

PARTY POLITICS AND THE FALL OF THE SECOND REPUBLIC IN NIGERIA: A REAPPRAISAL

Muhammad A. Bello¹ and Babayo Sule²

¹Department of History, Gombe State University, Gombe, Gombe State, Nigeria

²Department of Political Science, Federal University of Kashere Gombe, Gombe State, Nigeria

ABSTRACT

Against the usual narratives which claim that ethnicity, regionalism and religion were sole players in the fall of the Nigeria's Second Republic, the paper provides a new perspective on the dynamics that led to the fall of the Second Republic. In other words, the thrust of the paper is that the major cause of the crises in most States and the Centre during the Second Republic was unhealthy party politics rather than religious, regional or ethnic variations in Nigeria. The ugly inter and intra party politics experienced in 1979-1983 were the major factors that led to the fall of the Second Republic in Nigeria. The article stresses the need to draw better policies and political manifestos that will address the problems facing Nigeria's party politics, which is an essential feature of democracy. The study offer useful information to researchers who are interested in the history of party politics. Its interrogation of the misapplication of party politics in Nigeria, for example, will enable policy makers and politicians to comprehend the reasons why the Second Republic in Nigeria failed.

KEYWORDS

Party Politics, Political Party, Second Republic, Crises

INTRODUCTION

The fall of the Second Republic is not a new theme in Nigerian history. However, this paper presents an intriguing position that the major cause of the fall of the Second Republic in Nigeria was unhealthy party politics rather than ethnicity,¹ regionalism or religion, or even corruption². On his part, A. D. Yahaya holds the view that corruption was the major cause of the fall of the Second Republic.³ While this paper strongly argues that the fall of the Nigeria's Second Republic was caused by unhealthy party politics, it also acknowledges the fact that ethnicity, regionalism and corruption were contributing factors. Today, in Nigeria and many countries around the globe, democracy is arguably the most accepted and practiced system of government; hence, the need to have a proper understanding of its conundrums with a view to having a sound democratic governance. Bello M. A. argues that the major problem that led to the fall of the First Republic in Nigeria was the issue of highly polarised party politics. He made his argument on the

¹. Bello, M. A., "Ethnicity & Politics in Nigeria 1951-1999", in T. Wuam, C. Orngu, & E. T. Ikpanor (eds.), *Ethnic Minority Agitations & Political Development in Nigeria, Vol. II*, DonAfrique, Abuja, 2015, p. 377

². Kukah, M. H., *Religion, Politics & Power in Northern Nigeria*, Spectrum Books Ltd, Ibadan, Nigeria, 2011, pp. 166-171

³. A. D. Yahaya, *Nigerian Politics, Economy & Society- Twenty Five Years After Mallam Aminu Kano*, Aminu Kano Memorial Lecture Organised by Centre for Democratic Research & Training, Mambayya House, Bayero University, Kano, 2003, p. 13

facts that Ahmadu Bello and Aminu Kano were both from the same ethnic group, region and religion, but they had different political ideologies and remained opposed to each other throughout the First Republic. Obafemi Awolowo and Samuel Akintola were also from the same nationality, region and faith, but had serious political differences.⁴

The continued existence of the First Republic political actors in the Second Republic only changed the nomenclature of political parties of the First and Second Republics, but the ideology of the political actors remained unchanged. Arguably, therefore, there was no sharp contrast between the nature and practice of the First and Second Republics in respect to democratic practices in the country. This is what is termed as *old wine in a new bottle*. Awolowo who politically stood in sharp contrast with Ahmadu Bello in the First Republic continued to be in sharp contrast with Shehu Shagari in the Second Republic. It is against this background and many other reasons that this paper argues that the major problem of the Second Republic was ugly party politics rather than hitherto emphasised religious, ethnic or regional differences.⁵ Though on a different note, S. C. Ukpabi also maintains that the causes of political volatility in the First Republic also applied with equal force to the Second Republic.⁶

Conceptual Clarifications

Let us begin with the challenge of definitions: what is a political party? What is party politics? We cannot properly grasp the inner core of the argument of this paper without proper understanding of the above mentioned concepts. It is therefore, apt to tersely clarify these terms.

