and groups. The fines had to be paid in slaves which were believed to have been 'eaten' by Chukwu (the Oracle), although in fact they were sold to the coast middlemen. This recruiting campaign, carefully staged under conditions of awe and reverence, was rarely attended by violence.

Lesser oracles in the various Aro colonies supplemented the main oracle and the Aros employed certain warrior tribes to coerce those intransigent groups who did not bend to their authority. Following the suppression of the Aro oracle by the British in 1900, the Aro people and their warrior allies transferred their energies to other pursuits, achieving signal success in the fields of legitimate enterprise and education.

Title-taking is common among the Ibo and non-Ibo peoples alike. Most titled men have attained mature ages and respectable levels of personal wealth. In some communities, specific titles are vested in particular lineages. Titled men form societies which require the payment of initiation fees that are too great to be taken lightly either by the initiates or by the general public. At local government levels, title societies and "secret societies" of a religious nature are influential in the formation of public opinion.

According to the 1953 census, about one-half of the Eastern population is Christian; most of the others are Animists. The four largest Christian denominations are the Roman Catholic,

the Anglican, the Methodist, and the Church of Scotland Presbyterian in that order. Roman Catholicism is strongest in the Ibo area, while the Church of Scotland is based mainly in Calabar, where it was established in 1846.

Government

On 1 October 1954, Nigeria became a Federation consisting of three large regions, or groups of provinces, namely, the Northern Region, the Western Region, and the Eastern Regions; together with the Federal Territory of Lagos. On 1 October 1960, after almost half a century of colonial rule Nigeria became an independent member of the Commonwealth. On 1 October 1963 it became a Republic. On 9 August 1963 the mid-western region was formed. The regions were known prior to creation of the twelve states as Eastern Nigeria, Northern Nigeria, Western Nigeria and Mid-Western Nigeria.

The seat of the Federal or Central Government was, and still is, at Lagos where the House of Representatives was located to which the Regions sent elected members. The Federal Government had control over such things as external affairs, defense, finance, customs, and subjects of inter-regional interest such as ports, railways, main truck roads, aviation, post and telegraph, and broadcasting.

Each region has its own elected House of Assembly, and also a House of Chiefs. The Regions have a large measure of control over agriculture, education, medical services, forestry, and public works. At the same time much of the local administration was carried out by local authorities and local government councils.

The Government of Nigeria may thus be divided into two parts: (1) the Federal Government, and (2) the Regional Governments. The Nigerian system of government was not unlike that of Canada. In Canada there is a Federal (or Central) Government to deal with affairs of the country as a whole, and there are also governments for each of the provinces, which correspond to the regions of Nigeria.

The Problem

On the eve of Nigerian Independence in 1960, there were inspiring speeches about hard work, 'duty to our country,' 'sacrifice to our great nation' and other such lofty themes. Naturally the people, surging with innocent enthusiasm, braced themselves for the honorable citizenship of the wonderful and prosperous nation which they were promised. The experience of the first five years of post-independence Nigeria shattered these rosy hopes and provided grounds for the most cynical estimation of the African's competence for leadership.

Within the first months of independence, extreme regionalism brought the machinery of democratic federalism to a grinding halt. Because the political parties had their bases in (and therefore allegiance to) the Regions, the preponderance in size and population of the northern region upset the principle of federalism in Nigeria. Taking advantage of its built-in 50 per cent representative at the center, the North sought to perpetuate its position of domination in the country. Superimposed on this was the incompetence and irresponsibility of the politicians. Mediocrities with neither political vision nor

personal conviction were put into positions of power. Having nothing to offer the people, they sought to maintain their positions of power and affluence by taking advantage of the emotions of the illiterate populace. They encouraged tribalism and played one ethnic group against the other, and one Region against another.

Under this condition, efficient planning was impossible, and effective policies were frustrated at every turn. To make matters worse, every tissue of the body politic of the country was thoroughly saturated with the bad blood of corruption. In the diplomatic services, the public services and in high and low places all over the country, bribery and kinship were prerequisites for appointment and promotions.

As could be expected, the country made no progress. In spite of her rich and diverse resources, the per capita income of the people was still pitifully low. In striking and pathetic ^{contrast} ~~contest~~ to the poverty of the people, ministers and persons in positions of responsibility lived in extravagant splendour--with luxurious cars and palatial houses, and indulging in purposeless overseas tours, during which they lived in the most expensive hotels. Because Nigeria was a neo-colonial country, economic growth was impossible. The leaders followed the advice of their British "experts" and so-called "expertise." Moreover, a sophisticated parliamentary system of government, which requires a high degree of sophistication and discipline for its successful operation, was imposed on inexperienced hands, resulting in more turbulence than progress.

In a large land mass torn by tribal and religious animosities, such as Nigeria, the difficulties of operating a federal system were overwhelming. In the words of Mill, "Government must be made for human beings as they are, or as they are capable of speedily becoming." Speaking in the same vein, Thomas Jefferson stated that representative democracy requires an "aristocracy of virtue and talent." Nigeria's first republic lacked these requirements. Whatever is said in the end, Nigeria of the first republic placed every human activity in a pecuniary framework. It was not only the politicians or parliamentarians; everybody was involved in this--civil servants, contractors, the corporations, the courts, the police. Man was bound to man in Nigeria only by considerations of prudence and advantage.

A pertinent question which is the main focus of investigation in this thesis is to ask whether or not Nigeria could have drifted thus far if the politicians and leaders had set a good example. As the "New Nigerian" pointed out:

These people aren't, of course, wholly to blame. They have been set a bad example in the past. They have watched others prosper with little or no effort. They have seen the "dash" become an established part of the scheme of things. They have become part of a machine the overall tempo of which has moved at a snail's pace. They have seen leaders involved in malpractices of all kinds, grow rich with no chance or reprimand. Little wonder then that an air of unreality engulfed many aspects of the public service, with false values abounding and discipline at a low ebb.

The purpose of this thesis therefore, was to provide in a narrative format substantiated by documented evidences, the extent to which political corruption in post-independence

Nigeria contributed to the out-break of civil war in 1967. The time period included in this analysis was between 1960 after independence and the outbreak of civil war in 1967.

The method of research was mainly library research. The Sam Houston University library was used extensively. Other library facilities utilized include the following: Texas Southern University library, University of Houston (main campus), and Houston Public library (downtown). Other materials were obtained from University of Ife and University of Lagos, both in Nigeria. Personal correspondence was maintained with Mr. Toi Solaria, one of Nigeria's most recognized political observers and critic.

CHAPTER II

POLITICAL CORRUPTION: AN OUTLINE OF A MODEL

In this chapter, a model for analyzing the nature and extent of political corruption in Nigeria will be outlined. For years analytic models have been among the most useful scholarly tools with which social scientists find their way through the maze of political, social and economic reality. Without such conceptual maps to guide them, investigators tend to lose their way in tracing complex processed or causal relationships, and to become mired in irrelevancies. The analytical model affords a further advantage in that it does not pretend to serve as a theory, although if carefully constructed it may aid in the development of theory. If is, then, only a topographic sketch of some social or political landscape, and it can easily be adapted and improved as available knowledge increases, or it can be altogether redrawn if the original outline proves misleading.

The present model, which is intended as no more than a preliminary sketch, describes a two process in the analysis of political corruption in Nigeria. First, it isolates a set of related components that focus on the individual office-holder, his activities, and the matters with which he is concerned (the core process).

Second, it deals with another set of components, deriving from the first, that operate on the larger system and subsystem levels (the extended process). It shall be argued that the core process as described in this analysis is applicable to all instances of political corruption in all formal polities, whereas the extended process as described here applies substantially, but not exclusively, to Nigeria.

The "core process" has five components: (1) political officeholders; (2) political goods; (3) political resources; (4) transaction relationships and (5) conversion networks. The "extended process" has two components; (1) a culture of political corruption, and (2) an informal polity. In the discussion to follow, the core process and the extended process are considered in turn by means of a series of definitional propositions that illustrate, clarify, and relate the several components in each set to one another. First, however, the concept of political corruption requires clarification.

For the purpose of this thesis, political corruption will be defined as "the unsanctioned, unscheduled use of political resources and/or goods for private, that is, nonpublic ends" (Almond, 1969). This definition rests on three assumptions: (1) that there is a distinction between "political" and "non-political" corruption; (2) that there is a distinction between "political corruption" and "corruption of process," and (3) that corruption is a social process.

Throughout this analysis the corruption under discussion is corruption involving the formal polity, embodied in the institutions

of government, such as legislatures, executives, courts, bureaucracies, and statutory bodies of various sorts. These institutions operate according to terms set forth in constitutions, statutes, ordinances, decrees, and other written and ^{un}rewritten rules that have the force of law. The institutions themselves are made up of individual offices, arranged in series, hierarchies, or sets. Whatever the grouping, in each office the occupant functions according to prescriptions and expectations applicable to the office itself. Thus, the term "political" pertains to the structural and human components of the formal polity, and "political corruption" is that corruption which necessarily involves persons who occupy positions in the formal polity. This does not mean that political corruption is restricted to the formal polity in its scope of operation. Obviously it involves institutions, groups, and person who deal with the formal polity but are not themselves formally part of the structures.

However, unless the acts involve defined members of the formal polity, what is described is not political corruption, but something that might be styled "non-political" corruption.

The second assumption concerning the distinction between "political corruption" and another generic type of corruption, "corruption of the political process," rests on two criteria: the relationship of the activity in question to the political process and the motivation for the activity.

It is assumed in the case of "political corruption" that office holders dispose political resources within the framework of ongoing political processes, or at least that they use such processes as bases for the creation and maintenance of corrupt relationships. [In this analysis, political processes are treated as constant and receive only such additional examination as is necessary to clarify some aspect of corrupt transactions]. On the other hand "corruption of the political process" has as its principal effect the degradation or perversion of the political process. Electoral fraud of various kinds (such as "graveyard registration" and ballot box stuffing), attaining political office under false pretence, suborning perjury, and coercing judges all fall under this rubric.

In "political corruption," more often than not, those involved derive some sort of material benefit. However, personal material gain is not a component of "corruption of process." The core of the so-called Watergate Affair in the United States represents an almost pure case of this type of corruption, although it is clear that those involved in the campaign contribution aspect--particularly the big corporate donors--believed or were led to believe that their contributions would lead to governmental preferment. Characteristically, most of the principals--the "insiders" in the government or the Republican party--in that complex of misdeeds, sought neither enrichment nor other tangible gain, but such more abstract rewards

as political power and psychic satisfactions of service in a cause and victory over what they believed to be dangerous enemy.

Admittedly, the line between "political corruption" and "corruption of the political process" may become blurred when the one leads to the other or, as is most often the case, when elements of both may be found in a particular situation. The Nigerian case present a typical example where both elements of corruption prevails as will be demonstrated in the next chapter. Nevertheless, distinction is made between the two because it serves to highlight the self-serving behavior that is the central focus of this inquiry.

It is also assumed that "political corruption" is a social process. That is, a pattern of acts relating at least two actors. Therefore, in this context the corruption of an individual (as suggested in the statement, "he is becoming corrupt") is seen either as a consequence of the process or as a particular input into the process that may, for example, increase its scope. Further, to define political corruption as a process does not mean that such a process necessarily constitutes a system. A single, casual two-party corrupt transaction, as for example between a postal clerk and a transient customer, could hardly be called systematic, since the elements of repetition and patterned duration are missing.

With these assumptions in mind, attention will be turned to elements of the outlined model.

The Core Process

The key to the model is the individual officeholder in the formal polity. The functions of the individual occupying a given office or political position are defined not only by the formal, explicit powers and duties, attached to the office, but by a political role. The political role is determined by expectations as to how the occupant of a given office ought to behave. Thus, a ministerial secretary, for example, or a constable, not only holds a specific office in a governmental structure, an office that is clearly defined by a schedule of duties; he also plays a role that reflects certain (usually less well defined) expectations about how the job is to be performed. In this sense, the office is a sort of uniform that provides the wearer with explicit and implicit cues about his own expected behavior and also tells others something about how he will probably behave as long as he remains in uniform.

There are several reasons why in this study the crucial elements of an office or position is considered to be the individual who occupies it. It is he who represents the linkage between the formal polity and those outside it; it is he who converts political resources into the goods that create, feed, and maintain politically corrupt relationships; and as shall be noted in discussing the extended process, it is he who, by converting public resources into private resources, provides both the capital and the lubricant for the mechaninations

of the "informal polity." Finally, there is a powerful common sense reasons for the centrality of the individual officeholder in this analysis: it is not, after all, institutions or organizations that engage in corrupt political practices, but people, acting alone or in concert--and in Nigeria as elsewhere the practice has been to prosecute individuals, not institutions, for acts of political corruption.

In this analysis, political goods refer to those highly desirable things that government through their agents are in a unique position to dispense. Some may be quite tangible, such as money, electricity, water supply, roads, jobs, import licenses, food; some are intangible, such as security and protection against enemies and internal malefactors, information, legitimacy, and access to status and prestige. When Almond and Powell refer to the "distributive capability" of political systems, they are in fact talking about the extent to which governments have the power to dispense political goods. It should be added that the nature (type, quality, quantity) of the political goods to be distributed depends largely on the nature and functions of the State, the greater the governmental control over economic, social, and political resources, and the greater the quantity--and usually, the value--of the goods distributed. A "constabulary" state, in which public authority plays only a minimal role in economic life, will have fewer political goods to distribute than a welfare state or one with a planned economy.

Political resources, according to Almond, are the official and unofficial capital against which political goods are drawn; to use a banking analogy, as political resources are the deposits, political goods are the currency which officeholders spend in their dealings with one another and with the public. Every political position confers on its occupant access to certain political resources. The nature and relative importance of those resources--and of the goods that can be drawn--are usually defined by the job schedule or set of role-expectations attendant on the position. In this sense, then, what has been styled earlier as the "uniform" of office can become a political resource that enables the wearer to trade in certain kinds of political goods.

