

Conflict among the Nigerian Bourgeoisie and the Demise of the Second Republic

J. I. Dibua*

RÉSUMÉ. L'une des principales causes de la chute de la Deuxième République Nigériane réside dans la contradiction profonde entre la Constitution de 1979 et le caractère de la classe qui devait veiller à son application. L'indépendance et le patriotisme de la bourgeoisie sont une condition *sine qua non* pour une bonne application de la Constitution. Or, la bourgeoisie nigériane n'est pas indépendante, et la politique de la République était dominée par la bourgeoisie des affaires qui a un penchant marqué pour le capitalisme improductif. L'administration du pouvoir central par des membres de cette clique entraîna une grave crise économique du fait qu'ils cherchaient à s'approprier la plus-value qui revenait à l'Etat, d'où le conflit qui éclata entre eux. De plus, l'aggravation de la crise économique exacerba le conflit qui opposait la bourgeoisie des affaires aux producteurs capitalistes, au point que la bourgeoisie nigériane frisa l'auto-destruction. C'est le coup-d'Etat militaire du 31 Décembre 1983 qui l'en épargna. Cependant, les militaires, auteurs du coup-d'Etat, prirent parti pour les producteurs capitalistes. Néanmoins, une crise intra-bourgeoise persiste. La solution à la crise économique du Nigéria réside dans la réforme du système suivant les principes socialistes.

Introduction

On the 1st of October, 1979 when the military oligarchic faction of the Nigerian bourgeoisie handed over power to the civilian factions, there were self-congratulations, euphoria and optimism among this class. It was believed that bourgeois democracy had at last come to stay. But within a period of four years, the oppressed classes (proletariats, Lumpen proletariats, market women, peasants, the unemployed and students) as well as the faction of the domestic bourgeoisie that believes in productive capitalism were dissatisfied with the civilian regime and desired its collapse. The crucial question that should be asked is, what went wrong? This paper is an attempt to answer the question. The thrust of our analysis is that in accounting for the collapse of the Second Republic, we should look at the nature of the 1979 constitution and the character of the class, that it was meant to serve.

It is argued that the dominance of the faction of the domestic bourgeoisie that believes in unproductive or commercial capitalism, worsened Nigeria's economic crisis. This resulted in the intensification of the intra-bourgeois crisis that plagued the Second Republic, so much so that the class almost destroyed itself. The coup of December 31, 1983 was therefore an attempt to save it from self destruction. But in carrying out the coup, the military sided

* Lecturer, Department of History, Bendel State University, Ekpoma, Nigeria.

with the faction of the bourgeoisie that believes in productive capitalism. However, the inability of this faction to replace the influence of the other faction, resulted in the overthrow of the Buhari regime in August 1985. Although the Babangida regime which succeeded it is trying to satisfy the competing factions of the Nigerian bourgeoisie, its advent again marks the relative ascendancy of the commercial capitalist. Given the limitations of the domestic bourgeoisie, it is posited that the credible way out of the country's economic quagmire is the marginalization of the bourgeoisie by fundamentally restructuring Nigerian society along socialist lines.

The 1979 Constitution as a Bourgeois Constitution

The 1979 constitution was a product of the Draft by the Constitution Drafting Committee (CDC), which was subsequently deliberated upon by the Constituent Assembly (CA). Essentially, the CA agreed with the main provisions of the Draft. In discussing the features of the constitution, therefore, one has to take note of the composition of the two bodies. Members of the CDC were not elected, but merely nominated by the military. All the fifty members belonged to sections of the domestic bourgeoisie. In fact about 80 per cent of the members belonged to the bureaucratic bourgeoisie, while the remaining 20 per cent was made up of the business - commercial bourgeoisie.