Political Party

J. C. Johari defines political party as a group of people who come together to contest for elections and hold power in government. The party in its procedure agrees on some proposed policies and collective good on furthering supporters' interests.⁷ Anthony Downs describes political party "as a team of men seeking to control the governing apparatus by gaining office in a duly constituted election".⁸ John G. Geer views political party as "a group whose members act in concert to win the support for leaders who seek to govern".⁹ Going by these three concise definitions, it is evidently clear that democracy cannot exist without political party - a platform which every contender struggles for elective position. The concept of all the aforementioned three definitions of a political party are in congruence with each other and therefore, this paper adopts the theory.

Party Politics

According to J. Olaniyi, party politics are activities of political parties in democratic setting to wrest for control of political offices by means of elections. In essence, party politics exist only when elective principles are obtainable and also by implication, when the government recognises

⁴. M. A. Bello, "Party Politics & the First Military Coup in Nigeria: A New Perspective", in University of Uyo Journal of Humanities, Vol. 24, No.1, 2020, pp. 231-243

⁵. Bello, M. A., "Party Politics & Democracy in Northern Nigeria 1951-1983", PhD Thesis, International University of Africa, Khartoum, Sudan, 2019, pp. 246-281

⁶. Tekene M. Tamuno & Samson C. Ukpabi (eds.) *Nigeria Since Independence: The First 25 Years Vol. VI*, Heineman Educational Books, Ltd, Ibadan, Nigeria, 1989, p. 109

⁷. J. C. Johari, *Comparative Politics*, Sterling Publishers Ltd, New Delhi, India, 1972, p.254

⁸. A. Downs, in Hofmeister et' al, "Political Parties: Functions & Organisation in Democratic Societies", Conrad Adenauer Stiftung, National Library Board, Singapore Cataloguing-in-Publication Data, 2011, p. 11

⁹. John G. Geer, *Politicians & Party Politics*, The Johns Hopkins University Press, London, 1998, p.3

the legitimate choice of the citizen to select or elect people to represent them in government bureaus.¹⁰ M. Okeye holds the view that “party politics are activities of formal structure, institution or organisation which competes through electoral process to control the personnel and policies of government, and with the aim of allocating the scarce resources in a State through an institutionalisation or procedure”.¹¹ Okoye and Olaniyi’s views are in consonance with each other. This paper therefore, adopts and aligns itself with their definition of party politics.

The Emergence of Political Parties in the Second Republic

A. A. Ujo refers the political parties of the Second Republic as the *second generation* political parties.¹² After the military government lifted ban on political parties on 21st September 1978, fifty political associations competed to be registered with the Federal Electoral Commission (FEDECO),¹³ under the chairmanship of Chief Michael Ani. By July 1979, five political parties that fulfilled the requirements and conditions for registration were: National Party of Nigeria (NPN), Nigeria People’s Party (NPP), Unity Party of Nigeria (UPN), Great Nigeria People’s Party (GNPP) and People’s Redemption Party (PRP).

All the above political parties were formed and championed by the First Republic politicians. One can therefore, argue that the parties were more or less the reincarnation of what A. A. Ujo termed as the *first generation* political parties.¹⁴ PRP was the reincarnation of Northern Elements Progressive Union (NEPU), while NPN, GNPP and UPN were rebirths of Northern People’s Congress (NPC), Borno Youth Movement (BYM) and Action Group (AG) respectively. And NPP, being the Igbo dominated political party can be regarded as the rebirth of National Council of Nigerian Citizens (NCNC) of the First Republic. The parties were also built on the principles and ideology of the transformed First Republic political parties. The battles between the political parties that existed in the 1950s and 1960s therefore, continued to exist in the Second Republic. Like Peter N. Stearns would say: *the past causes the present and so the future*.¹⁵ The unhealthy party politics that led to the first military coup in Nigeria was the same challenge that consumed the Second Republic.

The likes of Obafemi Awolowo, Nnamdi Azikwe, Shehu Shagari, J. S. Tarka, Waziri Ibrahim and some other figures who were the most dominant politicians in the First Republic maintained their political grip in the Second Republic and continued their political combat. Though there was a little shift, as J. S. Tarka, the spearhead of United Middle Belt Congress (UMBC) in the 1950s/1960s joined NPN and aligned himself with Shehu Shagari, thereby putting an end to the political relationship brought about by the UMBC/NEPU alliance that existed in the 1960s, instead of joining the Aminu Kano’s PRP – his old political associate of the 1950s/1960s.¹⁶ At any rate, there was no any significant shift or change in principles and ideology between the First and Second Republics’ political parties and actors.