Political resources and political goods are, as suggested earlier, either tangible or intangible. Classified according to attribution, there are three main varieties; those related directly to office or position, those related to a political role attached to position, and finally, those attached directly to the person of an officeholder and capable of being used by him independently of the other two. Such personal resources relate to those connected with position and political role to the extent they are used in conjunction with them. Thus, for example, family connections (a personal resource), when coupled with the influence of position (a role-related resource), may enhance the value of a position-related resource such as facilitation (red-tape cutting, perhaps).

The term transaction relationships initially designates the various means by which political resources and goods are used for purposes other than those for which they were originally intended. Terms such as bribery, misappropriation, defalcation, fraud, nepotism, favoritism, are conventionally used to illustrate the ways whereby formal, public, political resources find their way into what are essentially private, that is, informal, channels. The conventional use of these terms, however, tends to obscure the essentially transactional nature of political corruption and the differences, if any, between criminal acts and political corruption. Each of these matters requires some comment. It is argued here that a willful act of misappropriation or defalcation, in which an individual, acting alone, takes or uses public property solely for his own benefit, is not an act of political corruption. It becomes a politically corrupt act only when it involves at best two persons, of whom at least one is an officeholder. In either case, of course, the act may be defined by law or regulation as criminal or even as corrupt, and its perpetrators may be subject to penalties. But it is by no means certain that all acts of political corruption are statutorily criminal; for example, flagrant favoritism may be defined as a manifestation of political corruption and yet may not be stipulated as criminal behavior in any law or regulation.

For the purpose of this analysis, then, a politically corrupt transaction, in its simplest form, involves at least one of the parties

knows that the disposition of the political good is unscheduled, illegal, or nonsanctioned. The structured ramifications of this basic, two-person transaction are almost endless. They are limited only by the ingenuity of the participants, the purposes of the transaction itself, and the nature of the goods exchanged.

The goods can range over the entire gamut of political resources available to the actors, be they tangible, intangible, position or role-related, or personal. But whatever their nature, once given, they do not necessarily disappear from the political corruption process, for the single dyadic transaction does not exhaust the life history of the goods themselves. It is considered here that all political goods, even the most tangible ones, undergo some degree of transformation as they are distributed and used, and may in fact lose their identities along the way. That transformation, which occurs or begins to occur when the goods reach the hands of the first recipient is here termed conversion, and the channels through which the goods subsequently travel constitute the conversion network. Theoretically, it should be possible to follow the conversion of political goods as they are passed on, broken up, passed on further, changed again, much as scientists can trace irradiated particules through living bodies. Actually, given the range of potential recipients in the conversion network and the mutable and often intangible nature of the goods, precise tracking at all points is generally either hopeless

or impractical. But it can be said conveniently that conversion does take place and under the right circumstances it can be traced.

The Extended Process

The extended process of political corruption, to recapitulate, includes two principal components, "the culture of political corruption, and the informal polity." (Almond, 69). Both of these components (in contrast to the components of the core process) tend to operate on the larger sub-system or system levels; both exist as outgrowths of an expanded and generalized core process. It is also argued here that an informal polity cannot develop in the absence of a culture of political corruption, but a culture of political corruption can exist without an informal polity.

A political culture, as defined by Almond and Verba and by Dawson and Prewitt, among others, is determined in part by operative political values, orientations and attitudes and their related practices, as well as by the formalized behaviors and structures that go into the maintenance of a political system. The definitions formulated by these scholars vary in some respects, but all agree that the key component of a political culture is the body of orientation, attitudes and values that yield criteria for determining what is politically legitimate and what is not. (This point will be effectively demonstrated in the consideration of tribalism and tribal sentiment in Nigeria later in the next chapter) Some authors have also argued

that "a political system may contain more than one political culture and out of the interaction of diverse political cultures within the system, the prevailing criteria of political legitimacy may change" (LeVine, 1971).

Thus, for example, the use of violence as a means of achieving political ends, such as changing governments, may emerge and become so institutionalized that a political "culture of violence may be referred to (Kling, 1967). By analogy and extension, when politically corrupt transactions becomes so pervasive in a political system that they are the expected norm in transactions involving government officials, a culture of political corruption can be said to exist.

The existence of a culture of political corruption may be inferred to in part where it is overtly clear that a large number of politically corrupt transactions are taking place. Beyond that, once politically corrupt transactions become commonplace, it is unlikely that they will in all cases remain confined to two persons. It is argued here that politically corrupt relationships tend to spread, and to ramify into increasingly complex networks of personal involvement through which political goods flow. And the visibility and complexity of these networks affords some measure of the extent and depth of the culture of political corruption.

Informal Polity

In the discussion of the core process, it has been demonstrated

how by means of a corrupt political transaction political goods pass into the conversion network, and it has been suggested how they may move into a ramified set of relationships beyond the simple dyadic transaction. When these ramified relationships become systematized (i.e., when the elements of repetition and patterned duration are present), they constitute what shall be termed "informal political network." These are relationships based on various kinds of interpersonal links such as friendship, family, clan, or ethnic affinities, patronage or clientelistic reciprocities; or business obligations. Their common characteristic is informality; that is, they normally lie outside the formal polity in the sense that they are not defined as part of the institutional network of positions and roles. They share with the formal polity, first, those individuals who function both as part of the formal polity and as part of the informal networks, and second, access (directly or indirectly) to political resources.

Informal political networks need not, of course, exist principally outside official structures; quite often they are established with official structures and most of the persons involved may hold positions within the polity (it should be added, however, that in Nigeria such networks commonly involve more people outside the polity than within). The salient point is that by definition the informal political networks themselves lie beyond the official polity, and the distribution and conversion of political goods constituting their

raison d'etre is unsanctioned, illicit, or at best morally unacceptable.

When informal political networks become so well established within the political system that their activities and influence begin to parallel those of governmental structures (as was the case in Nigeria during the period under study), they constitute an informal polity. The point at which informal political networks become informal polities may, in fact, define the boundary between what some scholars have called "political and parapolitical systems" (Bailey, 1968). "By the time the informal polity develops, political corruption is already so widespread that a culture of political corruption clearly exists as a prior condition." (Bailey, p. 285).

What is here called the informal polity is difficult to describe precisely because, unlike the formal polity, it tends to be structurally amorphous and constantly changing. Whereas the formal polity has defined hierarchies of office and role, the informal polity exists in large part to bypass established chains of command and, in effect, to operate in the interstices between government structures. Whereas the formal polity defines the norms and limitations appropriate to each political position, the network of relationships in the informal polity functions on a largely pragmatic, ad hoc basis. Whereas the formal polity seeks to operate with as much continuity and predictability as possible, relationships within the informal polity tend to

change as available resources change, political position shifts, and officeholders move up, down, laterally, or out.

The informal polity does, however, assume shape and visible structure as it grows. "The more extensive its supporting networks, the more pervasive the political culture of corruption, the more highly crystallized and enduring the informal polity becomes" (Scott, 1972). Whether an informal polity merely exists in symbiosis with the formal polity, or whether it becomes parasitic or even takes over its host is a question that can be answered only in relation to a real situation.

It has been suggested earlier that a given political system might in fact contain not one but several political cultures. It is also demonstrable that political systems are usually themselves composed of several political subsystems. Thus, there is the distinct possibility that a political system may contain several informal polities, each related to one or more subsystem. Again, of course, whether or not a plurality of informal polities actually exists within a given political system becomes an empirical question; yet it is also implicit where a culture of political corruption pervades a rational political system that encompasses regional and other parochial subsystems.

The concept of the "informal polity" is susceptible to yet further development. It has been posited that "informal polity" as a

relatively amorphous system intersecting the formal polity at points at which officials enter into networks of corrupt relationships, but one which nonetheless maintains a separate identity. Logically, the distinctions between the formal and informal polities can become so blurred the two seem as one; when this occurs, political corruption achieves near-official sanction. John Waterbury argues that this has occurred in Morocco, where what he calls "free-floating, endemic corruption" not only mirrors a thoroughgoing culture of political corruption but appears to be an expression of the preferred way of doing political business. According to Waterbury:

As the case of Morocco would tend to demonstrate, corruption is not simply an aspect of politics but has displaced and dwarfed all other forms of politics. Thus, in Morocco, free-floating corruption is manipulated, guided, planned, and desired by the regime itself (Waterbury, 1973).

Waterbury argues that the patrimonial nature of the Moroccan regime, a "parallel, non-official, and illegal system of payments and incentives, a finely honed spoils system, and a calculated policy of keeping politicians and officials insecure, have all contributed to the development of this planned endemic corruption" (Ibid, p. 547). Whatever the causes, Waterbury's account clearly shows that Morocco has developed both a culture of political corruption and an informal polity. It is in the author's opinion, as will be demonstrated in the next chapter, that Waterbury's analysis of the Moroccan case can

be adapted in totality to the description of political situation in Nigeria during the period under study. The revelation of the extent and perversity of the culture of political corruption in Nigeria is the subject of the next chapter.

CHAPTER III

POLITICAL CORRUPTION: THE NIGERIAN CASE

In the previous chapter, a distinction was made between political corruption and "corruption of the political process." It was argued that in the case of political corruption, office holders dispose political resources within the framework of ongoing political processes, or at least that they use such processes as bases for the creation and maintenance of corrupt relationship.

On the other hand, it was argued that "corruption of the political process" has as its principal effect the degradation or perversion of the political process. Also in the same chapter, it was cautioned that the line between political corruption and corruption of the political process may become blurred when the one leads to the other. Because of the difficulty in separating instances of political corruption and that of the corruption of the political process, and because of the difficulty in obtaining substantiating evidences in specific cases of political corruption in Nigeria during the time under study. The author will not attempt to demonstrate the extent of political corruption by introducing specific litigating of corruptive practices. Instead, the author hopes to demonstrate in this chapter

the extent of political corruption and corruption of the political process in Nigeria during this period by discussing the following crisis situations in Nigeria immediately after independence: (1) tribalism and leadership question, (2) emergency in Western Nigeria, (3) the Census crises, (4) the federal election, (5) Western Nigeria Election 1965.

Tribalism and the Leadership Question

Nigeria became an independent sovereign state on October 1, 1960. On that date, in a solemn and colorful ceremony, Princess Alexandra of Kent, on behalf of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II of Great Britain, handed over to the late Nigerian Prime Minister, Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balena, the constitutional instrument of Nigeria's independence. By this act Nigeria became the Sixteenth African State to achieve nationhood in 1960. Because of her comparatively peaceful progress to independence and her large population and size, it was generally hoped that she would play a role of a leader nation among the emerging states of Africa, an exemplar of a functioning democracy.

At that time, an ephemeral kind of unity had been created in the crucible of the interrecine and protected struggle for independence. The various nationalist fronts in the country had joined hands to ensure the ending of colonial rule. Having succeeded in doing so, it was assumed that the enthusiasm with which the country

was launched into nationhood would sustain the federation and help her people to develop a sense of common destiny and common nationality. The leaders themselves including the cadres of the nationalist parties, appeared, in the midst of this enthusiasm, to have braced themselves for selfless rational service. Thus it was that for the first two years after independence Nigeria was in a mood of calm and serenity.

But events after this date were soon to prove that Nigeria's most vexing, most basic problems were those of tribalism, sectionalism and of leadership. Because there were no honorable and acceptable answers to these problems, Nigeria, during the period between 1962 and 1966, was to be launched into a series of stormy crises which brought the country to the brink of disintegration. As a result of these crises, the hope of the Nigerian for leadership in African politics and for maximization of progress was frustrated. Indeed, Nigeria became the laughing stock of the watching world.

Tribalism had always been a potent factor in Nigeria's history, but in 1951 it came to be actively exploited by Nigerian politicians in their political campaigns, and there started a campaign of hate and calumny against certain politicians who came from particular ethnic or tribal areas. As Nelson Ottah, former editor of the Drum Magazine, put it:

One morning in 1951, the people of Nigeria were startled to hear of the formation of a political party with the gruff name of Action Group (AG). The Action Group was tribalistic. At the time, it was a Yoruba organization which barred its doors to any one by not less than a full-fledged son or daughter of Oduduwa. This terrible fact was noted and exploited by the NCNC (Ottah, 1963).

Tribalism is a concept based on tribe. A tribe can be said to be the largest social group in traditional societies made up of an aggregation of clans living in the same geographical area, sharing a common ancestry and language, and displaying a large measure of cultural identity, and cohesion. Tribalism itself can be defined as a social illusion which is based on emotional attitudes of tribal groups. It is marked by stereotype prejudices and it is essentially anti-national and anti-rational. Despite its illogicality, it provides for those who use it, especially in developing countries that are yet to attain political maturity, an effective weapon for social and political ends. Although education or literacy has often been said to broaden men's social outlook, the Nigerian experience was that the educated were often the most tribalistic, and their use of the weapon of tribalism against the illiterate masses drove a big wedge into the development of the feeling of unity in Nigeria, so much so, that Nigeria's political history from the fifties became one long record of a people that lived in turmoil of increasing hatred, treachery, suspicion and revenge. The political parties became based upon tribes and regions. Politicians became shamelessly mean and unscrupulous in their appeal to the lesser loyalties of their tribesmen, and all considerations of

principles and ideology were thrown to the winds. The whole political equilibrium became dislodged by centrifugal forces--"not only tribalism, but nepotism, greed and political jobbery, signifying a sharp deviation from the ideals that make for nationhood." (Nwankwo, 1969)

Perhaps, with the right kind of leadership, Nigeria might have been saved from the nightmares and turbulence of her post-independence days. As Samuel Ifejika said, "The lever of tribalism and sectionalism was used to deny the people of Nigeria the right kind of leadership." While Nigeria was at the threshold of independence, the question of leadership became a vexing problem for many well-meaning Nigerians, particularly the youth and the intellectuals.

Considering quality and character alone, the majority of the people in Southern Nigeria felt that leadership should be conceded to Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe, undisputably the father of Nigerian nationalism. Sincere and objective thinkers in Northern Nigeria were of the same opinion.