Members of the CA, were elected indirectly through their local government councils. This method of election made the body to be dominated by people from the propertied class. About three quarter of the total membership of the CA belonged to the business-commercial bourgeoisie, (Dudley; 1982). Given the composition of the CDC and CA, the 1979 constitution was logically a constitution drawn up by the bourgeoisie. Thus, the constitution was a product of a consensus between the bureaucratic bourgeoisie and the business-commercial bourgeoisie. It should also be noted that Murtala Mohammed (the then Head of State) while inaugurating the CDC in October 1975, virtually prescribed the Presidential variant of bourgeois-democratic government for Nigeria. Hence a minority report by Yusuf Bala Usman and Segun Osoba which recommended a socialist constitution for Nigeria was not brought before the CA for discussion.

The institutional structure of the Second Republic was therefore biased in favour of the bourgeoisie and thus against the interest of the peasants, proletariats, lumpen-proletariats, market women, the unemployed and students who in fact constituted the overwhelming majority of the population. A few examples can be used to substantiate this assertion. It was provided that before political parties could be registered, they must be 'broad based' in the form of having functioning, well staffed and furnished offices in at least thirteen states of the federation. Also, before contesting an election, a worker had to resign his job. Moreover, some election deposits were to be paid. The result was that of the over fifty political associations that applied

for registration as political parties in 1979, only five were approved by the Federal Electoral Commission (FEDECO).

All the five parties were led by frontline members of the domestic bourgeoisie. It is also significant to note that apart from the Unity Party of Nigeria (UPN), the other registered political Parties had their genesis in the CA. Dudley equally noted that of the nine members (excluding the President of the Republic and the nine Vice-Chairmen) who were the initial national officers of the National Party of Nigeria (NPN), no fewer than seven were members of the CA, and of the seven, four became Federal Ministers, one the Political Adviser to the President and the other two members of the National Assembly. As Ake (1984) rightly observed, the constitution effectively disenfranchised the subordinate classes, discouraging the political involvement of organized labour, and including conditions which ensured that only the wealthy or their surrogates could form political parties and contest elections. The only concession to democracy was the periodic ritual of voting.

Perhaps this bourgeois consensus can better be demonstrated by the use of the expression 'the federal character of Nigeria' which was defined as 'the distinctive desire of the people of Nigeria to promote national unity, foster national loyalty and give every citizen of Nigeria a sense of belonging to the nation, (Adamolekun, 1983). Thus 'federal character' was to be reflected in the appointment of:

Federal Ministers, Nigeria's permanent representatives overseas, chairmanship and membership of the boards of parastatals and public bodies set up under the constitution, judicial offices, commissioned and non-commissioned personnel of the armed forces, federal permanent secretaries and Presidential advisers (Dudly; 1982).

The above provisions which were clearly meant to satisfy the political and material interests of the bourgeoisie were seen as helping «to promote national unity, and also to command national loyalty thereby ensuring that there shall be no predominance of persons from a few states or from a few ethnic or other sectional groups in that government or in any of its agencies». Bourgeois unity was taken to be synonymous to national unity. This 'federal character' concept turned out to be one of the greatest sources of intra-bourgeois crisis in the Second Republic.

Implicit in the consensus over 'federal character' is the competition for offices, and therefore the resources controlled by incumbents. It is little wonder then that Adamolekun observed that the fundamental contradiction in the 1979 constitution, was the juxtaposition of consensual and competitive orientations as norms of political behaviour. This was further highlighted by the provision for multi-party system. Given the historical origin and character of the Nigerian bourgeoisie, it was inevitable that the competition over spoils of office should assume precedence over consensus. In fact the division and contradiction within the class made this a logical outcome. To a

very great extent, the amount of consensus exhibited during the process of constitution making was an attempt to convince the military that the civilian wing of the domestic bourgeoisie was matured enough to take over power. The most important consideration at that stage was the grabbing of power. It can then be argued that the consensus was at best a tenuous compromise that helped to conceal the division and conflict among the Nigerian bourgeoisie. To be able to appreciate this claim it is necessary to examine the historical development and nature of the class.

