

GST 113

NIGERIA PEOPLES & CULTURE

Sarah AJIYA
Cordelia CLAYTON
Tobi JOHNSON
Dinatu B. TANKO
Felix ODOFIN
Cynthia M. SAIDU

[© 2019]



LESSON 10

THE DYNAMICS OF THE EVOLUTION OF NIGERIA AS A POLITICAL UNIT II

Nigeria Post-Independence

On October 1, 1960, Nigeria gained independence from Britain. An all Nigerian Executive was headed by a Prime Minister, Alhaji Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa. On November 16, 1960, Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe, became the first indigenous Governor-General of Federation of three regions of the North East and West, with Lagos as the Federal Capital. Each of the regions was headed by a Premier with a Governor as ceremonial head. On October 1, 1963, Nigeria became a Federal Republic and severed whatever ties were let with Britain. Nigeria decided, however, to remain in the British Commonwealth of Nations. The Governor-General's position was, therefore, designated as President.

In January 1966, a group of army officers, led by Major Chukwuma Nzeogwu overthrew the central and regional governments, killed the Prime Minister, and tried to take control of the government in a failed coup d'état. Nzeogwu was countered, captured and imprisoned by Gen. Johnson Aguiyi-Ironsi. General Aguiyi-Ironsi was named Military Head of State.

In July 1966, a group of northern army officers revolted against the government, killed General Aguiyi-Ironsi, and appointed the army chief of staff, General Yakubu Gowon as the head of the new military government. In 1975, Gen. Yakubu Gowon was deposed via a bloodless coup and General Murtala Muhammed became the Head of the Federal Military Government of Nigeria until his assassination in 1976. In 1976, Gen. Olusegun Obasanjo was made head of state in a meeting of the Supreme military Council. Keeping the chain of command established by Murtala Muhammed in place.

In 1979, Nigeria adopted a constitution that was modeled on the constitution of the United States, with provision for a President as (unicephalous executive head), and a Federal bi-cameral legislature (Senate and House of Representatives). In October 1979, after more than 13 years of military rule, Nigeria was returned to democratic rule. The National Party of Nigeria (NPN) emerged victorious in the Presidential election and Alh. Shehu Shagari was elected President.

On December 31, 1983, the military overthrew the second republic. Major General Muhammadu Buhari emerged as the Chairman of the Supreme Military Council and the new Head of State. In August 1985, General Buhari government was peacefully overthrown by the then Army chief of Staff Major general Ibrahim Badamosi Babangida. Gen. Babangida became the Military President and Chairman Armed Forces Ruling Council. In August 1993, Gen. Babangida 'stepped aside' and chose an interim government headed by Chief Ernest Shonekan as Interim President. In November 1993, Gen. Sani Abacha seized power from Shonekan and became Head of State and Chairman Provisional Ruling Council. On June 8, 1998 Gen. Abacha died at the presidential villa, Abuja and Maj. Gen. Abdulsalami Abubakar became Head of State and Chairman PRC.

In May 1999, Maj. Gen. Abdulsalami ‘stepped down’ and Olusegun Obasanjo was elected civilian President. Obasanjo served two terms in office and on 29 May 2007, Umaru Musa Yar’Adua was sworn-in as President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. President Yar’Adua died on 5 May 2010, and Vice President Goodluck Jonathan was sworn-in as President on 6 May 2010. On May 29, 2015, Muhammadu Buhari was first sworn-in as civilian President. Muhammadu Buhari was sworn-in a second time as a civilian President on May 29, 2019 for a second and final term which should end in 2023.