However, as political parties were based on regions, the Northern Peoples Congress (NPC) of Northern Nigeria won the 1959 General Elections, and took advantage of the population and size of Northern Nigeria. Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa, a vice-president of the NPC was appointed Nigeria's Prime Minister. Many Southerners were naturally suspicious of Balewa who in 1947 declared that "Nigerian unity is only a British intention for the country" and that "if

the British quit Nigeria now at this stage the Northern people would continue their interrupted conquest to the sea." This new nation seemed to have been called upon by fate to accept the leadership of a man who never truly believed in its nationhood, and who could still be nursing the idea of continuing the jihad down south according to the postulations of his ancestors and forbearers.

Some Nigerian politicians reacted immediately to this prospect of domination in pertuity by the conservative Muslim North. One of such politicians was chief Obafemi Awolowo, the leader of the Action Group, the principal party in Western Nigeria. Chief Awolowo had contested the federal general elections along with others, and his party won 73 out of the total 313 seats. The NPC won 142 seats all in Northern Nigeria, while the NCNC led by Dr. Azikiwe won 90 seats. Immediately the results were known Chief Awolowo declared a desire to form a coalition government of his party with the NCNC, in which leadership would be conceded to Azikiwe. Chief Awolowo emphatically expressed the view that he would rather have Azikiwe lead the country than Balewa.

However, that might be, Awolowo's plans did not materialize. The NCNC could not accept his proposals, for it suspected Awolowo of duplicity. It was generally believed in the inner caucus of the party that while chief Awolowo was pleading with the NCNC at Onitsha, Eastern Nigeria, his emissaries were at the same time

making overtures to the NPC in Kaduna, Northern Nigeria, for the same purpose of forming a coalition government. The move by the Action Group leader was therefore emptied of all altruism. Ultimately, the NPC (North) and the NCNC (East)--two parties with diametrically opposed ideologies--formed a coalition at the center. There were those who were optimistic enough to hope that this 'marriage of convenience' would manage somehow to plod through, and indeed produce a strong government at the Centre. Because it was a marriage of incompatibles, the going in fact turned out to be difficult. Balewa was appointed Prime Minister. One of the Nigerian nationalist newspapers reported that when, during the time the coalition was being negotiated, Balewa was asked whether he could concede leadership to 'Zik,' he emphatically replied in his native Hausa dialect 'ba-bu,' meaning 'no.' 'Zik,' to the surprise and dissatisfaction of many Southerners, ultimately became the Governor-General of the country on November 16, 1960--his fifty-sixth birthday.

Azikiwe seemed to be satisfied with the fact that 'this is the second time that a person of African descent has been inducted into the office of Governor-General.' In obvious reply to the dissatisfaction being expressed by some critics about his agreement to become Governor-General, he said:

In the view of certain observers, here and abroad, my decision to accept and assume the office of Governor-General has been surprising. They thought that since I was leader

of a political party which contested the last federal elections, I should continue to fight in order to displace the present Head of our Government, instead of supporting the conclusion of a political truce and agreeing to become what one of them euphemistically described as "a prisoner in a gilded cage." Whilst I appreciate the good intentions of these critics, I should make it clear that one important reason why human society is unstable and full of conflicting emotions is because of the tendency to intensify rivalry beyond its normal course . . . in a team of many players all cannot be elected captains (Azikiwe, 1960).

Azikiwe stated that he was 'satisfied with the present arrangements' and declared that 'my stiffest earthly assignment is ended and my major life's work is done. My country is now free, and I have been honoured to be its first indigenous Head of State.' He asked: "What more could one desire in life?" He called upon all Nigerians and all of Nigeria's leaders to join hands and give "support and assistance" to Balewa's Government and the nation, and "forget the wounds inflicted in the course of our internecine altercations."

Although for two years after independence it appeared as if this call was heeded, Nigeria could not for long suffer in silence under uninspiring and weak leadership. This leadership question is one of paramount importance in any new country, especially a country like Nigeria, torn by tribal divisions and hatred, and looked up to to play a decisive role in African politics. "The leader of such a new nation must be a 'here,' like Nkrumah of Ghana, Sekou Toure of Guinea, Senghor of Senegal, Nasser of Egypt and Bourguiba of Tunisia--triumphant, evangelising, sure-footed and confident, and charismatic

in order to be able to lead the divided peoples of the country into true nationhood and prosperity in the difficult period immediately preceding independence. With such a leader at the helm of affairs, people will get to observe the calls and requirements of the nation out of feelings of loyalty and affection for the leader--feelings which they may not at first have for the nation."

Such qualities of leadership were clearly lacking in Balewa. Many Nigerians considered him excessively moderate, cautious, weak and uninspiring, and he came later to be regarded as a stooge of the colonial masters from whom Nigerian nationalists had wrested independence. With this kind of attitude towards him prevalent, some other Nigerian leaders did not see why they should cooperate with him. Indeed, their attitude towards him bordered on contempt. When Azikiwe lost the leadership of the country and agreed to become a Constitutional Head of State, the country lost the opportunity of virile and inspiring leadership. This was due to tribalism and sectionalism.

It is pertinent to observe here that, not long after Azikiwe entered the State House as Governor-General, his political stature and image began to diminish. His later warnings to Nigerian politicians went unheeded when Nigeria became launched into her nightmares and crises. Indeed, Azikiwe was considered not only to be "a prisoner in a gilded cage," but was accursed by some of the youth and the intellectuals in the country of being in advantageous conspiracy with the feudal

North in order to perpetuate Northern tyranny against the South. They felt that "the once militant, dynamic and enterprising 'Zik,' whom the masses regarded as something near a demi-god, had betrayed the aspirations and hopes of the youth." (Okafo, 1964)

Whether these accusations were justified or not should perhaps be left to posterity to answer, but certainly Nigeria's lack of strong and charismatic leadership at the center contributed to the political strifes and crises that bedevilled her after independence.

Emergency in Western Nigeria

After the British had left, the major motivation for unity--viz. the nationalist struggle against colonial rule--was gone. Nigerians now turned their attention inwards, to domestic problems. Ethnic, regional or other particular interests, which had temporarily held back their claims, started to reassert themselves. Gradually the sense of restraint disappeared among the country's leaders, and some of them, out of inexperience and over-zealousness, or even irresponsibility, began to manifest the "infantile maladies of independence." The prospect of continued peace in Nigeria became very gloomy.

On May 20, 1962, there occurred a split in Chief Awolowo's Action Group. This crisis is most significant in Nigeria's history for, from the moment of its inception, Western Nigeria did not know peace again until the military coup of January 1966. In fact the continuation of the unrest, bitterness, rancour and bloodshed which it

brought to Western Nigeria, and the apparently insincere, if not indifferent approach which the Federal Government adopted, was one of the major reasons for the Army takeover of government in Nigeria on January 15, 1966.

The Action Group's internal crisis started in a small way. But little did those who launched it realise what ills it would carry with it for the country. After the Action Group lost the Federal Election of 1959, Awolowo became leader of the opposition in the Federal legislature, while Chief Samuel Ladoke Akintola became Premier of Western Nigeria. According to Nelson Ottah, this was a fatal step for Chief Awolowo, for he lost the base of his security and found that, without being the head of any of the governments in the Federation, he was like a man that has gone from "the twilight into darkness." In September 1960, the Action Group leader, with some young intellectuals in the party, formulated and launched the ideology of democratic socialism, and it was adopted as the ideology of the Action Group. This ideology did not seem to have been favoured by Akintola and his clique supporters, and in fact he did everything to distort this ideology, working in collaboration with the party's extreme right wing. Akintola started also to collaborate with the NPC and therefore wanted the Action Group to stop all its political activities in Northern Nigeria. He also began to take a number of important steps about cocoa prices, taxes and school fees without consulting his party chief. When therefore, on May 20, the Action Group annual congress met in Jos, Northern Nigeria,

Akintola was charged with planning to displace Chief Awolowo as the leader of the Action Group, with acting without consultation and with squandermania. Akintola himself replied that the insistence that he should consult party officials before taking any major decisions hampered his administration.

At the end of the congress the Action Group decided to remove Akintola as Premier of Western Nigeria. The knotty question was how to do this. Chief Akintola, not feeling sure-footed, refused to advise the summoning of the Western House to test his popularity by a vote of confidence. In this event Chief Awolowo got the majority of members of the Western House to sign an affidavit stating that they had lost confidence in Chief Akintola as Premier. On the strength of this affidavit the then Governor of Western Nigeria, Sir Adesoji Aderemi, was asked to exercise his powers under the Constitution of Western Nigeria to remove Akintola as Premier. Aderemi thereupon removed Akintola as Premier, and appointed Alhaji Dauda S. Adegbenro in his place. But Akintola refused to accept that he had been validly removed and refused to accept that he had been validly removed and refused to relinquish office, maintaining that his dismissal must be as a result of a vote obtaining on the floor of the Western House. He also filed an action in the Ibadan High Court challenging his dismissal by the Governor. A situation arose, therefore, in which there were two claimants to the office of Premier, each angling for support from Lagos and from the Western legislators.

When ultimately the Western House met on May 25, 1962, to debate a motion of confidence in Chief Akintola, serious fighting broke out in the House between the two factions, and the police had to use tear gas to disperse the rioting legislators. Following this disturbance and the tension that had developed in Ibadan as a result of the premiership tussle, the Federal Government came directly to intervene in the affairs of Western Nigeria by declaring a state of emergency throughout the region and taking over the regional government. This decision had been influenced largely by the NPC, with the support of the NCNC. Under the Emergency Powers Regulations of 1961, Dr. Moses Koye Majekodunmi, the Federal Minister of Health, was appointed Administrator over Western Nigheria, with extensive powers. After the clash in the Western House, Akintola was formally dismissed from the Action Group. But he thereupon formed the United People's Party (UPP). Many leading members of the Action Group resigned and joined the UPP. To stop further political activities in the region the new Administrator placed under detention or restriction many of the region's politicians.

There was no doubt that a serious situation had developed in Western Nigeria, but there was no doubt that the NPC-dominated Federal Government of Lagos was eager to pull a political string against the Action Group. It was clear that Chief Akintola had the sympathy, if not the support, of the NPC, which saw in the Action Group crisis an opportunity of destroying that turbulent party completely and politically

by Mr. Justice George Sodeinde Sowemimo to ten years imprisonment for treasonable felony, five for conspiracy and two for unlawful importation of arms. The sentences were to run concurrently.

Looking at the whole episode, the conclusion appears inescapable that the NPC led Government of Lagos was interested in the fate of both the Action Group as a party and Chief Awolowo as the leader of that party. Awolowo was obsessed with the idea of his "unalterable destiny"--to rule Nigeria at any cost. It was alleged at his trial that he was prepared to use callous unconstitutional means to get that power. If this was true, he stands condemned by all responsible opinion. But it is also true that the Federal Government, in its over-zealousness to seal the fate of Chief Awolowo, resorted to all sorts of excesses and unfair treatment. During his trial Chief Awolowo was refused the representation of his counsel from the United Kingdom by the Federal Minister of Internal Affairs. It was never really proved in court, except for the statements of Dr. S. Onabamiro, that Awolowo really planned a revolution by force. Onabamiro's statements could be regarded as those of a man anxious to save his own head. This is borne out from the fact that he was in the original list of those accused with planning to overthrow the Federal Government, but he later turned a Crown witness.

It is no wonder then that Chief Awolowo came to be regarded by the masses of Southern Nigeria as a martyr on the altar of Nigeria's selfish and sectional politics. Akintola was dubbed a stooge of the NPC

in the South. A good number of people even came to doubt the wisdom of the declaration of a state of emergency in the first place. It must be remembered that the declaration of this emergency was as a result of a fight or 'riot' inside the Western House by members themselves. There was no disturbance outside the House anywhere in the Western Region. Secondly, it was not the Action Group which provoked the fight. It was, in fact, first started by Akintola's Party men, supported by the NCNC. The Federal Government knew what was to happen and was ready. As soon as it was informed it used the police and tear gas to disperse the parliamentarians--a very high-handed method indeed--and the Prime Minister and the NPC-NCNC-dominated Federal Parliament immediately invoked the Constitution and dissolved the Western House. They knew that Akintola could not win. Judged in the light of later events, the conclusion therefore appears to be that it was unwarranted, and that it was all politics. If the Federal Government could declare a state of emergency in 1962 following the internal crisis in the Action Group, why did the same Federal Government refuse to take a similar line of action in 1965, when wholesale arson, looting and murder were taking place in Western Nigeria following the fraudulent Western elections of October that year? It was the same Federal Government under Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa. Perhaps a declaration of an emergency in 1965 would have jeopardised the NPC design in Western Nigeria. We see, therefore, how the Federal Government came to take a tribal, sectional or self-interested approach in the affairs of the country, deepening rather than closing up Nigeria's divisions.

The Census Crisis

In 1962 Nigeria had her first population census since Independence. The fact that it turned out to be a big fiasco shows how hard it is to establish the simplest facts when the result may have major political consequences. Nigerians had last been counted between 1952 and 1953, but that was under the British. According to the results, the Northern Region had a population of 17,573,000, the Eastern Region 7,497,000, the Western Region 6,408,000, while the Federal Territory of Lagos had 272,000. The total population of Nigeria, therefore, was given as 31,750,000. The political significance of the 1952-3 Census was that it assured the dominance of the North in the Federal Government since seats in the Federal House of Parliament were then allocated on a population basis. Out of the 312 seats in the Federal House, the North received 174 seats, thus placing it in an absolute majority. Since in Nigeria the major political parties were based on regions, a population census that gave the North such a majority meant handing over the Federal Government in perpetuity to the NPC.

In 1962, the Nigerian Federal Government under Balewa announced that it was going to hold another population census. Among the reasons given for ordering the census was the need to obtain all essential data for development plans in all fields. Mr. J. Warren, an expatriate civil servant, was to be in charge, under the general ministerial responsibility of the Hon. Minister of Economic Development, Alhaji Waziri Ibrahim, a Northerner.