¹⁰ J. Olaniyi, *Foundation of Public Analysis*, Sunad Publishers Ltd, Ibadan, 2001, p. 99

¹¹ M. Okoye, “Party Politics & Elections: Historical Functional Analysis,” Malthus Press Publishers, Lagos, Nigeria, 1982, in Aziz, “Ethnicity, Party Politics & Democracy in Nigeria: People’s Democratic Party (PDP) as Agent of Consolidation?”

¹² Ujo, A. A., *Understanding Elections in Nigeria- The First 50 Years...*, *op. cit.*, p. 289

¹³ Falola Toyin et’al, *History of Nigeria Vol. 3*, Longman Group Nigeria Ltd, 1991, p.158

¹⁴ Ujo, A. A., *op. cit.* p. 46

¹⁵ www.historians.org, retrieved on 02/10/2020

¹⁶ Bello, M. A., *Party Politics & Democracy in Northern Nigeria...*, *op. cit.* pp. 179-259

The 1979 Elections in Nigeria

For the first time in Nigerian history the electorates got the opportunity to elect their president and senators, unlike the First Republic when these offices were not elected by what the political scientist called *popular votes* in representative democracy.¹⁷ The parties adopted the following as their symbols and slogans:

Table 1: Names, Symbols and Slogans of Political Parties

S/N	Party	Symbol	Slogan
1.	NPN	House and Maize	One Nation One Destiny
2.	UPN	Light Bulb	Up Nigeria
3.	PRP	Key	Nasara (Victory)
4.	GNPP	Cockerel & Palm Tree	Adalchi (Fairness)
5.	NPP	A Family	Power

Source: Ezonbi, B, *Post-Colonial Political Parties in Nigeria: The Old Face that Refused to Disappear*, in Egwemi, Wuam & Orngwu (eds.), *Federalism, Politics of Minorities in Nigeria: Essays in Honour of Professor G. N. Hembe*, Bahita Dalila Publishers, Lagos, Nigeria, 2014, p. 549¹⁸

The Gubernatorial Elections of 1979 in Nigeria

In a series of elections of the 1979 in Nigeria, the gubernatorial election was conducted on 28th July, 1979. Obafemi Awolowo and Waziri Ibrahim made attempts to truncate the political fortunes of the NPN in the country, but to no avail. Both of them were flag-bearers for presidential election of their respective political parties; and going by the trend of NPN victories recorded in the elections of 7th, 14th and 21st July, it was likely that NPN would still sweep the gubernatorial elections in the country. This therefore, forced the move by Awolowo and Ibrahim to change the tide of NPN's victory on the 28th July, 1979, to end in futility.

To this end, as D. Babarinsa argues, Awolowo in a desperate move to change the trend of election to his favour, announced a unilateral coalition with the other political parties except NPN, asking all the UPN gubernatorial candidates of Ondo, Oyo, Ogun, Lagos, Kwara and Bendel States to step down.¹⁹ This move was amplified when in a television interview at the eve of the gubernatorial election, Waziri Ibrahim mentioned that "four political parties were making moves to work collectively and thwart the NPN from coming to power."²⁰

Notwithstanding the coalition of UPN, PRP and GNPP during the gubernatorial elections in Nigeria, the NPN sustained its political grasp in the 1979 elections. Those elected were: Alhaji Shehu Muhammad Kangiwa, Sokoto State (NPN); Abubakar Tatari Ali, Bauchi State (NPN); Mr Apa Aku, Benue State (NPN); Alhaji Adamu Attah, Kwara State (NPN); Alhaji Awwal Ibrahim, Niger State (NPN); Alhaji Abdulkadir Balarabe Musa, Kaduna State (PRP); Solomon Lar, Plateau State (NPP) ; Alhaji Abubakar Barde, Gongola State (GNPP) and Alhaji

¹⁷. https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/poupopular_vote_representative_democracy retrieved on 09/12/2018