The Historical Development and Character of the Nigerian Bourgeoisie

The Nigerian bourgeoisies are products of colonialism. The colonial state required the services of Nigerians as clerks, teachers, interpreters, etc. It was therefore forced in its own interest to transfer certain skills and resources to these people. During the inter-war years when the colonial master relied more on the chiefs in colonial administration, this newly emergent class was trying to consolidate its position in order to be able to challenge the influence of the chiefs. But the conditions in Nigeria after the second imperialist war of 1939-1945 made the colonial government to ditch the chiefs and rely more on this set of people. Having been uprooted from their communities, these people came to live in urban centers. Since they were products of the colonial structure, they depended on the manipulation of that structure for survival. Yet their access to opportunities was on very unequal terms. This class as a result, perceived reality in terms of inherited inequality, blocked economic opportunities and social discrimination. It led to the desire to replace the colonial structure and fortunately, the new skills gave them some of the resources with which to attempt this.

Given the above situation, their 'nationalism' was opportunistic and petty bourgeois in nature. For one thing, the colonial state was in control of the economic surplus which was progressively enhanced by the exploitative activities of the marketing boards. In order to have access to the wealth of the state, one had to be in control of state power. The opposition of this class to colonialism, thus stemmed from the limits which it sought to impose upon their ability to acquire more of the available resources, (Brett; 1973).

Owing to the differential impact of colonialism on different sections of the country, and the weak material base of this class, the process of political decolonization witnessed a struggle among members for the control of state power. In this struggle, ethnicity and regionalism were brought into play so that the colonial power became the umpire and ensured that only political independence was achieved. The competition witnessed the manipulation of particularistic interests and sentiments among the poor, for self-aggrandizement. Thus political independence was negotiated in stages, with the least possible disruption of colonial institutions. It has therefore been observed that Nigeria produced no political martyrs, but successors. (D. Graf; 1983).

By 1960, the domestic bourgeoisie was predominantly composed of the business-commercial and the bureaucratic factions; with the former as the

most influential faction. Members of this faction, used their privileged position to accumulate the economic surplus that accrued to the state. They had allies in the bureaucratic bourgeoisie who nevertheless played subordinate role. It was the competition among them for the control of state power and hence for the resources available to the state that largely contributed to the demise of the First Republic.

The military rule gave opportunity to the bureaucratic bourgeoisie to accumulate surplus. Since the military was not experienced in the act of administration, they relied on these people for advice. The bureaucratic bourgeoisie used their newly acquired status to strengthen their own position. The incipient alliance that had been formed between the bureaucratic and the business-commercial bourgeoisie up to the eve of the civil war was strengthened by the civil war conditions. The exploitation of the civil war profiteering conditions united them in their common aspirations of appropriating the surplus that accrued to the state from the petroleum industry. But it should be noted that the power of formulating and implementing policies laid with the bureaucratic bourgeoisie and they only co-opted the business-commercial bourgeoisie in so far as the latter were prepared to accept their terms. Military intervention therefore resulted in a 'fractional shift' in the intra-bourgeois balance of power in favour of the bureaucratic faction, so that the business-commercial bourgeoisie became junior partners in the bourgeois coalition rather than co-determining principals.

The domestic bourgeoisie sought to establish areas of economic activity in which they would be protected from foreign competition, or in which foreign companies would have to operate through them. This was done through the 1972 Indigenization Decree which transferred ownership of some foreign enterprises to the indigenous bourgeoisie. The enterprises affected were in the sphere of small scale production and distribution, in which mainly the Lebanese had interest. Only a certain percentage of participation was required for large-scale enterprises which were mainly under the control of multinational corporations. The finance for either the takeover or for indigenous participation in these enterprises were provided by banks, now 40 per cent government-owned, by illegally gained wealth of the state-sponsored bourgeoisie and by employers of foreign companies who have been lent money by these firms to buy their shares at favourable prices. Civil servants were said to be among the main recipient of the bank loans. The military nursed and concretized the domestic bourgeoisie through the Indigenization Decree and by creating financial institutions that helped them to advance their economic interests. Ekuhware (1984) has observed that the indigenization policy did not only promote the ownership and control by the domestic bourgeoisie of the merchandising and small scale industrial enterprises but also promoted the ownership and control by the foreign bourgeoisie of highly state protected and subsidized and high-technology enter-

prises. Thus the dependence of the domestic bourgeoisie on foreign capitalists was further enhanced.