The census day was May 13, 1962. Warren had recruited enumerators and supervisors and had devised a pilot scheme to facilitate the exercise. By about July the Lagos headquarters had received all the figures for the Northern and Eastern Regions. Because of the political unrest in the Western Region, the results from there came after those of the other regions. When all the results were examined, the North showed an average increase of 30 per cent in ten years, bringing the total population to 22.5 million. Both the East and the West showed a rise of more than 70 per cent. Warren, making his report on the preliminary census figures, declared that the Northern results were reasonable, while the figures for the Eastern region appeared to him to have been 'grossly inflated.' Under Warren's advice, the Federal Government decided to verify and check results in selected areas in the country. This involved sending all the enumeration books back to the regions. Although an attempt was made to get the consent of all the regional premiers, including Senator Majekodunmi, who was then administering Western Nigeria under the emergency, the Eastern Premier, Dr. Michael Okpara, revealed that according to the 1962 census, the East came out with a population of 12.3 million. He stated quite categorically that the East would stick to this total. Since Waziri was determined that the checks and verifications must be carried out, it became clear that a political storm was about to explode in the country.

Early in December 1962, when the Federal House of Parliament was summoned, Waziri Ibrahim read out parts of the Warren report

on the census. He read out the portion of it which stated that the Northern figures were reasonable and that the Eastern results were inflated, but failed to tell the Parliamentarians what the totals were for the various regions. Following this one-sided and mutilated statement, a tension developed between the NCNC and NPC members in the coalition Government, while throughout Southern Nigeria there was a general outcry against the census results. The NCNC and Action Group Members of Parliament walked out of the Federal House and demanded that Warren should have no further part to play in the census affairs, and also that he should leave the country.

When Parliament reassembled on December 10, 1962, the Prime Minister, Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa, had some comments to make on the statement made the previous Wednesday by Waziri Ibrahim. He described "the whole drama of both the Minister's statement and walk-out by some members as embarrassing and unfortunate." He stated that the Minister "should have been more restrained," and announced that the census would now come under his personal responsibility. He declared that, because of the public controversy that had developed over the census affairs, he would review the position with a view to removing doubt and re-establishing confidence.

Following this statesmanlike announcement, feelings were calmed down and the nation waited to see what solution would be forthcoming. The Government had proceeded on the verification checks, but at the end of it, while the figures for the East and West remained as before,

those of the Northern region rose suddenly from 22.5 million to 31 million. This meant an increase since 1952-3 of about 80 per cent. Certainly it would have been the biggest joke of the year had the Federal Government published the Northern figures. But the Balewa Government that had all along looked for a reason to cancel the census count, now found one. The census was accordingly cancelled by the Prime Minister. The 1.5 million that had been spent thus went down the drain.

After the first census had failed, it was agreed between the various governments in the Federation that there would be a new and quick count lasting only four days. It was also agreed that, in each region, the numeration would be done not only by enumerators from that region, but also by those from other regions. In this way, it was hoped, fraudulent practices would be checked. In a broadcast to the nation on November 2, 1963, on the second population count, Balewa, giving reasons for the count, stated that:

The life of the present Federal Parliament ends in 1964, and it is my intention to have a general election as soon as possible. The electoral register now in use does not reflect sufficiently the changes in population over the years. It is therefore agreed by all the Governments that particulars of eligible voters obtained through the census will be used in compiling a new electoral register for the General Election next year.

Innocently, perhaps, Balewa had again reminded the people of Nigeria of the political implications of the census.

The Prime Minister also announced that "the census this year is being organized by a body of high government officials appointed by

all the governments in the Republic" and that "the manner in which the population count will be made has been approved by all the governments." He also stated that "besides counting by eight, certain checks and tests . . . will be applied in order to ensure accurate figures of the population." He went on,

These include statistical sampling checks based on internationally accepted principles; demographic tests based on sex and age distribution; specially arranged pre-enumeration checks; and special devices to remove double counting.

All these were intended to impress the people of Nigeria and the world about the fairness of the coming census. But the hopes then expressed were not borne out by the actual counting and manipulations that followed it.

The census took place on November 5-8, 1963. In the Prime Minister's own words, it was organized to last for only four days in order to ensure an accurate count of people at places where they live. Over 180,000 enumerators and supervisors were recruited, as against 45,700 in the one of 1962. As in the previous census, enumerators went from house to house asking every individual his name, age, ethnic group or nationality, religion and occupation. On all travelling points and regional boundaries, there were enumerators, and anyone they counted at these points they stained with a special indelible ink-mark on the thumb to prevent double counting at the destination. Travellers were ready to suffer this inconvenience, and cooperated because "the

governments in the Republic [attached] the greater importance to this census. "

At the end of the returns, a delay of about two months followed during which period the figures were said to be undergoing "exhaustive test. " The Census Board released the preliminary figures of the 1963 National Population Census on February 24, 1964, and the figures for the various regions were as follows:

North	29,777,986
East	12,388,646
West	10,278,500
Mid-West	2,533,337
Lagos	<u>675,352</u>
Total	55,653,821

It will be observed that whereas the figures for the North rose to 29,777,986, as against her 22.5 million in 1963, those of the East were the same as the original total on which the Eastern premier, Dr. Michael Okpara, had taken his stand the previous year. The same was about the case with the West, now separated into regions, with a population rise in one decade of almost 100 per cent.

The overall increase of the total Nigerian population in one decade was about 74 per cent. The United Nations demographers regarded a 2 per cent increase per annum as normal in Africa. In ten years, if one relies on the opinions of these experts, there would be an increase of 20 per cent. In the Nigerian circumstances, granting that there was some under-counting in 1952-3 due to evasions, and

allowing about 5 to 10 per cent for this under-count, and thus bringing the total rise of the Nigerian population to 25 or 30 per cent in a decade, it would appear, therefore, that the census of 1963 was "grossly inflated." The Premier of the new region of the Mid-West, Chief Dennis Osadebay, declared it to be "the biggest joke of the year."

The Eastern Premier, backed by the Mid-Western Premier, "completely" rejected the preliminary census figures that had been published. He charged that although the census was the responsibility of all the regional premiers, the Prime Minister had published the figures "without consultation." He declared:

Since the preliminary report was received, I have said that we would check the figures and if accurate, would accept them, but if inflated, would reject them. I REGRET THAT THE INFLATIONS DISCLOSED ARE OF SUCH ASTRONOMICAL PROPORTIONS THAT THE FIGURES OBTAINED, TAKEN AS A WHOLE, ARE WORSE THAN USELESS.

Dr. Okpara then went on to detail the reasons why he was rejecting the preliminary figures. He explained that the Census Board based its checks against inflation upon the sampling count carried out by two inspectors comprising one from the home region and one from outside in about one-thirtieth of each census district. The area to be sampled was not to be disclosed until just before the count, but, in the case of the North, the areas to be sampled were disclosed long before the census took place. He quoted the Census Board statement admitting this lapse, which statement read as follows:

We wish also to point out that it is the feeling of one or two members that the timing of the release of information regarding the identity of enumeration areas to be sampled was unfortunate, in the sense that it could have afforded a great deal of opportunity for unfair practice to anyone who might be so inclined.

He also cited a list of other irregularities spotted by inspectors from Eastern Nigeria who were sent to the North. They were listed as follows:

- (1) Counting of Eastern inspectors against the decision of the Board;
- (2) Double counting;
- (3) Counting of travellers and passers-by without staining their thumbs--in contravention of the Board's decision;
- (4) Posting of inspectors after commencement of count--thereby permitting incredible counts of 900-2,559 persons in one day;
- (5) Counting sampled areas without the Inspector;
- (6) Counting in market places against the Boards decision;
- (7) Refusal of entry into Purdah;
- (8) Counting after November 8, i.e., after the last day of the count;
- (9) Counting of persons not seen, contrary to the Census Board's decision;
- (10) Refusal to let the Inspector initial enumeration book;
- (11) Merging of two enumeration books from two different areas, one of which was not covered by inspector;
- (12) Removal of black completed labels, thereby facilitating the double counting of persons in the same household;
- (13) Late return of enumeration books.

These irregularities were documented and reported to the Census Board.

Dr. Okapara pointed out that all these irregularities were detected in the small sampled areas, and wondered what must have happened in the rest of Northern Nigeria where there were no sampling and checks. He stated that because of "these alarming irregularities, the Northern figures could not pass the generally accepted demographic tests" and,

as a result, out of a total of 175 Census Districts in the North, as many as 49 failed all tests, 76 failed some of the tests, while only 99 Census Districts passed the tests. In the East, of the 73 constituencies, 53 passed while 20 (of which 5 failed all tests) failed. In the West, out of 47 constituencies, 20 passed, while 27 failed and 10 failed all tests. Of the 15 in the Mid-West, 8 passed, 3 failed all tests and there were 7 failures in all. The Census Board decided not to apply the tests to the 3 constituencies in Lagos. These irregularities and deficiencies led to a scale-down of the figures, reducing the grand total from 60.5 million to the 55 million which the people of Nigeria were ultimately asked to accept. Dr. Okpara still maintained that the figure of 55 million for Nigeria was ridiculous. To obtain this inflated figure, the country had spent 2.5 million.

On March 16, 1964, the Prime Minister, Alhaji Balewa, stated in the Federal House that the "Census Board comprising duly appointed representatives of the Governments in the Republic," had completed its job, and had given him the preliminary figures of the 1963 National Population Census. He declared:

I am advised that my acceptance and publication of these figures is final.

He stated that he would be holding a meeting with Regional Premiers to discuss "other matters in connection with the Census." This ambiguous statement deepened rather than closed the controversy.

Widespread public reaction on the census now began. Students from the Southern universities (the University of Lagos, in Lagos, the University of Ibadan in Western Nigeria, the University of Ife, then at Ibadan, and the University of Nigeria, Nsukka) staged demonstrations against the census results. More than 600 students from the University of Nigeria came all the way from the East to hand over their protest memorandum to the Prime Minister in Lagos. The position of Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, in the North was quite understandable; they maintained silence over the census issue. Major political parties like the Action Group, the NEPU and the Dynamic Party, also spoke out against the census figures. S. L. Akintola's UPP, which entered into coalition with the NCNC at the end of the emergency period to run the government of Western Nigeria, accepted the census figures, and thus it came about that the Akintola Government was the only Southern Government to do so.

Apart from parties and governments, there were a number of other powerful or influential organizations that organized protests against the census, and these included the Labour Congress, the Lagos City Council, the Zikist Movement and Otegbeye's Socialist Party.

However, in the face of the overwhelming dissatisfaction over the preliminary census figures, the Premier of Northern Nigeria and President of the NPC, Sir Ahmadu Bello, the Sardauna of Sokoto, announced that he had accepted the preliminary census figures, and that

"it is the intention of the Government of Northern Nigeria to proceed to work with them for the purposes of planning." He declared that "the census was fairly conducted and the staff did their best at all levels." He then proceeded to reply to the charges made against the North under some eighteen heads. To the charge that sample areas were disclosed to the Northern Region, he answered that this, being a criminal offence, "should have been reported to the police for investigation." On the allegation that 900 to 2,559 people were counted in a single day by one enumerator in the North, he stated that "there is no iota of truth in it" but that, to the best of his knowledge, "the highest count was 958 people in four days and not in one day." He asserted that the trick of double counting did not take place in the North, neither was there any "shred of evidence" that counting continued in the North after November 8. He stated that it was most unfair for anyone to accuse the Prime Minister of not consulting the Premiers before releasing the figures, as there was no decision to that effect. The Sardauna warned that "my Government and my Party are fully prepared at any hour of the day, in any eventuality to meet any challenge." Nigeria had thus reached a stage where a headlong clash between the various governments of the Federation was inevitable. Two governments (East and Mid-West) had rejected the census; another two (North and West) had accepted it, and these two opposing camps would want to remain stubborn in their stands. Nor was there a chance of a third census for Nigeria in this kind of muddle.

However, the East, convinced of the justice of its case, instituted actions in the Federal Supreme Court against the Governments of the Federation under Section 114(1) of the Nigerian Constitution. The Attorneys General of these two governments were made nominal parties in two action which were later consolidated with the consent of the parties. In each of the actions, the Eastern Government asked for a declaration that the Federal Government, its servants or agents, were not entitled to accept or act on the 1963 census figures. In the second action the Eastern Government alleged that the manner in which the census was conducted was unconstitutional, ultra vires and illegal, and therefore null and void, on the grounds of a wrong assumption of jurisdiction by the Prime Minister. The Eastern Government also alleged that the census was further vitiated on the ground of irrelevant considerations and bad faith, and to substantiate these allegations, it attached to its Statement of Claim particulars of irregularities. The Federal Government, in its turn, filed a motion in each case asking the court to dismiss the actions on the ground that no cause of action was disclosed, that the court had no jurisdiction to entertain the claim and that the action was frivolous and vexatious.

The Eastern Government was unsuccessful in its action. The court in its holding stated that the Eastern Government had failed to prove that it had any legal right which could be enforced by the Court. It also held that, since the Premier of Eastern Region concurred in the setting up of a Census Board responsible to the Prime Minister, the Eastern

back" to the East. One of them (Alhaji Usman Liman) declared: "Mr. Chairman, North is for Northerners, East for Easterners, West for Westerners and the Federation is for all." Whatever must have prompted these extremities, and whether the North maintained its dominance or not, the fact remains that the Nigerians, under Balewa, could not count themselves, and the true size of the Nigerian population will probably never be known.

The Federal Elections

After the Federal election of December 12, 1959, the Northern People's Congress (NPC) formed a coalition government with the National Council of Nigerian Citizens (NCNC). As stated earlier, Alhaji Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa, deputy leader of the NPC, became the first Prime Minister of an independent Nigeria. Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe became President of the Senate, and Chief Obafemi Awolowo's Action Group went into a small but nonetheless vocal opposition. On November 16, 1960, Dr. Azikiwe was installed as Governor-General and Commander-in-Chief of the Federation of Nigeria.

On October 1, 1963, the Federation of Nigeria became a Republic and Dr. Azikiwe was installed as President. In his inaugural address he declared:

Instead of being restive, we have every reason to be composed because our leaders have proved their mettle by soberly guiding us safely through the crucible of political apprenticeship during these three difficult years of transition from monarchy to a republic.