¹⁸. Ezonbi B., *op. cit.*, 549

¹⁹. Dare Babarinsa, *House of War*, Spectrum Books Ltd, Ibadan, Nigeria, 2003, p. 49

²⁰. J. O. Ojiako, *Nigeria: Yesterday, Today, & ?*, Africana Educational Publishers, Onitsha, Nigeria, 1981, pp. 290-292

Muhammad Goni, Borno State (GNPP).²¹ In the Southern part of the county the NPN also had Dr Clement Isong, Cross River (NPN) Melford Obiene Okilo, Rivers State (NPN). Others were Professor Ambrose Alli, Bendel State (UPN), Jim Nwobodo, Anambra State, (NPP), Samuel O. Mbakwe, Imo State, (NPP); Ajibola Ige, Oyo State (UPN), Alhaji Lateef K. Jakande, Lagos State (UPN), Micheal Adekunle Ajasin, Ondo State (UPN); and Victor Olabisi Onabanjo, Ogun State (UPN).²² The outcome of the governorship elections of 1979 therefore, clearly indicated that the NPN could win the presidential elections and this could further force the country into yet another unhealthy party politics, as other political parties struggled to stop the NPN from getting the presidency.

The Presidential Elections of 1979 in Nigeria

Last in the 1979 elections series was the presidential election which was conducted on 11th August, 1979. The NPN which already won the majority seats in both the National Assembly and at state level had perfected plans to emerge victorious in the polls. M. H. Kukah argues that the victory of the NPN was due to a number of methods. At first, the NPN succeeded in garnering support for Christian candidates principally within a rural, mostly illiterate Muslim setting. The party also penetrated the *Middle Belt* and other non-Muslim minority States in the country.²³ The triumph of NPN in Cross River and Rivers States during the gubernatorial election²⁴ further buttressed Kukah's argument as the party had more national outlook than any of the other political parties.²⁵ Kukah also argues that the NPN had the support of the traditional rulers, particularly in the North.²⁶ The NPC in the First Republic had the support of the traditional institutions, such that the Tiv Riots of 1960 and 1964 targeted some traditional rulers sympathetic to the party. Babarinsa also maintains that the 1979 presidential election was a battle between the NPN and UPN. The 1959 election had Awolowo's Action Group leading the phalanx from the South and Shagari's Northern People's Congress (NPC) holding forces for the Ahmadu Bello from the North.²⁷ Below was the result of the presidential election which was the last in the series of the 1979 elections.

Table 2: Parties, Candidates and Election Results

S/N	Party	Candidate	Votes Cast
1.	NPN	Shehu Shagari	5,688,857
2.	UPN	Obafemi Awolowo	4,916,651
3.	NPP	Nnamdi Azikwe	2,822,523
4.	PRP	Aminu Kano	1,732,113
5.	GNPP	Waziri Ibrahim	1,686,489

Source: Nigerian General (Presidential) Election of 1979: *Reports by the Federal Electoral Commission (FEDECO)*

²¹. Bello, M. A., *Party Politics & Democracy in Northern Nigeria...*, *op. cit.*, p. 261

²². J. O. Ojiako, *op. cit.*,

²³. Kukah, *op. cit.*, p. 150

²⁴. Ezonbi, *op. cit.*, p. 550

²⁵. S. U. Fwatshak, "Economic & Political Environment of Elections & Expectations of Nigerians from Elections", in *Journal of Historical Society of Nigeria* Volume 18, 2009, p.14

²⁶. Kukah, *op. cit.*, p. 150

²⁷. D. Babarinsa, *op. cit.*, p. 48

The result of the presidential election was a triumph to Shehu Shagari's NPN. This result was nevertheless, challenged by PRP, UNP, NPP and GNPP. Awolowo, the UPN presidential flag-bearer took NPN/ Shehu Shagari to Election Petition Tribunal and the Supreme Court. He, however, lost as both judicial verdicts upheld Shehu Shagari's election. On 1st October, 1979 Shehu Shagari was sworn-in as the first democratically elected president of Nigeria.²⁸

Election of Presiding Officers of the National Assembly (1979-1983)