As was demonstrated by the Murtala Mohammed coup of July 1975, the accumulation of wealth was in the main restricted to the top echelon of the bureaucratic bourgeoisie and their allies among the business-commercial bourgeoisie. The Murtala Mohammed purge provided an opportunity for the younger elements of the domestic bourgeoisie to settle scores with the older generations that had largely benefitted from the previous accumulation of surplus. Thus former Federal and State Commissioners, Permanent Secretaries, Chief Executives and older Military Officers were publicly discredited and disgraced. The younger generation now proceeded to use their privileged position to accumulate wealth. One can therefore say that there was division and in-fighting among the domestic bourgeoisie which was a product of the relative access of the different factions and groups to the surplus that accrued to the state.

The military regime therefore brought power and influence to the bureaucratic bourgeoisie. They did not only replace politicians in government but also assumed public posture which presented them as the legitimate representatives of their localities. They spoke and acted on behalf of the areas they came from on vital political, economic and educational issues such as regional interests, state creation, revenue allocation, industrial location and the quota system into government offices. Having built for themselves secure economic base, they proceeded to the local level to buy traditional titles, and build political bases through patronage and personal promotions of individuals, (Yahaya; 1985). The military therefore continued and in fact encouraged the process of primitive accumulation. It is hardly surprising that corruption which is an integral part of a dependent and decadent capitalism became the order of the day. It can be argued that the military failed to provide the conditions necessary for the establishment of a bourgeois democratic rule which was supposedly inaugurated in 1979.

Intra-Bourgeois Conflict and the Demise of the Second Republic

As a result of the prominent role of the bureaucratic bourgeoisie under the military, they inevitably had to constitute the majority in the CDC. But when it came to indirect election into the CA, they were out-done by the older generation of business-commercial bourgeoisie. It has been argued earlier on that the 1979 constitution was a product of a consensus between factions of the Nigerian bourgeoisie and that within this consensus was a latent conflict. This will become apparent when we discuss the role of the domestic bourgeoisie in the Second Republic. It suffices here for one to reiterate the fact that the constitution was a bourgeois one.

For a bourgeois democracy to be successful, an independent and nationalistic bourgeoisie is a necessity. But as we have seen, this was not the case in Nigeria. The bourgeois class did not only have a weak material base but was also dependent and parasitic. This was the major contradiction in the Nige-

rian State system - a contradiction which contributed in no small measure to the collapse of the Second Republic. To make up for the situation, members embarked on primitive accumulation, that is, «the use of legal and physical coercion to accumulate surplus and to institutionalize capitalism», (Ake; 1982). However, most of the accumulated surplus was not translated into productive ventures which would have gone a long way to establish a sound material base for the domestic bourgeoisie. This fundamental contradiction which played a great role in the collapse of the First Republic, is equally crucial in understanding the demise of the Second Republic.

In the formation of political parties in 1978/79, the different factions of the domestic bourgeoisie found themselves coming together in the different parties. The contradiction inherent in such a situation was largely responsible for the series of intra-class feuds that bedeviled the Second Republic. It is necessary here to examine the composition of the political parties. The NPN was made up of feudal elements, business-commercial bourgeoisie, and the bureaucratic bourgeoisie. The struggle in the party was one between a coalition of the feudal elements and the business-commercial bourgeoisie on the one hand, and the bureaucratic bourgeoisie on the other hand. The former had the advantage of experience and time in which they did grassroot campaigns. The nomination of Shagari as Presidential candidate gave them an ascendancy. Their position was reinforced by gaining more gubernatorial and senatorial nominations. Thus a coalition that was strongly disposed towards unproductive capitalism became dominant. For them capital came «less from productive activity than the manipulation of social status and political power», (Ake; 1982).