Surely the country was restive, but she need not have been if her leaders had proved their mettle. Over the census issue of March 1964, the country had a thorough bath in the lurid stream of tribal sentiments which the issue generated. By April 1964 the political atmosphere of the country was again charged. Nigerians were getting ready for an election--the first post-independence Federal election. The period was marked by political manoeuvres and party realignments. Chief Akintola had earlier broken away from the AG, and formed the United People's Party (UPP). Soon after the emergency period he formed a coalition government with the NCNC, which has hitherto been in opposition.

This was not the end of Akintola's manoeuvres. As soon as the census rumpus ensued, he announced the death of the UPP and formed the Nigerian National Democratic Party (NNDP), pulling with him some NCNC party stalwarts. Notable among these was the ambitious Fani Kayode. Thus the NCNC was once more in the opposition benches, but this time with the Action Group. The ground was now set for the Federal elections. Following the census issue mutual distrust had developed between the coalescing parties in the Federal Government. The NCNC naturally made an alliance with the Action Group for the purpose of the elections. Comparing the ideologies of the two parties, Dr. Michael Okpara, the NCNC leaders, was later to declare:

The main differences between pragmatic African socialism (of the NCNC) and democratic socialism (of the AG) are: pragmatic African socialism is African in origin. Democratic socialism

is essentially the socialism of Western Europe. Pragmatic African socialism therefore includes a revolt against foreign domination in thought. But the characteristic feature of democratic socialism is that in Western Europe it seeks to superimpose socialism on a society that has gone through the metamorphosis of an industrial revolution and installed capitalism. Pragmatic African socialism starts off with a society which has not yet gone through the changes of industrial revolution, and where capitalist control is yet relatively young and weak . . . we have discovered that the democratic socialism of the Action Group is practically indistinguishable from the pragmatic African socialism of the NCNC, since the economic picture has not been distorted by an industrial revolution and capitalism. This is the key to the coming together of progressive nationalists under United Progressive Grand Alliance (UPGA).

The NNDP allied with the NPC under the name Nigerian National Alliance (NNA). The NPC, of course, did not make any pretences about its "One North, One People" ideology. The party's name remained Northern People's Congress. The NPCers made practically no attempt to contest elections in the South, but concentrated all attention to winning all the seats in the North--at all costs. One would wonder why, in spite of the express parochialism of the NPC, the NNDP submitted to an alliance with them. The answer lies in the fact that Chief Akintola was a man who had no political ideology at all. He stood for no principles but played the game of power politics in a cold and ruthless way. If he was an unscrupulous schemer, it is also true that he was clever and courageous. When he decided on an intrigue he carried it out with boldness and without the least compunction. There is no doubt that Akintola's machiavellianism in politics contributed a great deal to the failure of Nigeria.

As the year 1964 grew older, political parties were making feverish preparations. Manifesto leaflets were fluttering from campaign cars mounted with loud speakers. Old wounds were reopened and that ugly destructive monster, tribalism, reared its head once more. Political propaganda became more and more defamatory and irresponsible. As sectional bitterness was inflamed, party organs of publicity became vehicles of tribal sentiments.

It was certain that danger was looming not far ahead. On May 6, the Head of State, Dr. Azikiwe, made a broadcast to the people of Nigeria in which he declared:

In accordance with my Oath of office, I solemnly swore, on the assumption of my office as Head of State, to maintain and uphold the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

In view of recent events throughout our country, some citizens and inhabitants of Nigeria have been apprehensive about their fundamental rights which are entrenched in our Republican constitution. I am taking this opportunity to clarify the fundamental rights of the citizens as laid down in our constitution and also to appeal to all our law enforcement agencies to perform their lawful duties and give protection to our citizens.

He reminded the nation of the fundamental rights of citizens entrenched in the Federal Constitution and appealed:

In the light of the above circumstances, I hereby call upon the citizens and inhabitants of the Federal Republic of Nigeria to desist henceforth from engaging in defamatory propaganda which entails the use of insulting words likely to cause public disorder, incite hatred among any segment of the people of Nigeria, calumniate any particular section of our country and thereby disturb the tranquility of our federal Republic.

Finally, he called on the law enforcement agencies and warned that, "in order to avoid a state of anarchy in Nigeria" they must protect the citizen "from being impugned or violated by those who, through ignorance or impertinence, would flout the provisions of our laws and desecrate our constitution." Unfortunately this appeal fell on deaf ears. To begin with, the Prime Minister refused to announce the date of elections until three weeks before the polling day. The Federal Electoral Commission had been given only six months to prepare and complete arrangements for the elections.'

So it was evident from the beginning that the elections were going to be lawless and disturbed. The ruling party in the North gave instructions to natural rulers and the native authorities in the North to embark on massive arrests, intimidation and prosecution of opposing party members. Following this license, supporters of the United Progressive Grand Alliance (UPGA) were arrested on trumped up charges; many without being informed of the offence they committed. Worse still, they were allowed neither bail nor permission to seek legal aid. The detainees were subjected to all sorts of cruel treatment, and were refused medical care. As would be expected, many died from their injuries, while others were starved to death. A team of lawyers sent by th UPGA to defend the legal interests of the UPGA supporters were arrested on charges of being more interested in politics than in law. All weapons of the Northern Government were employed by the NPC to make life as miserable for these people as possible. The most notorious of these

weapons were the native courts--alkali courts--and the native authority police, the dandukas. These two institutions were converted into party organs of coercion. The dandukas arbitrarily arrested political opponents of the ruling party in the North, and harassed them in their homes with search raids. In the alkali courts, the principle of presumption of innocence until guilt is established beyond reasonable doubt was completely unknown. The concept of justice depended entirely on the whims of the native magistrate. The testimony of a Muslim was considered to carry far greater weight than that of an "unbeliever"--meaning Christians and all non-followers of Islam.

So glaring was this contemptuous abuse of human dignity that, on October 10, the Nigerian Bar Association appealed to all the Attorneys-General in the Federation to ensure that lawyers were allowed to discharge their professional duties without molestation, particularly in Northern Nigeria.

In the West, where Chief Akintola's NNDP was in power, the situation was no less gruesome. Local councils were instructed to impose curfews on their areas of jurisdiction, and road blocks were mounted against UPGA campaign teams. The principle of free and fair elections assumes that the people can vote intelligently if protected from external pressure. But of course the people cannot vote intelligently if they are denied the chance of at least listening to those who seek their mandate. If, in the interest of peace and order, a curfew was considered necessary,

justice would demand that any election within this period should be postponed.

In a society such as Nigeria's where, due to poverty and a low standard of literacy, other means of mass media such as radio, television and newspapers are ineffective, political campaigns provide the most effective means whereby political parties can have such personal contacts with the masses as are necessary for the latter to assess the former judiciously. It follows, therefore, that elections cannot be rightly and justly held when, for any reason, there is a ban on public meetings. "Free elections and curfews don't mix;" so read the protest placard of a Western Nigerian demonstrator.

In the North and West therefore, the instruments of power were boldly employed by those in power to repress and stifle opposition. Political opponents were victimized in all sorts of ways. Privations, beating up of political opponents, false arrests and detentions, denial of bail, prosecution on trumped-up charges--all these undemocratic acts were freely employed by remorseless politicians through the local authorities. As if these were not enough, every conceivable difficulty was placed in the way of the campaigning teams. They were refused accommodation in hotels and government-sponsored resthouses. Nor were they even allowed to hold rallies, as there were always government-paid thugs to disperse crowds as soon as they had gathered.

On October 22 a meeting of leaders of the main political parties contesting the Federal elections was held in Lagos under the chairmanship

of the Prime Minister, Sir Abubakar. The leaders reached a nine-point agreement to ensure free and fair election. Among other things it was decided that bans on public meetings be lifted, that permits for processions be granted, and that a peaceful atmosphere be maintained prior to and during the Federal Elections. These agreements were disregarded by the Nigerian National Alliance. Of this breach of faith, the Nigerian Outlook observed:

The systematic violation and subsequent overthrow of the peace pact in Western Nigeria, agreed upon by political parties, has not come as a surprise, though it is very much regretted.

Again on December 10, 1964, the voice of the Head of State, President Azikiwe, was heard over the network of the Nigerian Broadcasting Corporation. "Having sworn to preserve and protect the Constitution," he reiterated, "it is my primary duty, as President of our beloved Republic, to guard jealously the cherished liberties of the citizens of Nigeria, by whose grace the politicians remain in office. Thus it is reasonable to expect that, during elections, the fundamental rights of the citizen must be protected and allowed to flourish in order to give the electorate a fair chance to assess the varying claims of opposing political parties. . . . The way and manner our electioneering campaign is being conducted leaves much to be desired. . . . It would appear that certain political parties are preventing their opponents from having the opportunity conveniently to explain their party policies and programmes. . . . The politicians in power . . . have no right to employ the instruments

of power in order to perpetuate their stay in office. They are expected to give an account of their stewardship periodically, in an atmosphere that is devoid of violence and disorder, so that the voters should be in a position to assess their worth as faithful servants who are imbued with the principles of fair play and justice, and therefore worthy to be reappointed for another term." He condemned denial of free expression and declared: "Moreover, the fact that during the period of electioneering our governments had transferred the power of granting permits for meetings and processions and demonstrations from the police to the local authorities, has intensified the suspicion that the police power is being subverted for political ends, since the local authorities are constituted by politicians who have a stake in their survival as the party in power . . . Instances have been cited of calculated deprivation of Nigerian citizens of their constitutional right to freedom of association in ten intimidatory instances, as follows:

- (1) The arrest of political opponents by local authority police because they were accused of holding private meetings in their homes to discuss political issues;
- (2) The apprehension of political opponents before lay judges, who are not learned in the secular laws of the Republic;
- (3) The remanding of political opponents in custody by local authority courts and refusing them bail, in spite of the bitterness of the charges levelled against them, and despite the willingness of accused persons to indemnify the state according to law;
- (4) The accusation of political opponents of infringing unwritten law, contrary to our Constitution; return to the
- (5) The application of laws by lay judges on political opponents even though such laws are alien to the religious susceptibilities of accused persons;
- (6) The conviction of political opponents for alleged infringement of written or unwritten law, without giving them the opportunity

to be represented by learned counsel, especially where their individual liberty is involved;

- (7) The deliberate hand-cuffing or chaining of accused persons awaiting trial and marching them through the streets as an ocular demonstration of the fate awaiting those who seek to preserve their fundamental human rights;
- (8) The passing of sentence of a term of imprisonment, instead of fines, and at times including flogging of political opponents, irrespective of the fact that they are first offenders;
- (9) The gaoling of political opponents in local authority prisons whose standards in hygiene and sanitation are said to be primitive and scandalous;
- (10) The virtual interference with the right of appeal of political opponents by the employment of dilatory tactics by incompetent local authority court officials in preparing records of proceedings for a superior court, in spite of the fact that the accused person has already served his or her sentence whilst the record was being prepared. . . . Unless a free and fair election is envisaged by the politicians, then the refusal to allow the electorate to attend public rallies for the purpose of receiving the leaders of opposing political parties, and hearing their views on national issues, is a blatant invasion of the fundamental rights of the citizen and a deliberate violation of our Constitution. . . . The right of any person or party to publish political pamphlets and air its views, and also to critics opponents, is guaranteed under our constitution.

The President observed that regrettably these allegations of intolerance contained in his message were not only shameful and embarrassing to a country professing liberal democracy but also "distort the image of our traditional hospitality as a nation." He also regretted the "studied silence of the law enforcement agencies in the face of continued allegations of denial and deprivation of fundamental rights to some citizens of this country."

Then came this prophetic note of warning:

. . . I have one advice to give to our politicians: if they have decided to destroy our national unity, they should summon a round table conference to decide how our national assets should be divided, . . . for it is better . . . that we should disintegrate in peace and not in pieces. Should the politicians fail to heed this warning, then I will venture the prediction that the experience of the Democratic Republic of the Congo will be a child's play, if it ever comes to our turn to play such a tragic role.

Tragically, though not surprisingly, this warning was ignored by those whose passion for power had blinded them and deafened their ears to all premonitions.

So the pillage continued: cars were burnt, houses set on fire, entrenched power arbitrarily brandished and the Constitution flouted. It seemed certain that the elections would be a farce.

To begin with, the voters' list was not available for sale to the public till December 17, two days before the closing date for nomination. Whereas the NPC had the voters' list, the UPGA members were forced to expose their nominators in an attempt to find out whether their names were in the voters' list. Thus their candidates and nominators were both made targets for arbitrary arrest, physical attack and even abduction in order to prevent them from being nominated.

Secondly, whereas in the East and the Mid-West all electors were supplied with nomination forms, many UPGA electors were denied this in the North and in the West.

Thirdly, even after succeeding in getting the nomination papers, the UPGA electors experienced great difficulty in submitting the filled forms because the electoral officers had decided to disappear. Polling

booths were located in the most awkward positions such as in people's compounds. The Federal Electoral Commission had approved certain specifications for the construction of polling booths. Many booths were not built in accordance with these specifications.

Between December 20 and 22, the NNA announced that 66 of their candidates, including the Prime Minister, had been returned unopposed. This looked ridiculous, as the UPGA had nominated candidates for all the 167 seats in the North.

The UPGA announced that 15 had been returned unopposed. It was left to the chairman of the Federal Electoral Commission, Eyo E. Esua, to confirm these claims. On the 22nd, in an emergency broadcast to the nation, Mr. Esua admitted that there had been irregularities in the nomination of candidates. He cited four cases, one in Eastern Nigeria and three in Northern Nigeria, and observed that "it is evident from what I have said that something is wrong with those cases." He warned "that the commission has power under the Electoral Act of 1962 to postpone the election in a constituency where something has gone wrong." He assured the nation that all the cases were being "properly investigated" and promised that "the result would obviously be made known by the Commission."

But the nation waited in vain to hear from Mr. Esua. Meanwhile, the country entered upon what the Nigerian State House Diary later described as "sixteen days of political crises."