The Clerk-to-the National Assembly Alhaji Gidado Idris sworn-in the 95 elected Senators and the 449 Members of House of Representatives on 9th October, 1979.²⁹ With the beginning of the Second Republic in Nigeria, the National Assembly which was bicameral in nature consisting of the Senate and the House of Representatives swung into action. After all the political intrigues, Joseph Wayas³⁰ and Edwin Ume Ezeoke³¹ emerged as the Senate President and Speaker respectively. The Senate President hailed from Cross River State and was member of the NPN; while the Speaker of House of Representatives was from Anambra State, and a member of the NPP. John Pam Wash, NPP Senator from Plateau State, was elected as the Deputy Senate President; while Alhaji Idris Ibrahim, Niger State emerged as the Deputy Speaker of House of Representatives. Except, the Speaker (Edwin Ume Ezeoke) all the other three presiding officers came from the minority ethnic nationalities of the country. T. Falola argues that the election of the Senate President was the implementation or actualisation of the NPN agreement during its convention in Lagos.³² As J.O. Ojiako put it, "the fear of domination eliminated". It should be noted however, that the emergence of the presiding officers who were NPP members was because of the alliance between NPN and NPP.³³ The alliance of NPN and NPP at the National Assembly further buttressed the argument of this paper that, to the politicians of the Second Republic, ethnicity, region or creed had little place in their political battles. The emergence of the Senate President and Speaker of the House of Representatives who were from the South-South and South-East regions respectively typified the reality that party politics can bring people together or put them in disarray.

The 1983 General Elections in Nigeria

Let it be noted that the Nigeria Advance Party (NAP) struggled to be registered in 1979, but failed. Dr Tunji Braithwaite's NAP succeeded in getting registered and that gave him the stimulus to contest during the presidential election in 1983.³⁴ The outcome of the 1983 election was another victory to the ruling NPN. Shehu Shagari was returned as elected president and his party won sixty one Senatorial Districts; three hundred and seven Federal Constituencies of the House of Representatives.³⁵ The NPN welded its hold on the polity, breaking into the holds of the opposition. Borno, Gongola, Bendel, Anambra, Ondo and Kaduna which were hitherto non NPN States also came under the dominance of the ruling NPN after the 1983 election. Except the South West, NPN was now in control of the other five geopolitical regions in the country.

At any rate, the NPN retained the majority. In presidential election, Shehu Shagari (NPN) scored 12,047, 864 votes; Awolowo (UPN) polled 7,885, 434 votes; Azikwe (NPP) scored

²⁸. Ojiako, *op. cit.*, pp. 306-318

²⁹. *Ibid*, p. 330

³⁰. https://senate_president_of_Second_Republic Retrieved on 15/12/2018

³¹. https://speaker_of_Second_Republic Retrieved on 15/12/2018

³². Falola et al, *op. cit.*, p. 161

³³. Ojiako, *op. cit.*, pp. 326-341

³⁴. Ezonbi, *op. cit.*, p. 551

³⁵. <http://constrystudies.us/nigeria/29.htm> Retrieved on 18/12/2018

3,534,633 votes; Tunji (NAP) scored 308,842 votes; Waziri (GNPP) polled 640,128 votes and finally, Alhaji Hassan Yusuf (PRP) scored 1,037,481 votes.³⁶ The hegemony of the NPC across the country after the 1983 elections fueled political crisis all over the country which culminated in ugly party politics as the opposition had increased in number and force.

Political Crisis / Repression in Nigeria (1979-83)

As M. A. Fika notes, the attempt to curb the voices of the opposition arose because of the need by the executives to hold on to power; and they did so with viciousness, and not with level-headedness. Therefore, there is no gainsaying that political chauvinism on the part of those who held power would create “totalitarian” democracy.³⁷ The NPN, being the party at the centre oppressed and suppressed the opposition parties in Nigeria. In Kano State, the PRP and its members were tyrannically handled by the NPN. For instance, on Friday, July 10th, 1981 Dr Bala Muhammad, who was the Political Adviser of Kano State Governor, was assassinated in what Abubakar Rimi (governor of Kano State) termed as an *organised, premeditated* violence designed at stumbling the wheel of progress. The security approach towards this murder was nonchalant.³⁸ M. Othman describes the PRP as a revolutionary political party and concluded that the assassination and political repression of its member was to be expected. He maintains that revolutionary leaders such as Amilcar Cabral in Guinea Bissau, Walter Rodney in Guyana, Dunduzu Kalili Chisaza in Malawi, Ahmed Mahdi in Morocco, Felix Moumi in Camerouns, Abdulrashid Ali Shermake in Somalia, Patrice Lumumba in Congo and so on were cut down precipitately by assassins.³⁹ While all these events were unfolding during the second republic, the military were watching with keen interest with a view to striking in due time. The military did the same in 1966 when they toppled the First Republic. The hand over to a democratically elected government was first proposed by General Yakubu Gowon, but was so reluctant in keeping his words and this culminated in Murtala Mohammed’s coup of 1975.