A group of younger elements of the bureaucratic bourgeoisie who were dissatisfied with the ascendancy of the other faction within the NPN, and some young radicals, rallied round Aminu Kano to form the Peoples Redemption Party (PRP). An alliance was formed with remnants of Aminu Kano's old Northern Elements Progressive Union (NEPU) supporters who could not fit into the new political arrangement where wealth and western educational achievements were the major criteria, (Yahaya; 1985). The marriage was therefore that of convenience and turned out to be uneasy. The composition of the PRP was predominantly petty bourgeois even though it contained a significant group of young radicals.

The Nigerian Peoples Party (NPP) was made up mainly of the petty bourgeoisie. Ake (1982) described them as the 'lower bourgeoisie', that thrived on commerce, contracts and political access. As a result it is not noted for strong passions or ideological purity, and its loyalty is fitful. The Great Nigerian Peoples Party (GNPP) revolved round a leader, Ibrahim Waziri, who is a strong member of the business-commercial bourgeoisie. But the majority of the members belonged to the petty bourgeois class.

The core leadership of the UPN were strong members of the business-commercial bourgeoisie. The leadership in fact came close to being a bour-

geoisie in the orthodox sense for it had a fairly well established base in commerce and industry. By its economic nature, it was more disposed to discipline, efficiency and productive capitalism (orthodox accumulation). Even though the majority of the members belonged to the bureaucratic bourgeoisie, the efficiency of the organization of the party and the fact that most of them had strong loyalty to Obafemi Awolowo helped to minimize internal dissensions.

One significant development in the Second Republic is that the political parties that experienced the greatest amount of internal crises which were mostly caused by disagreement over co-operation with the NPN and therefore access to political power and wealth were those in which the petty bourgeoisie were predominant. Hence the NPP quickly reached an accord with the NPN after agreement had been reached on how to share offices, which resulted in the appointment of NPP members as Federal Ministers, and to positions in Federal Government's corporations and parastatals.

The breakdown of the accord in 1981 was as a result of what the NPP saw as discrimination in the award of contracts, import licences and the distribution of offices, while the NPN accused the NPP of ingratitude, deceit, greed and blackmail.

It is equally significant to observe that even when the accord came to an end, two NPP Ministers and some of its federal legislators did not agree with the decision. Subsequently, Senator Anah formed a break-away faction of the NPP. In fact Ishaya Audu, then Minister for External Affairs, argued that it would be suicidal for him to resign his appointment since he had no other job to fall back to. He, therefore, resigned from the NPP after expressing displeasure with the party for breaking the accord. His acceptance of NPN's offer to continue as Minister suggests that what was more important to him was the material benefits that accrued to him as a result of the ministerial appointment. Even before the break-down of the accord, some prominent NPP members like retired Brigadier Benjamin Adekunle and Chief Okoi-Obuli a Federal Minister, had decamped to the NPN. It should also be noted that the group that championed the breakdown of the accord were led by the three NPP Governors whose access to wealth and patronage was guaranteed by the control of state power.

Even then it has to be pointed out that the NPP leadership was not originally genuinely interested in breaking the NPN/NPP accord. The six months notice that was served by NPP in July 1981 was meant to serve as a threat for getting more material benefits from the NPN. One of the terms of the accord was that any of the party that intended to terminate it had to give the other party a six-month notice. The NPP leadership calculated that the period would be used to secure more benefits from the NPN. To their chagrin, the NPN chairman, A. M. A. Akinloye called off the NPP's bluff by waiving the notice and terminating the accord with immediate effect. This prompted Nnamdi Azikiwe the Presidential candidate of the NPP in the

1979 election, to accuse Akinloye of lacking the political acumen to interpret the six-month notice as a cooling device that was to enable both parties to re-determine the need for fence mending. He added that the notice was open to «conditional negotiated settlement». (Okpu; 1985).