On December 23, Dr. Michael Okpara, Premier of Eastern Nigeria and leader of the UPGA, called for the Army to be invited to supervise the election. The next day, December 24, he led an UPGA delegation to the President and threatened that, unless the elections were postponed and irregularities righted, the UPGA would boycott them. On December 26, the President consulted with the Governors of Eastern, Western and Mid-Western Nigeria. As a result of this meeting, the Prime Minister invited the four regional Premiers to a conference with him. He received no reply. On the same day, Dr. Okpara conferred with the President, who advised that, in the face of proven irregularities and threats of boycott and secession, the elections be postponed for six months to allow the United Nations to send experts to assist in conducting a free and fair election, as had been the case in 1959. The Prime Minister refused to agree to this. After 105 minutes of consultation, a laconic announcement informed the bewildered nation that the Prime Minister and the President had disagreed. The announcement added that it had been decided to summon all the regional Governors and Premiers to confer with both the President and the Prime Minister on their disagreement. The fear which gripped the nation as a result of the disagreement was to some extent mitigated by the hope that, when the regional governors and premiers met, good sense might prevail and a solution be found to a dangerous impasse. This hope was however shattered when, on the 29th, it became known that the regional Governors and Premiers of the West and North did not attend the meeting.

Explaining his absence, Alhaji Sir Ahmadu Bello said he did not attend because the meeting was called to discuss the secession of Eastern Nigeria from the Federation. Chief Akintola, Premier of Western Nigeria, explained that he did not attend because the notice was too short and he did not think the subject for discussion fell within their competence. The childishness of these reasons casts a great doubt on these leaders understanding of the seriousness of their responsibilities to the nation.

However, the President and Prime Minister went ahead to confer with the Premiers and Governors of the Eastern and Mid-Western regions. At the end of the meeting, they decided to call the Federal Electoral Commission to adhere strictly to the Electoral Act of 1962, in the light of proven irregularities admitted by the Chairman of the Commission himself. But this did not solve the essential problem. Polling was less than eighteen hours away. Meetings were held, decisions and resolutions were taken, and agreements were reached, but the essential problem remained unsolved. The irregularities remained unstraightened. Mr. Esua's silence since his broadcast of December 22 became more ominous. It was obvious that the storm was coming and nothing was really being done to avert it.

On the same day, December 29, the Joint Action Committee of Nigerian Trade Unions called a strike in support of the demand for the postponement of the election. This was immediately followed by the resignation of two members of the Federal Electoral Commission,

Mr. Akenzua and Mr. Aniagolu, following disagreement with other members of the Commission on the holding of the elections. All the time the State House was busy receiving one delegation after another, some advising, others threatening. It was at one of these conferences that the Premier of Eastern Nigeria informed the President of the decision of the UPGA to boycott the elections because they had reason to believe that they would not be free and fair.

December 30 arrived and the disagreement between the Prime Minister and President remained unresolved. The elections were held in Northern Nigeria, in many parts of Western Nigeria and in some parts of Mid-Western Nigeria. They were completely boycotted in the East. The UPGA declared the elections a farce and announced their determination not to accept any government formed on the basis of the elections.

Polling results showed a heavy win for NNA--190 seats to UPGA's 40. On January 1, 1965, the President informed the Prime Minister that he would rather resign than appoint any person to form a government. He recorded a speech to be broadcast at 7:10 p.m.. This was later cancelled by an instruction from the State House. A statement from the State House explained that efforts were being made to find a solution to the impasse. January 2 and 3, 1965, were marked by intensive political activities and manoeuvrings in both the State House and the Prime Minister's residence. The atmosphere continued to be sombre and uncertain until the evening of January 4, when, at 9 p.m.,

the President broadcast to the nation announcing that he had appointed Sir Abubakar to form a "broad-based government." A few minutes later, Sir Abubakar made a broadcast announcing the end of the crisis and his acceptance of the invitation to form "a broad-based government."

This decision received a mixed greeting of praise and condemnation. The Times of London, The New York Times and the (Manchester) Guardian praised the President and the Prime Minister for preserving the unity of Nigeria. The Nigerian Outlook, condemning the settlement, declared: "The President himself, on January 1, 1965, stated that 'it would not be morally right to proceed with an election whose integrity was questionable.' May we ask: Is it morally right to proceed with an election whose integrity was questionable? Or has the questionability of the election been corrected without a countrywide re-ballotting? Impossible."

There has been a great deal of debate on the justifiability of Dr. Azikiwe's role in this period of national crisis. There is no doubting that there was a great deal of activity behind the scenes in the State House, any attempt to recount which has been purposely avoided. This is because there have been conflicting versions about what happened. Some versions have given the impression that the President's last act in compromising his publicly proclaimed convictions was motivated by his apprehension for his personal safety and his material investments. Others suggest that Dr. Azikiwe so fears physical violence that he would go to any compromise to circumvent it. There are others, notable among which is the

State House Diary, which have completely absolved Dr. Azikiwe of any blame, portraying him as the great nationalist whose every action was determined by his belief that violence cannot solve any problem, and also by his desire to preserve what he has helped to build. The State House Diary states that the President received legal advice from the Federal Attorney-General and Minister of Justice (Dr. T. O. Elias) and the Solicitor-General of Eastern Nigeria (D. O. Ibekwe), who were of the opinion that the President had no power under the Constitution to form an interim or provisional government, or to assume personally the powers of Parliament or the Cabinet. This is a strictly legal and constitutional view, and seems to derive its strength from the fact that the Nigerian Republican Constitution provides for a president invested with great powers, most of which are exercisable, not by him, but by others--notably the Council of Ministers. For example, he appoints members of the Cabinet and members of the Federal Electoral Commission, dissolves Parliament, and removes ministers in accordance with the advice of the Prime Minister.

Section 87, Sub-section (8) (a), of the Nigerian Republican Constitution states that:

the office of Prime Minister shall become vacant when, after any dissolution of the House of Representatives, the Prime Minister is informed by the President that the President is about to reappoint him as Prime Minister or to appoint another person as Prime Minister.

Sub-section (2) of this same section states that:

whenever the President has occasion to appoint a Prime Minister he shall appoint a member of the House of Representatives who appears to him likely to command the support of the majority of the members of the House.

Again Section 93, Sub-section (3), states that:

where by this Constitution the President is required to act in accordance with the advice of any person or authority, the question whether he has in any case received, or acted in accordance with, such advice shall not be enquired into in any court of law.

In view of the above sections of the Constitution, it may be argued that the post of the Prime Minister was vacant the moment Dr. Azikiwe informed Sir Abubakar that he would not reappoint him to form a government. Therefore, he (Dr. Azikiwe) could have appointed someone else, as the Constitution leaves this exercise entirely to his discretion. But the point to note is that the President's discretion is not absolute. He must appoint somebody who appears to him on reasonable grounds likely to have majority support. It is a different thing if the President refuses to appoint a Prime Minister on the ground that, since the elections were not completed, there was no parliament by virtue of the existence of which the Prime Minister held office. But there is nothing in law which gives him the power to refuse to appoint a Prime Minister when it appears to him that the elections have not been properly carried out. It is for the Federal Electoral Commission, acting under the powers given to it by Section 156(1) of the Electoral Act, to postpone elections in any constituencies where it is satisfied that there has been a substantial failure

to comply with the requirements of this Act before the date "fixed for holding the election in respect of nominations or otherwise however." It is therefore very difficult to desist from blaming Eyo E. Esua, Chairman of the Federal Electoral Commission, and other numbers of the Commission for failing--due to whatever cause--to exercise this power. Messrs. Aniagolu and Akenzua are of course absolved from this blame since, having failed to convince other members of the Commission of the necessity to postpone the elections, they resigned.

In any case, the President was bound to act on the strength of returns sent to him by the Electoral Commission. The question arises: at what stage is the President to exercise his appointing powers? There is no parliament until the elections are completed (i. e., until all the returns have been made). Therefore, he cannot appoint a Prime Minister because a government cannot be based on a non-existent parliament. Of course, when the results of elections in two hundred out of a total of three hundred constituencies have been returned, it is obvious that a party which wins a hundred and seventy seats has clearly won a majority. The parliamentary leader of such a party may justly be asked to form a government. (This situation arose in 1959 when the then Governor-General of the Federation, Sir James Robertson, appointed Sir Abubakar Prime Minister before all the returns were made.)

However, there is another angle to this. The Nigerian general elections of 1964 were completely boycotted in Eastern Nigeria. Could

anybody therefore rightly and justly appoint a Prime Minister of a federation when no returns have been made from a component region of that federation? Secondly, could there be a parliament under a federal system when elections have not been held in one of the federating states? The question is even more fundamental in relation to the senate. If no senators were appointed from one part of the federation, could the parliament be said to be a lawful one? These are very pertinent questions which cannot be answered satisfactorily in the light of the Zik-Balewa compromise.

The Constitution is a living document. Therefore it should be elastic, flexible and expansive. Chief Justice John Marshall of the United States formulated and applied the principle of "Implied powers" as a means of enhancing national power and constitutional flexibility. He declared:

The sound construction of the Constitution must allow to the national legislator that discretion, with respect to the means by which the powers it confers are to be carried into execution, which will enable that body to perform the high duties assigned to it, in the manner most beneficial to the people. Let the end be legitimate, let it be within the scope of the Constitution, and all means which are appropriate, which are plainly adapted to that end, which are not prohibited but consist with the letter and spirit of the Constitution are Constitutional . . .

The Nigerian situation was this: here was a constitutional Head on whom were vested great powers, which were exercisable by others-- the Ministers. If there were ministers all the time, everything would work harmoniously. But when there were no ministers, there was a

complete standstill of government, and a fatal weakness of the Constitution came to light. Those who drew up the Constitution did not anticipate this situation, and there was therefore no provision for it. A broader view of this holds that the President is the guardian and custodian of the Constitution, acting in the interest of the people. Upholding the Constitution means not only upholding it in the letter but also in practice and in spirit. In the Nigerian situation, the President was the only remaining person who could exercise those powers, even though the Constitution does not give him such a right. This is a situation that he should have approached with a deep sense of its importance, and a full realization of his awesome responsibility to the people. That Dr. Azikiwe was fully convinced that the elections were a massive fraud is beyond doubt. The spirit of the Constitution envisages that he should appoint a Prime Minister who has been fairly elected. The law is meant for a living society. Therefore social philosophy must be applied in executing the law. This approach is outside the strict confines of the Constitution. But its end is legitimate, since it is within the scope of the Constitution. Thus, being the only appropriate measure to this end, and being consistent with the spirit of the Constitution, it is a constitutional approach.

Of course, it is realized that a stand of this nature needs courage. Considering the risk of civil war that might have arisen out of this stand, it requires a President whose fortitude and conviction in achieving what is right for the people, and whose sense of duty to the spirit of his Oath, exceeds his fear of violence. On the other hand, it

must be admitted that "what is right for the people" is subject to determination. For the balance is yet to be struck between what is Nigeria's fate today and what would have been her fate if it had been thrown into a civil war then. Perhaps it would have emerged stronger, or perhaps disintegration would have come sooner; perhaps more, perhaps less blood would have been spilled in the process. There is no way of knowing now. Be it as it may, posterity, indeed every man of principle, would naturally ask; if the President was convinced that the elections were a farce, why did he not resign, rather than appear to condone fraud and political injustice by remaining in office? It is doubtful whether the "settlement" really resolved the crisis. It was in the interest of the country that these irregularities should have been investigated and corrected once and for all. By so doing, the country might have been saved the shame and agony of facing the same problems again and again. Drum declared that Nigeria survived because her "sense of moderation and the spirit of compromise of her leaders prevailed to meet the sternest test our Federation has faced since independence. The truth is that Nigeria's brand of compromise was only a temporary measure that just succeeded in postponing the inevitable. When two people decide to live together, continued harmony requires concession from both sides. But when it is one side that makes the concession each time in the spirit of national unity, that unity will continue to be a fleeting shadow, as time will surely and naturally come when the conceding side will run short of concessions. This has been the case with Nigeria, as will be seen later.

Late in January 1965, Isaac J. Boro and Jude K. Emezie, acting on behalf of the Students' Union of the University of Nigeria, Nsukka, filed a motion asking the Court to rule that the December 30 elections were unconstitutional and illegal and, therefore, should be declared null and void. The plaintiffs also requested the Court to order that the Federal Electoral Commission should conduct a free and fair general election throughout the Federation. Furthermore, they sought the Court's injunction to restrain the Clerk of Parliament, Mr. Adeigbo, from summoning the Parliament, contending that Sir Abubakar could not hold office as a result of the elections, and should therefore be restrained by the Court from continuing in office as Prime Minister of the Federation. Inimical as uncompromising doggedness may be to peaceful co-existence, improper concessions defeat its very purpose. Human nature being what it is, the love of having grows with having; and if concession must follow every demand, no matter how preposterous, the country's troubles become chronic. It was a defeat for the end of political justice to compromise a recurrent evil in the interest of peace. The best and most ethical approach would have been to eliminate the cause--the root cause. Any other approach perpetuates injustice and political fraud. Men do not cease to be dishonest merely because their dishonesty has been compounded. Nor are they likely to honour overtures of honest men unless they have a repentant heart. There cannot be a repentant heart unless there is religious conscience--a conscience sensitive to

its own imperfections and faults and aware of its obligations towards others.

Western Nigerian Elections, 1965

The fraudulent manoeuvres of the Western Nigeria election of 1965 by the ruling Nigerian National Democratic Party led by Chief Samuel L. Akintola were a direct consequence of the total abortiveness of the Zik-Balewa compromise. At least, it is extremely difficult to think otherwise.