Another instance is how violence broke out in Plateau State, after the announcement of the return of NPP (Solomon Lar), as the winner of the 1983 gubernatorial election in the State. Supporters of the NPN and Mr John Kadiya (NPN gubernatorial candidate) attacked and molested people in Jos metropolis, Bukuru, and villages of Du, Zawan and Gyei. One of the party officials of the NPP, Mallam Adamu Garba was attacked along with his wife and daughter. The Divisional Police Officer (DPO) in charge of Bukuru area had to quickly mobilise a unit of anti-rioting policemen to quash the uprising.⁴⁰ It should be noted that the NPN took NPP to court over the victory of Solomon Lar, and won its case which was ruled after the military coup of 1983.⁴¹

Y. B. Usman argues that, in Borno State, the Majority Leader (Shugaba Abdulrahman) of the GNPP in the State House of Assembly was illegally deported by NPN with the plan of eliminating him in Chad. NPN Federal Government claimed that Shugaba’s father was born

³⁶. D. Babarinsa, *op. cit.*, p. 216

³⁷. M. A. Fika, *The Role of Opposition in the Attempt to Establish Democracy in Nigeria*, Being a Text of Aminu Kano Memorial Lecture Delivered on 17-04-2010, Aminu Kano Centre for Democratic Research & Training, Mambayya House, Bayero University Kano, pp. 16-23

³⁸. A. M. A. Rimi, “*The Repressive Tendencies in a Neo-Fascist Regime*”, in A. Essien-Ibok, (ed.), *Political Repression & Assassination- A Tribute to the Late Dr Bala Mohammed*, Gaskiya Corporation Ltd, Zaria, Nigeria, 1983, pp. 1-14

³⁹. M. Othman, “*Assassination in the Third World*”, in A. Essien-Ibok, (ed.), *Political Repression & Assassination- A Tribute to the Late Dr Bala Mohammed*, Gaskiya Corporation Ltd, Zaria, Nigeria, 1983, pp. 25-27

⁴⁰. *New Nigerian* (Newspaper) 16/08/1983, p.12

⁴¹. Danlami Jos, (Interview) 18/12/2018

outside Nigeria.⁴² NPN government oppressed both the *Talakawa* and the opposition during its reign in the period 1979-1983 as a result of party differences. This highhandedness was perpetrated only on the opposition. Had it been the majority leader of Borno State House of Assembly was a member of NPN, the Federal Government would not have used its apparatus of coercion to deport him. It is on the basis of such despotic attitudes by the ruling NPN that the polity was heated. In other words, this ugly party politics coupled with issues of corruption and harsh economic situation culminated in the fall of the Second Republic.

In Kano State, an unhealthy intra-party politics resulted to a series of political authoritarianism after the emergence of Sabo Bakin Zuwo as Kano State Governor in 1983. H. Wakili demonstrates how Bakin Zuwo reversed PRP programmes in the State. For instance, after PRP came into power in 1979 Governor Abubakar Rimi created three more emirates in the state, which were dissolved by Bakin Zuwo in 1983. Moreover, a number of civil servants who were suspected to be Rimi's supporters were dismissed or compulsorily retired from service. In sum, the short-lived tenure of Sabo Bakin Zuwo was characterised by a complete reversal of every conceivable achievement and policy of Rimi. This intra-party politics remained a source of division within the PRP group, such that the NRC, which is the *right wing* political party, won gubernatorial election in the Third Republic.⁴³ The paper would not discuss deeply because its limitation in the themes that ended the Second Republic.