There were similar occurrences in the PRP and the GNPP: The PRP did not enter into an accord with the NPN in 1979 largely because of the influence of the young radicals who incidentally were led by Balarabe Musa the Governor of Kaduna State and Abubaka Rimi the Governor of Kano State. But with time, a group of PRP legislators led by Sarbo Bakin Zuwo together with Sam Ikoku the Secretary-General of the party, started advocating for cooperation with the NPN. This was strongly opposed by Musa and Rimi who on the other hand favoured the coming together of the other four political parties to form the Progressive Parties Alliance (PPA). This alliance was to oppose the NPN. But Aminu Kano who was against the formation of political alliances, was opposed to the PPA. Okpu has advanced two other reasons for Aminu Kano's attitude. The first is that he was influenced by the experience of his former party, NEPU, with the National Convention of Nigerian Citizens (NCNC) during the First Republic. Between 1954 and 1964, NEPU formed an alliance with the NCNC, yet when after the 1959 election the NCNC decided to form an alliance with the Northern Peoples Congress (NPC), it did not consult NEPU thereby leaving its leadership in the cold. He saw this same opportunistic traits with the NPP (generally regarded as the offspring of the NCNC) and so was not prepared to join any alliance that included the party. Secondly, that Aminu Kano's earlier association with the NPN probably made him more disposed to the party than the PPA. Nevertheless, Zuwo and Ikoku managed to secure his support and this resulted in a split in the PRP into the Michael Imoudu faction and the Aminu Kano faction.

The strong influence of Wiziri Ibrahim initially prevented the GNPP from forming an alliance with the NPN. As happened in the PRP it was a group of federal legislators led by Mahmud Waziri that championed the cause of cooperation with the NPN. This again resulted in a split in the party.

A pattern that can be deciphered from these intra-party conflicts is that the anti accord group were usually led by State Governors who had access to state power and therefore patronage, while the pro accord group were usually led by Federal Legislators, who wanted patronage from the NPN federal government. No thanks to the revenue allocation formula which gave a greater chunk of the country's revenue to the federal government. The important consideration was therefore the material gain of the individuals involved. Closely related to the above is the fact that many states and even the Federal Government witnessed controversies and disagreement between legislators and members of the executive, with the former claiming that the latter was using the control of state power to amass wealth. It was particular-

ly more pronounced in states like Bendel, Kwara and Kaduna where the governors did not command overwhelming majority in the legislature.

Even the legislators saw their position as a source of primitive accumulation. The first thing they did was to vote lucrative salaries for themselves - ranging from 25,000.00 Naira for the President of the Senate to 14,000.00 Naira for a member of the House of Representatives. This in a country where the highest paid person in public sector earned 15,000.00 Naira. Moreover, they lucrative fantastic amount for themselves as car loans. It is significant to note that legislators from all the political parties agreed with these decisions. Even though the contract board of the National Assembly was empowered to award contracts not exceeding 150,000.00 Naira within a period of four years, it had awarded contracts totalling 20 Millions Naira. When the board sat for contract awards, its Secretary was barred from attending.

Given the dominance of the business-commercial faction of the domestic bourgeoisie, emphasis was laid on the award of contracts and the issuing of import-licences. The 'Green Revolution' and the housing policy of the NPN Federal Government became a veritable gold mine for members of this parasitic class. The masses for whose benefit they were supposedly meant only read about them in the papers. Corruption became the order of the day. The struggle for contracts was such that it even resulted in division within the NPN. The main reason why a group of Yoruba politicians opposed the re-election of Adisa Akinloye as the chairman of the NPN in 1982, was that he did not use his position to influence the award of contracts to them. This made Akinloye to publish a list of multi-million Naira contract awards given to those who were seeking to depose him for 'relegating Yorubas to the background'. Moreover, the resentment of this group was alleged to have had its foundation in the 1981 cabinet reshuffle in which Yoruba Ministers were dropped from what were seen as more lucrative ministries. Closely related to this is the fact that an important source of intra-bourgeois dispute was over the interpretation and implementation of the term 'federal character'. Some politicians argued that their ethnic groups did not get their fair share in the distribution of offices.