By the time the country emerged--or apparently emerged--from the nightmare of the Federal election crisis, she was already looking forward to the Western Nigeria election, which was due in October 1965. The strife-weary people of Western Nigeria hoped that this was their badly-needed opportunity to claim their right to a peaceful and unmolested life by throwing off, once and for all, the man whose introduction of intrigue, hatred and suspicion into their region in 1962 brought them nothing but anarchy and disorder. But Chief Akintola had a completely different view. He was determined to stay in office at all costs. It has been mentioned earlier in this chapter that, in Chief Akintola's reckless and inordinate ambition, the Northern Nigerian leaders found a useful tool. It will be recalled that, having discovered that the Northern People's Congress could not retain their dominant position in the Centre while remaining a strictly regional party, the Northerners sought to compromise the two desires by

implanting Akintola's puppet regime in Western Nigeria. It will be interesting at this point to recall a man whose role in the history of Western Nigeria is startlingly analogous to Chief Akintola's. The Are Ona-Kakanfo is the Field-Marshal of Yoruba land. It is a title which is prestigious in itself, but the history of the exploits of those who have borne it has made the office one of very doubtful repute. The title of Are Ona-Kakanfo has always been conferred upon the most headstrong and venturesome among Yoruba soldiers, and most of the crises in the history of the Yorubas have been brought about by one Kakanfo or another. Notable among the Kakanfos is Afonja of Ilorin, the sixth Kakanfo of Yorubaland. Having by intrigue and intimidation forced Oba Aole, the Alafin of Oyo--the head of the Yoruba empire--to commit suicide, the inordinately ambitious Afonja embarked on a military campaign motivated by his desire to assert his independence of Oyo. This was in 1817, by which date the Oyo Empire was showing signs of decline. To achieve his objective, Afonja enlisted the help of Hausa and Fulani mercenaries under an influential Fulani, Mallam Alimi. He succeeded, but the Muslims had their hearts in continuing their Jihad southwards into the Yoruba land. By the time Alimi died his eldest son, Abdussalami, had established himself in Ilorin. Afonja realized this only too late, and when he tried to rid himself of his Muslim allies he was refused support by other Yoruba chiefs who had not forgotten his treachery. His army was defeated and he was killed, his body being publicly burnt in the market-place.

Thus the Yorubas lost Ilorin to the Muslims, and Abdussalami became the first Fulani emir of that Yoruba district.

When in 1964 the Government of Western Nigeria announced that the "political and social resurgence of the Yoruba people of Western Nigeria is now becoming a reality with the installation of the Premier (Chief S. L. Akintola) as the (thirteenth) Are Ona-Kakanfo of Yorubaland, many eyebrows were raised and many Nigerians speculated upon the significance of this move. Why did Akintola resuscitate this infamous title in spite of its association with perfidy, intrigue and bloodthirstiness, and in spite of the fact that the post had lain vacant for over fifty years? Was history repeating itself? Was Akintola going to be the twentieth-century Afonja who, in order to satiate his personal love for power, would sell his own fatherland to perpetual domination by the Hausa-Fulani oligarchy? In the light of available facts, the answer looks all too clear. The conclusion that Chief Akintola's megalomania had impawned the liberty and honor of his people to the whims of the regionalist Northerners is unavoidable.

The people of Western Nigeria, in any case, had arrived at this conclusion. From then on it became obvious that Chief Akintola was completely disaffected from his people. As with Kakanfo Afonja, reverence to royalty was for him a mere facade. If an Oba stood in his way, he dealt with him ruthlessly. The twentieth century Kakanfo, true to his nature, knew through his feelers that the discontent of his people

was gaining in strength each day. Akintola's consequent feeling of insecurity drove him to the altar of tribalism. In the words of Dr. Ikejiani, "tribalism is a creed, an emotional attitude and a symptom of insecurity"; as an ideology, it is a figment of imagination, but it is a weapon which has proved its efficiency when used in social and political conflicts. He went on:

Crackpot tribalist propaganda aims at winning people to the open expression of tribalism by playing upon unconscious mechanisms rather than by presenting facts and arguments. Hence its personalized character, its consistent substitution of means for ends and the emphasis upon propaganda as an end to itself. It functions as a kind of wish-fulfillment. It attacks bogies rather than real opponents and systematically promotes an organized flight of ideas. Intended to provide gratification rather than enlightenment, tribalist political meetings and rallies have a ritualistic character, as shown by the fact that their contents are invariably the same. There is always tribal identification and glorification of the status quo.

As soon as Alhaji Abubakar's broad-based government--which included the NNDP--was formed, Akintola got busy telling the Yorubas that now was the time for them to share in the "national cake," to which they had hitherto been outdone by other tribes. That this sort of propaganda did the Yorubas more harm than good is shown by the rumpus that followed the replacement of Dr. Eni Njoku by Dr. Saburi Biobaku as the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Lagos.

On October 11, 1965, Western Nigerians went to the polls. The fraud of the 1964 Federal Election was repeated without the least dissimulation and on the grandest scale in the history of rigged elections.

On the election day over 500,000 ballot papers were recovered from both the NNDP leaders and the NNDP electoral officers when they tried to dump them into the ballot boxes. Some "pregnant" NNDP women were caught with ballot papers bulbously wrapped over their stomachs, while NNDP men were arrested with bundles of ballot papers conveniently hidden in the spacious depths of their agbadas, the Yoruba native dress. Ballot boxes already filled with ballot papers were recovered before polling began. The police also recovered lists of election results which the NNDP had prepared long before the polling day.

The NNDP had announced that sixteen of their candidates were returned unopposed. The electoral officers in the constituencies of these candidates were conveniently kidnapped and sent into hiding in Northern Nigeria to make certain that they did not receive nomination papers from the UPGA candidates. Some electoral officers who received nomination papers from, and issued certificates of validity to members of the UPGA were summarily dismissed, and replaced with new electoral officers who refused to recognize the certificates of validity issued by the dismissed officers.

It has already been stated that a fictitious list of successful NNDP candidates was recovered by the police. This did not in any way upset Chief Akintola's strategy. NNDP candidates were declared elected, in spite of the fact that they had not polled majorities of votes. The returning officers refused to announce results at the polling stations, but

forwarded false results to the broadcasting stations for radio announcement. Unfortunately, the NBC and the Western Nigeria Broadcasting Service (WNBS) faithfully relayed these falsities to the public. Earlier, the UPGA leaders, apprehensive of the NNDP methods of running the election, had sent delegations to the Controller of the NBC, Lagos, and the Federal Prime Minister, requesting that a stop be put to the misuse of public information media, and that a network of NBC broadcasting stations be set up, so that reports be made directly from the counting stations instead of through the Ministry of Information. These requests were turned down because the NNDP controlled both the Federal and the West regional Ministries of Information. These requests were turned down because the NNDP controlled both the Federal and the West regional Ministries of Information. In a protest memorandum sent to the NBC Board of Governors, the Nigerian Broadcasting Corporation Staff Association condemned attempts to ruin the Corporation for political ends--especially during the recent elections in Western Nigeria. They stated that "the News Division came under the control of 'a Senior Executive Staff, who approved, suppressed, substituted or doctored news to suit certain ends." They gretted that, because of repeated breaches of the principles and constitution of the Corporation, the public had soon lost confidence in their news items, expressing their discontent by physical attacks on the practice of ministers, parliamentary secretaries and other politicians of channelling news items through the

individual members of staff in contravention of the provisions of the ordinance establishing the NBC. They concluded: "We hope . . . the Board will see to it that, in future, no attempts will be made to ply and bend the Corporation for ends other than that for which it was set up.

Soon after the election, the NNDP had it announced that it had won 82 seats to UPGA's 11. The returns were transmitted to the Governor of Western Nigeria by the Secretary to the Western Nigeria Electoral Commission. On the strength of these results, the Western Nigeria Governor, Sir Odeleye Fadahunsi, appointed Chief Akintola Premier and asked him to form a government. Earlier, the UPGA had published the detailed results of the election in which the UPGA won 68 seats to NNDP's 26 (including the 17 "unopposed" seats). On the strength of this, the UPGA declared they had formed an interim government in Western Nigeria with Alhaji Adegbenro, acting leader of the Action Group, as the Premier. Alhaji Adegbenro and his nine ministers were promptly arrested and charged with illegal assumption of office.

Thus it dawned on the people of the West that Chief Akintola had got away with his rape of the people's will. In such a situation, there is little left to the people other than a mass uprising. So Western Nigeria erupted, heads rolled and blood flowed. The rioting spread, and in Ibadan, Ijebu-Ode, Igbare-Ode, Mushin, Akure, Ado Ekiti--all over the region--the frustration of the people was expressed in arson, looting and murder. Houses and cars of NNDP supporters were burned. The police were useless, as law and order had completely

and section 14(3) of the same Regulations which provides that

the electoral officer's decision that the candidate has been validly nominated shall be final and shall not be questioned in any legal proceedings,

the Electoral Commission could lawfully do nothing to check the irregularities in the election. He expressed surprise at the leakage of ballot papers since the Commission had handed the papers to the Commissioner of Police in the conviction that this would ensure their safety. He observed that the federal Electoral Act did not apply to the Regional elections and therefore, unlike the Federal Electoral Commission, the Western Region Electoral Commission had no powers to postpone elections even if there was likelihood of a breach of the peace. He made recommendations for changes in electoral laws and concluded:

I have tried to spotlight in this letter most of the glaring faults and questionable practices which came to my knowledge during the last West Regional elections. It is clear that, while the effective organization and control of the details of the election were left directly in the hands of Government of the day, the Commission was left utterly helpless in spite of the Commission's desire to remedy the abuses which came to light. One cannot expect an impotent Commission, therefore, to perform miracles. Unless we effect the necessary changes in the electoral laws along the lines suggested, we may as well say farewell to parliamentary democracy and the rule of law in Nigeria.

The essence of true democracy is that the people should always be free to decide who should govern them and, broadly speaking how they should be governed. Akintola's attempt to deny his people this right is a typical

case in which the neutral forces of democracy have been used to pervert democratic principles, because of the absence of the spirit of democracy-- which is so essential. Unfortunately, Nigeria imported British democracy, in which the consent of the governed is sine qua non, without its spirit.

Esua's belated confessions were of no consequence and did not resolve the crisis. The basic problem remained: that the people were not given the opportunity to choose their rulers. A ruler was being imposed on them against their will.

Only a fresh election (free and fair, of course) could resolve the issue; to form a "broadbased" government would again be a cowardly compromise which, being uncertain and temporary, could not solve the problem. When Nigeria gained her independence from the British, her people did not bargain for Black Tyranny. The people of Western Nigeria came to be confronted by this menace: they did not want it, and so they reacted against it. They were fed up with the unpopular government of the NNA, headed by Chief Akintola. The attempt to resist the people's will by police or military power only worsened the situation, the more so because, in preparation for the election, the NNDP Government had made a mass recruitment of party thugs into the local authority police. Understandably, the people came to regard the police as a repressive arm of tyranny.

Aftermath of the Elections

The events of the Federal election of 1964 and the Western Regional election of 1965 had thoroughly shaken the faith of Nigerians in the future of democracy in their country. The forces of disintegration had already been set into operation by the fraud of the Federal election; the tyranny of the Western Nigeria election stimulated these forces into a higher tempo.

All this time, the Federal Prime Minister denied that there was anything wrong with the situation in the West, and maintained a studied silence. Commenting on this, the Nigerian Outlook, in an editorial captioned "Speak, Sir," deplored the fact that the Prime Minister was leaving for the OAU Conference at Accra without as much as saying a word about the crisis in Western Nigeria:

The crisis arising from the Western Nigerian elections is . . . [so] well known throughout the world . . . that the Rhodesian Prime Minister, Mr. Ian Smith, did not hesitate to use it to buttress his argument against giving the Africans in that territory the vote. What kind of a figure does Sir Abubakar expect to cut among the nations attending the Accra Conference, if he goes there without any indications as to what he proposes to do about the tense situation in Western Nigeria? It has been reported that some 300 persons have died in incidents in that Region. Will even this not make the Prime Minister talk? This silence is no longer golden.

The call was, of course, ignored and the "God-fearing and able" Prime Minister continued to seek for African Unity and world peace while a part of his country was in chaos. Paradoxically, he went ahead to

convene a meeting of Commonwealth Premiers in Lagos to discuss the granting of the franchise to four million Africans in Rhodesia, while a few miles away eight million Western Nigerians were in effect little better off than those four million Rhodesian Africans.

Thus, by the beginning of 1966, it had become obvious that the democratic Constitution of Nigeria was unworkable in the hands of irresponsible politicians. When the Premier of the West could cling to power against the wishes of the people, and when the Federal Premier, because of his commitment to an unholy alliance, could disregard the shedding of innocent blood and refuse to intervene in a clear state of anarchy, the country was doomed unless something was done. On January 15, 1966, something was done in fulfillment of the yearnings of all Nigerians.

CHAPTER IV

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Summary

To recapitulate, the purpose of this thesis was to describe instances of political corruption in post-independence Nigeria and to relate such instances and its contribution to the outbreak of civil war in 1966.

As it was made clear in Chapter I, Nigeria consists of three regions inhabited by three different nationalities of differing social background and different political ideologies. The three nationalities were unified into one geographical area by the British during the Colonial era.

On October 1, 1960, Nigeria gained her independence. The first two years after independence was relatively peaceful but the experience after this date provided grounds for the most cynical estimation of the African's competence for leadership. Such cynicism was justifiable in the face of the crisis situation precipitated by Nigerian leaders as discussed in Chapter III. The extent to which corruption by political leaders contributed to the civil unrest which plagued Nigeria during this period was clearly demonstrated by Major Nzeogwu's

justification for the military coup (which he headed) of January 15, 1966. In a personal interview by the Daily Times on May 21, 1967, Major Nzeogwu gave the following as reasons for the coup.

1. The unrest in the West has assumed anarchial dimensions, and had great possibilities of spreading to other parts of the country.

2. The projected takeover of the country by the NNA, with the assistance of highly placed Northerners in the Army, portended a bloody disintegration of the country.

3. It was necessary to purge the country of its social evils--bribery, tribalism, bureaucracy, nepotism, feudalism, and other social injustices.

4. There had arisen a class of presumptuous chosen leaders who forgot that their powers were derived from the people, and were running the country for their own benefit.

5. Simpering under foreign eulogies on its democracy and stability, the civilizn rulers had let the comestic affairs of the country come under the remote control of imperialists. In external affairs, the leaders sought to play up to the tune of foreign, flatteries resulting in lack of coherence in the country's policy statements.