In Kaduna State where Balarabe Musa of PRP won the governorship election of 1979, the won 64 seats while the NPN won only 16 seats out of 99 seats. This gave the NPN an impetus to impeach Balarabe Musa as a governor claiming that he refused to constitute his cabinet as enshrined in Nigerian constitution. Conversely, Balarabe had actually submitted his commissioner nominees list time and again to the House of Assembly which was dominated by the NPN, but the House refused to screen and confirm the nominees insisting that NPN members must form part of the cabinet which the governor also disagreed on the basis of political ideology and his prerogative to nominate the cabinet members. NPN was all out to clip the wings of the PRP and GNPP in Nigeria being the major threats to the success of the former in 1983 election. The three months period after the 1983 election was therefore characterised by political turmoil in most parts of the country.

Just like the old headquarters of the North-east Region (Borno State), the old headquarters of Northern Region (Kaduna State) and the biggest State in Nigeria (Kano State) which were engulfed in political upheaval brought about by unhealthy party politics, the Western Region was also in dissonance and political turmoil. A good number of states in the South-South and South-East regions were now won by the NPN and thereby depriving the opposition parties access to public treasury at both Federal and State levels- a crisis hard to manage. Babarinsa opines that the political crisis of the Western region was a force to reckon with. The *Wild-Wild-West*⁴⁴ of the First Republic transited to the Second Republic. The Western region being the strong hold of the UPN was overwhelmed by ugly intra-party politics in all the states- Lagos, Oyo, Ogun and Ondo. By 1982 Obafemi Awolowo began to lose full control of the party. As the gubernatorial nomination of the UPN drew closer, men and women of interest began to heat the political atmosphere in all the UPN states including Bendel State. Candidates who vied for governorship

⁴². Usman, Y. B., (ed.), *Political Repression in Nigeria Volume I, A Selection of Basic Documents 1979-1981*, Gaskiya Corporation Ltd, Zaria, Nigeria, 1982, p. xiii

⁴³. Wakili, Haruna, *The Phenomenon of Revolts & Riots in Kano 1893-1995: An Historical Perspective*, PhD Thesis, Bayero University, Kano, 1997, pp. 102-105

⁴⁴. Bello, M. A., *Party Politics & the First Military Coup... op. cit.*, pp. 238-239

seats vehemently protested against automatic nomination of UPN incumbent governors. This further deepened the internal crisis of Awolowo's UPN.

The governor of Ondo State Adekunle Ajasin and his Deputy Akin Omoboriowo were in constant disagreement towards the end of their tenure (1979-1983), such that the later succeeded in pushing out the former from the governorship position. Akin Omoboriowo defected to NPN and managed to win the 1983 general election which was followed by riots. During the riot, FEDECO office and 16 vehicles including police Landover were burnt to ashes. One policeman was killed. NPN party men and many Federal Government buildings were also attacked.⁴⁵ In Oyo State, Bola Ige was not Awolowo's preferred candidate during the gubernatorial nomination of 1979. Awolowo had favoured Archdeacon Alayande, and therefore, continued to have disagreement with Bola Ige. Trouble was also looming in Ogun State where Onabanjo was governor. Olusoji Odunjo had lost to Olabisi Onabanjo during the party's nomination in 1979 and this political rivalry continued to linger. Busari Adelakun was also a thorn in flesh to governor Bola Ige of Oyo State. The former accused the later for holding meeting with Olusegun Obasanjo, who was regarded as enemy of the UPN that worked against his fellow Yoruba men during the 1979 general election and handed over power to Shehu Shagari of the NPN.⁴⁶ In Bendel State, Ambrose Alli who was the governor under the platform of the UPN had had personal disagreement with Obafemi Awolowo for a number of reasons. One, Ambrose Alli was not Awolowo's favoured candidate during the 1979 party nomination. Two, Awolowo advised Ambrose that the State burial of the later's mother which was funded by Bendel State treasury was unfair, but Ambrose insisted that he did not do anything immoral.

Albeit, Awolowo supported the UPN governors for an automatic re-nomination, with a view to strengthening his party for the battle against the ruling NPN, but that did not yield the desired result. By 1983, of the five UPN governors, only Lateef Jakande of Lagos and Olabisi Onabanjo of Ogun States returned elected. NPN took over Bendel, Oyo and Ondo States.