It is within the context of this commercial or unproductive capitalism, that the economic crisis which the State faced can be appreciated. The situation becomes clearer when it is realized that in 1979 when the civilian regime came to power, the nation's external reserve stood at about 5 billion Naira, but by the end of 1983 when the regime was overthrown, it had fallen to a mere 0.9 billion Naira. Also while the total crude oil sale in Nigeria between 1959 and 1983 was 79 billion Naira, the period between 1979 and 1983 accounted for 43.6 billion Naira, that is 55.2 per cent of the total amount from oil. Yet by the end of 1983, Nigeria's external debt stood at about 20 billion Naira.

As the economic crisis deepened, there was a struggle between the business-commercial faction and the capitalist producers faction of the domestic bourgeoisie. While the capitalist producers which included retired army Generals who had become capitalist farmers, like Olusegun Obasanjo (Head of State between February, 1976 and October, 1979) and Shehu Yar'Adua (his Second in Command for the same period), called for austerity measures and the ban on the importation of certain items like fresh and frozen chicken as a way of solving the economic crisis, the comprador elements were opposed to these measures which would make it difficult for them to accumulate wealth. On the contrary, they urged Nigeria to leave OPEC so that the country would be able to increase oil exports, (Turner and Badru; 1985). The business-commercial bourgeoisie therefore resorted to the use of coercion as a means of retaining itself in power. By using force, it could no longer disguise exploitation as fair exchange but rather exposed it as naked coercion. The result was that legitimacy receded to the background thereby making way for relations of raw power and the perception of right to be co-extensive with might (Ake; 1982).

The increasing delegitimization of the NPN Federal Government made the comprador elements undermine the formality of voting that had, in the first place, been grudgingly granted the masses. This was demonstrated by the 'electoral coup' of 1983. In frustration, sections of the Nigerian populace particularly in Ondo and Oyo States resorted to acts of arson and rebellion which were forcefully suppressed. This meant that the government had virtually abdicated power to its coercive arm. In relying heavily on force, the regime initiated its own displacement by its coercive institutions. The military coup was therefore a defensive one which saved the Nigerian bourgeoisie from self destruction. In carrying out the coup the military sided with the section of the bourgeoisie that sought to promote capitalist production in Nigeria. Thus the collapse of the Second Republic was principally caused by a realignment of the power structure within the domestic bourgeoisie in favour of the capitalist producers.

Conclusion

In this paper, we have sought to demonstrate that the crucial factor in explaining the collapse of the Second Republic was the fundamental contradiction between the 1979 constitution and the character of the class that operated it. The primitive accumulation tendency that was displayed by majority of the Nigerian bourgeoisie did not only unleash unhealthy rivalry for the control of state power, but also plunged the state into economic crisis. A crisis which threatened to destroy the domestic bourgeoisie. The intervention of the military wing of the bureaucratic bourgeoisie has for now prevented this class from self-destruction.

But the intra-bourgeois crisis was shifted to the military. The Muhammadu Buhari regime which was installed in January 1984, sought to promote productive capitalist relations in Nigeria. This could not be, given the dominant

position of the business-commercial bourgeoisie. The outcome was a realignment within the military oligarchy which resulted in the Ibrahim Babangida coup of August 1985.

Although Babangida's regime is trying to maintain a delicate balance between the competing factions of the domestic bourgeoisie by granting them access to state power and hence, resources, the ascendancy of market forces in Nigeria's political economy, marks the dominance of the business-commercial bourgeoisie. The contradiction inherent in such a situation, is bound to set in motion some other forces that would affect the tenure of the regime.

However, given the dominance of the business-commercial faction of the domestic bourgeoisie, the only way the capitalist producers can gain ascendancy is to form an alliance with the oppressed classes of peasants, workers, lumpen proletariats, market women, the unemployed and students. But as have been observed by Turner and Badru, the fact that such an alliance constitutes a threat to the dominance of the bourgeois class would likely prevent its emergence. The alternative therefore, is to marginalize the bourgeoisie by effecting a fundamental restructuring of the society along socialist lines. The worsening economic crisis is bound to resolve the situation in favour of the oppressed classes.

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