6. Because of the Nigerian leaders' lack of any plans and the consequent drift of the country, the Nigerian populace had developed a sometimes too emotional but often too soft and apathetic, approach to vital issues. It was necessary to whip them up and

reorient them so they would appreciate things objectively, and to bring these to realize that national issues are also personal issues.

7. The country needed a more realistic unification, a centralization of vital agencies and the building of a nation where every citizen belongs everywhere.

8. The civilian leaders had proved completely incapable of managing the affairs of the country.

It is obvious in these statements that something was terribly wrong with Nigeria prior to the coup if Major Nzeogwu's allegations were true. In American jurisprudence, such allegations are required to be supported by documented evidences before any validity can be ascribed. It is, however, cautioned that the state of affairs in Nigeria during this period simply did not permit such verification and documentation. From the author's experiences and observations, it can clearly be said that a state of anarchy existed in Nigeria during the period under study. In Western Nigeria and Lagos, the high-handedness and callousness of gangster politicians had driven the people to murder, arson and reckless plunder, those so engaged naturally no longer believed in the obligatory character of the law. They had lost faith in the constitution, the courts and the judges. They were no longer prepared to accept legal control and from then on, they manifested the freest possible expression of all the latent crude powers of men. Neither law nor the executive could stop them. But so long as the Nigerian

people had decided by their constitution that their society should be governed by social control and not anarchy, so long as the Constitution had enjoined the sovereignty of the state and not that of the individual, the maintenance of social discipline was indispensable. It was, in the author's opinion, to restore this social discipline, to re-establish faith in the Constitution of the land, and to give birth to true "Nigerianism" that Major Nzeogu and the Military entered Nigerian politics on January 15, 1966.

Perhaps Nigeria would have managed to live on, but for the fact that the country's maladies not only culminated in grave recurrent national crises but were in turn cast into a bold relief by these crises. In Chapter III, the Action Group debacle of 1962 and the subsequent emergency period in Western Nigeria were discussed. Also discussed were the census crisis of 1962-4. The Western Nigeria Election crisis which was at its peak by January 1966 and the Federal election crisis of 1964. In each of these crises, the common man emerged the worse for it. It was the common man invariably who suffered death and injury, or whose hard-earned money was wasted. It was seen in the discussion of these crises how, for national unity, the people of Nigeria were offered tribal intrigue; for freedom from white rule, black tyranny; for justice, injustice, nepotism and political intrigue; for national sacrifice, corruption and greed; and for visionary and selfless leadership, prosaic leadership and political demagogary.

It was also seen how the rights and freedoms of citizens were flouted and how the republican constitution was contemptuously desecrated at will. It was seen how the arms of the law were flagrantly used as instruments of coercion.

Tragically, even the courts, that should have been repositories of justice and fairness, were not in a position to salvage the country. Following the abolition of the Judiciary Service Commission, the ruling governments filled the bench with political sympathizers. Consequently, the courts were becoming as corrupt and partisan as the politicians. Most of the high court judges and magistrates advised politicians of how to take advantage of flaws in the Constitution to circumvent their responsibilities to the people. As a result, there was complete loss of confidence in the Judiciary by the people. So much so that proven cases of electoral irregularities would not be referred to the courts by losing candidates, because the futility of such a venture was common knowledge.

When the common people of Nigeria could neither remove unpopular governments through normal democratic means nor seek redress in the courts for encroachments on their constitutional rights and liberties, the fate of democracy was completely and conclusively sealed in Nigeria. In this state of affairs the people, seeing no prospect for a brighter future, were left with no alternative but to take the laws in their hands. The fraudulent manoeuvre of the Western

Nigerian Election of October 1965 was the last straw. The ensuing chaos in that region was an expression of many years of pent up frustrations. It was also seen that the North-controlled authorities' response to this natural demonstration of an indignant people was a show of force. Hostile Northern soldiers were drafted to this unfortunate region, and dusk-to-dawn curfews were clamped down on most of its towns. Naturally, the chaos, instead of diminishing assumed anarchial dimensions.

Meanwhile there was resentment in the Army, particularly among the educated middle-rank officers, about the obvious inability of the civilian rulers to hold the country together. This feeling of resentment was further intensified by the use of soldiers in settling political problems. By now the idea was beginning to grow among these officers that it was high time the Army did something to save the country. The matter became a frequent topic of discussion in military circles. For some, however, it was a more serious matter. To Major Nzeogwu, "a serious and brilliant young man with a magnetic personality, the fate of the federation was a matter of serious concern." "He was very impatient with the inefficiencies of the current rulers of the country, and was already thinking seriously of a military coup." On January 15, 1966, Major Nzeogwu operationalized his intentions.

After a visit to Nigeria, J. D. F. Jones, the diplomatic correspondent of the Financial Times, said of the popularity of the Army takeover:

The enthusiasm is infectious, and marks a happy contrast with the years of growing disillusion and suspicion that lay behind Nigeria's much-lauded "Democratic Experience.

Mr. Jones' statement oversimplified the overwhelming excitement of the Nigerian people for being given another chance to survive again. With transparent enthusiasm and sincerity, the military men embarked on the much needed national reconstruction which would transform the old suspicion-plagued Nigeria into a strong, united New Nigeria. In this, they received enthusiastic cooperation from the people. The riots in Western Nigeria and in the Middle-Belt Territory ceased. Millions of people in these areas who, as an expression of their complete loss of confidence in the government of the Federation, had for long refused to pay their taxes, willingly resumed payment. All over the country there was obvious dedication to the ideals of the new regime.

In the regions, the military governors were busy. In Enugu, Lt. Col. Ojukwu declared that the Nigerian citizens must "realize that we are determined to turn our own back for ever on the unproductive drift of yesteryear" which he described as "ten wasted years of planlessness, drift, incompetence, inefficiency, gross abuse of public office, corruption, avarice and gross disregard of the interest of the common man."

In the North, Major Hasson Katsina announced that he would operate on the administration structure established by Major Nzeogwu. He declared:

Everyone must realize that we are one nation, irrespective of tribe, from which each of us originated. Our experiences in the past have shown that the political parties have not worked for the common good but for sectional interests. I do not need their greetings or congratulations, as this is not the time for jubilation or flattery, but for hard work and selfless service. This is the way to reach our goals.

In the West, Fajuyi revoked the appointments of all managing committees administering the local government councils throughout the region. He also revoked the appointments of all members of joint boards responsible for customary courts, education, water schemes and forestry, and replaced these committees and joint boards with sole administrators.

Throughout the Federation, concerted efforts were being made on all fronts to re-establish the country and revive its body politic into a new lease of nationhood. Enquiries were instituted in numerous institutions, and suspects of fraud, arrested and committed to assises with unprecedented dispatch. Chief Pius Nwogo, the former Eastern Minister of Town Planning, and his permanent secretary, Uche Okoye, were charged and convicted with corruption and conspiracy to defraud the Eastern Nigerian Government. Chief Odojin Bello, former Commissioner of Police for the Western Region, was sentenced to three years imprisonment on charges of corruption and abuse of office. He was charged with receiving 2,500 pounds from Oba C. D. Akran, Finance Minister, in Akintola's Government, with a view to protecting offending NNDP supporters from detention or punishment. Emmanuel Olawaiye,

Assistant Commissioner of Police in the West, was charged with abuse of office and stealing 162 pounds, property of state. Solomon Olujobi, Superintendent General of the Western Nigerian local Government Police, was charged with receiving 500 pounds from Chief Adeyi, NNDP Minister of Works and Transport and another 500 pounds from Oba C. D. Akran, in order to show favor to NNDP supporters. Also arrested were seventeen ministers and functionaries of the former NNDP. Controlled government; they were charged with stealing the sum of 62.5 thousand pounds, property of the Western Region Marketing Board.

This wave of national purgation, set into operation by the soldiers, gave the people of Nigeria assurance of a brighter future for the country. Commenting on this, a correspondent of the "Economist" said that

Nigeria would now emerge stronger, cleaner, and a more promising recipient of an investment. A clean sweep has been made not only of politicians but of political appointees in corporations . . . and a start has been made in dismantling the patronage system on which regional politics rested.

In a front page comment, the Daily Times had this to say:

Let's hand it to the Army. They're doing a fine job . . . they have taken long strides in a short time--and done it with such a minimum of fuss . . . Nigeria knows more calm today than it has in three years. . . the Army has spent the first 30 days pulling down what was left of the house that crumbled under sheer weight of **corruption**, illegality and mismanagement. It has put the teeth of its tractors to the debris of ill-founded boards; it has put its shovel to corporations slit and made rickety; it has brought in the heavy-duty movers and moved

mass concrete into areas where the murk of filth had been prepared as bedrocks.

In a few weeks, the task of preparing the site for a new nation would have been complete. And then the great question is--WHAT NEXT.

Indeed, the big question was: "What next?"

And the big question was: "What next?"

While the Military government was busy cleaning up what was left of the civilian government an older and greater evil was already germinating in the Nigerian scene--tribalism.

Like all events in history, the revolution of January 15 has been subjected to all shades of interpretation; it stands clearly, however, as one of the most often misconstrued of historical events. The standard bearers of this misinterpretation were notably British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) commentators and the leaders of Muslim countries. In spite of the fact that all Nigerians received the military takeover with an obvious joy expressed by nationwide jubilations, the BBC called it an "Ibo-coup." The leader of a neighboring Muslim African state condemned the "dastardly assassination" of the Sardanna, and closed its borders with Nigeria.

During the coup, seven Senior Army officers were killed by the revolutionaries. These were:

Brigadier L. Maimalori (Northerner)
 Brigadier S. Ademulegun (Westerner)
 Colonel Kur Mohammed (Northerner)
 Colonel S. A. Shodeinde (Westerner)
 Lt. Col. A. Loryema (Northerner)
 Lt. Col. J. Y. Pam (Northerner)
 Lt. Col. A. C. Unegbe (Easterner)

The question asked by the critics was "why only one Ibo officer? It was also asked why they killed the Sadauna (Northerner), Chief Okotie-Eboh (Mid-Westerner), Chief Akintola (Westerner) and Sir Abubakar (Northerner) leaving Dr. Okpara of the East and Chief Dennis Osadebey, Midwestern premier? These critics alleged that the killing was motivated by sectional sentimentalism and directed to ensure Ibo domination of Nigerian government.

A study of the reasons for the coup as given by Nzeogwu himself provided an answer to these questions. He explained that the immediate cause of the revolution was the projected takeover of the government by the NNA with the aid of Northern Senior officers. The fundamental cause was the fact that the civilian rulers had proved incapable of holding the country together. The plan of the revolutionaries was to arrest all Senior Army officers, all the civilian rulers and all persons in positions of responsibilities including members of the judiciary and senior police officers. These would have been publicly tried "after exhaustive and expansive enquiries to ascertain how they individually or collectively contributed to the decay of the Federation," and the culprits would be punished in accordance with the gravity of their offenses. He explained that those who died, did so because they resisted arrest.

In view of this explanation offered by Major Nzeogwu and despite the overjoyous spirit with which the revolutionary group was received by all Nigerian citizens. Some powerful expoliticians, who for one

reason or the other escaped the coup decided to capitalize on the issue. On July 29, 1966 six months after the first coup, another military coup was effected in which hundreds of military officials of Ibo origin were massacred. General Irosi was killed and Major General Yakubu Gowon (Northern) replaced him.

As of this date, Nigerians of Eastern origin residing outside their state were massacred at will by the uncontrollable Northern soldiers. As the situation worsens, the Governor of Eastern Region, Lt. Col. Ojukwu appealed to Easterners residing in other parts of Nigeria to return to their region in order that their lives might be protected.

After a series of diplomatic communique between the Eastern government and the Federal government failed to offer dependable protection for the easterners, Lt. Colonel Ojukwu and his government with apparent support of the Easterners decided to break away from the Federation.

Lt. Col. Ojukwu, the Military Governor of Eastern Nigeria, found himself, by providence, accepting the challenge of championing the cause of the persecuted people of Eastern Nigeria. These people, frustrated by the futility of many years of one concession after another in the interest of national unity, embittered by the cross ingratitude of a people whose homes they had helped to develop, and brutally shocked out of their strong belief in Nigerian unity by six months of a savage program, returned home from other parts of the country, determined to give a trial to a form of association, which amounted virtually to separatism.

General Gowon, a non-Hausu-Fulani from the oppressed Middle-Belt Area of the Northern dominated Nigeria, had led a Northern revolt which overthrew Ironsi in July 1966. His position was complicated. He had to compromise with three pressure groups: the Hausa-Fulani aristocracy, who wanted secession or domination of the rest of Nigeria; his backing gunners of Middle-belt who wanted freedom from their Muslim oppressors; and imperialistic Britain, which, seeing greater economic gains in a Nigeria dominated by compliant Northerners, advised against secession or confederation. The dilemma in which these groups threw General Gowon was reflected by his vacillations and contradictions. But his problems were not yet ended. Superimposed on this pressure from three directions was the frustrating manoeuvre of misguided Federal civil servants.

As Mr. Tai Solarin said:

Each time the story of the last days of the Federation of Nigeria is told, the betrayal of the Nigerian people by these selfishly-motivated top civil servants will be remembered as the greatest disservice to the nation of all.

The cloud of disaster continued to hang over the nation like the mythical sword of Damocles. Immediately after the secession of Eastern Region, Nigeria was launched into a civil war that was to last three bloody years.

Conclusion

The conclusion is simple. Nigerian leaders during the period under study were corrupt, inept, selfish and lacked the barest

qualification and will to manage a democratic nation. They exploited tribalism (which amounted to systematic discrimination by those in position of authority in both private and public institutions of Nigerian citizens who happen to come from regions different from that of the officials) to perpetuate a culture of corrupt relationship.

Consequently, the Nigerian political process became corrupt resulting in loss of civil rights to millions and loss of life and property to thousands.

It is the author's opinion that in order to operate a real democratic government in Nigeria, the basic evil of tribalism (discrimination) must be abolished. It can be done as it has been done with unprecedented success in the United States.

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