The 1983 Military Coup and the fall of the Second Republic in Nigeria

Karl Maier denotes that the 1983 elections were characterised by violence, rigging and bribery. The NPN gave a free rein to a no-holds-barred campaign to transform Nigeria to a one-party system state, which the electoral umpire and judiciary could not resist. General Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida put it thus: *we in the military waited for an opportunity... we don't intervene when we know the climate is not good for it or the public will not welcome it.*⁴⁷ Military interference and the consequent usurpation of political power from civilians is not a new episode in the Third World.⁴⁸ The military had tasted power after its intervention in 1966 and accumulated wealth as Max Siollun,⁴⁹ Ibrahim Braji⁵⁰ and other scholars demonstrate. After a series of protests, petitions, and complaints of economic hardships against the ruling NPN after the 1983 elections continued, one of the consequences that followed was the military coup. The military waited for the society to express social discontent and frustration before any intervention. Politicians under the banners of PRP, GNPP, UPN and NPP who were the major opposition parties felt relegated to the background as NPN swept most of the states during the 1983 gubernatorial election. The

⁴⁵. D. Babarinsa, *op. cit.*, pp.2-10

⁴⁶. *Ibid*, pp. 110-116

⁴⁷. Karl Maier, *This House Has Fallen*, Spectrum Books Ltd, Nigeria, 2000 pp. 58-59

⁴⁸. Braji Ibrahim, *The Nigerian Military: Origins, Politics & Capital Accumulation*, University Press Ibadan, Nigeria, 2014, p. 67

⁴⁹. Siollun Max, *Oil, Politics & Violence: Nigeria's Military Coup Culture (1966-1976)*, Algora Publishing, New York, 2009, pp. 51-203

⁵⁰. Braji, *op. cit.*, pp. 63-132

fortunes of the opposition to empower their supporters through employments, contracts, scholarship and so many other benefits dwindled.⁵¹ The opposition therefore, resorted to criticisms and within ninety days of NPN's second tenure at the centre, the party lost popularity. As A. D. Yahaya points out, the Second Republic was evacuated by the military in the midst of disagreement following the 1983 elections, on accusations of the misappropriation of the public treasury and pervasive corruption in the operation of Shagari's administration.⁵² Shagari was put under *house arrest* and some of his cabinet members were either jailed or exiled.⁵³ This paper views the Second Republic as a popular government at the beginning of its *first term*, but unpopular towards the end of the *first term* and beginning of the *second term* and also suffered from what P. Wilmot termed as *the absence of legitimacy*.⁵⁴ These unhealthy inter and intra party politics culminated in the 31st December, 1983 military coup in Nigeria which ended the Second Republic in Nigeria.

Conclusion

The paper reappraises the Second Republic in Nigeria which began with the formation of five political parties, namely: NPN, UPN, NPP, GNPP and PRP. In National Assembly elections of 1979, the NPN had the majority. The presidential election of 1979 led to the emergence of Shehu Shagari, the NPN candidate as the first elected president of Nigeria; as against Aminu Kano, PRP candidate; Waziri Ibrahim, GNPP candidate; Obafemi Awolowo, UPN candidate and Nnamdi Azikwe, NPP candidate. In 1979, Joseph Wayas and Edwin Ume Ezeoke were elected as Senate President and Speaker respectively. Shagari was returned as elected president in 1983 with majority of the national assembly NPN members. Shagari's administration was truncated as a result of military coup on 31st December, 1983 brought about by unhealthy inter and intra party politics, largely the crises in Kano, Kaduna, Borno, Lagos, Oyo, Ogun and Bendel States.

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⁵¹ M. A. Bello, *Party Politics & Democracy in Northern Nigeria... op cit*, pp. 210-215

⁵² Yahaya A. D, *op. cit.*, p.13

⁵³ https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Second_Nigeria_Republic Retrieved on 18/12/2018

⁵⁴ P. Wilmot, *In Search of Nationhood- The Theory & Practice of Nationalism In Africa*, Lantern Books, Ibadan, Nigeria, 1979, p.60, also see William D. Graf, *"Nigerian New Year's Coup of December 31st, 1983: A Analysis*, in Journal of Black Studies, Volume 16. No: 1, 1985, pp. 21-45

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