

CHAPTER FIVE

PROFESSIONAL BODIES (OTHER THAN LEGAL) AND CIVIL SOCIETY GROUPS

5.0. INTRODUCTION

5.0.1 In reporting on the human rights violations and abuses that occurred during the mandate period, the Commission considered whether or not professional associations and other civil society groups had contributed to the violation or the protection of individual human rights. The scope of this chapter is restricted to the activities of the Association of Recognised Professional Bodies (ARPB), as well as those voluntary and/or political associations that had an impact on the human rights landscape. Consequently, the Commission did not study all political parties, nor all civil society groups ever formed in Ghana. The groups concerned are professional bodies (other than legal) and other civil society groups.

5.0.2 The Commission believes that a study of the activities of these movements during the mandate period would enable the nation appreciate their importance in the socio-political history of Ghana; be provided with the reasons for change or continuity in these movements; understand why the movements underwent a transformation or ceased to exist altogether, and above all assess their impact on the development or otherwise of a culture of respect for human rights.

5.0.3 This chapter is in two sections: reflecting the two sectors that were studied under the title of this chapter. Part I covers the activities of the professional bodies as they were grouped under the rubric of the ARPB, and other civil society groups with influence over, or interest in national politics. Part II covers civil society in general, as well as groups that operated in the political arena during the mandate period. These were also of two types: (1) the groups such as political parties, formed for the purpose of securing political power; and (2) the others which were formed for other purposes although they became involved in the political struggles of the country.

5.0.3.1 The Political Parties and Groupings: United Gold Coast Convention (UGCC); Convention Peoples Party (CPP); The Ghana Congress Party (GCP) National Liberation Movement (NLM); Moslem Association Party (MAP); Northern Peoples Party (NPP); Togoland Congress; Anlo Youth Association; *Ga Shifimo Kpee*; United Party (UP) National Alliance of Liberals (NAL); Progress Party (PP); Peoples Movement for Freedom and Justice (PMFJ); Third Force; Front For The Prevention of Dictatorship; Togoland Liberation Movement and National Liberation Movement of Western Togoland; Movement on National Affairs (MONAS); Peoples Revolutionary League of

VOLUME 4 CHAPTER 5

Ghana (PRLG); Kwame Nkrumah Revolutionary Guards (KNRG); June Fourth Movement (JFM); People's Revolutionary League Of Ghana (PRLG); 31st December Women's Movement (DWM); Movement for Freedom and Justice (MFJ).

5.0.3.2 Legon Society on National Affairs; Trade Associations and Market Women's Associations.

5.0.4 This chapter highlights the mistreatment or otherwise of the groups, their leaders and other prominent activists, either because the patron-governments had been overthrown, or because their activities were a challenge to the sitting government. It also discusses the nature of the relationship between members and leadership of these movements and the governments they worked under, during the mandate period.

PART I**5.1 Introduction**

5.1.1 Apart from a few of these bodies such as the Ghana Medical Association (GMA), which was formed in 1958; Ghana Institute of Architects (GIA) formed in 1962; the Ghana Institution of Engineers (GhIE), formed in 1968; and Ghana Institution of Surveyors (GIS) in 1969, most professional associations were formed in the 1970s and later. From the available evidence, professional associations were formed for the primary purpose of promoting the interest of members of their respective professions.

5.1.2 In furtherance of the professional interest, most of them sought and obtained state recognition through appropriate legislation, which in some cases regulated their professional activities, including the maintenance of professional standards and ethics. It was upon the formation of the ARPB in the early 1970s, coupled with the speed and manner in which economic conditions deteriorated in the country, that changed the nature of interaction between the professionals, as organized under their associations, and the government.

5.2 **6TH MARCH, 1957–23RD FEBRUARY, 1966:**
CONVENTION PEOPLE'S PARTY (CPP) GOVERNMENT

5.2.1 Professional associations were not directly concerned with politics as a civic responsibility requiring them to show keen interest in the political fortunes of the country; and thereby availing themselves of the opportunity to make critical interventions when necessary. For them, any activity associated with political parties, politics and even governance, were not to be mixed with one's professional practice. Therefore, involvement in politics as a civic duty was not considered appropriate for a body of professionals. With the exception of the Ghana Bar Association (GBA), the professional associations that existed prior to the 1970s did not feature much in national affairs. For

VOLUME 4 CHAPTER 5

instance, the most momentous piece of legislation of the time, the Preventive Detention Act (PDA), 1958, that empowered the government to detain without trial, any person suspected of acts that might endanger the security of the state, did not elicit any public response from the registered professional bodies at the time, except for the GBA. Doctors and engineers did not see their vocations as entitling them to meddle in issues of governance, even though other groups outside the opposition parties, such as the churches, criticized the legislation.

**5.3 24TH FEBRUARY, 1966 – 30TH SEPTEMBER, 1969:
 NATIONAL LIBERATION COUNCIL (NLC)****5.3.1 The Formation Of Legon Society On National Affairs (LSNA)**

5.3.1.1 A few days after the 24th February coup d'état, a group of seventeen Ghanaian Senior Members of the University of Ghana were called together to form an organization that would mount guard over our patriotic interests and help preserve the coup. On 1st March, 1966, this body organised themselves in a spirit described above, into the Legon Committee on National Reconstruction. The committee's aims and objectives were simple: to help demolish the Nkrumah myth and to assist the NLC in every way possible, within the competence of the committee both as a body and as individuals:

A few weeks ago, one of the four sub-committees of the LCNR, the political, proposed to the main body the establishment of the committee's own organ, as one of the most practical ways – as well as an urgent one of giving assistance to the NLC. The Legon Observer is the result. We aim, through its columns, first, to give loyal support to the NLC.¹

5.3.1.2 This group, re-named the Legon Society on National Affairs (LSNA), played a human rights advocacy role through its mouthpiece, *The Legon Observer*. This was its official platform, although very often, it was individual members of the LSNA who protested human rights abuses by the NLC. During this period the official body of university teachers, University Teachers Association of Ghana (UTAG), confined itself to its trade union functions.

5.3.1.3 The LSNA made a “vow” to the nation that it was resolved “to give loyal support to the NLC” in its drive to consolidate freedom and democracy in the country. Though the LSNA was critical of certain NLC policies, its avowed opposition to the CPP compromised its ability to protest at the serious infringements on the human rights of CPP officials and activists.

5.3.1.4 Public opinion, even of enlightened persons, demanded punishment for the corrupt and “bad CPP officials”. These views supported the detention of CPP activists

¹ *Legon Observer*, 8th July, 1966 Vol. 1 No. 1 Editorial Comments.

VOLUME 4 CHAPTER 5

and functionaries, because such detentions were deemed to be necessary for the protection of society. There was also support for the confiscation of their properties allegedly acquired by corrupt means, in order that they would not be able to buy their way back into political power. The LSNA, as other intellectuals in the country, mounted open opposition to the NLC's policy of not seeking vengeance, and pacifying the nation in order to heal its wounds and unite it. Indeed, the former President of the GBA Victor Owusu, was the Attorney-General and Minister of Justice, when these laws were passed.²

5.4 **1ST OCTOBER, 1969 – 12TH JANUARY, 1972:
THE SECOND REPUBLIC – THE PROGRESS PARTY
(PP) GOVERNMENT**

5.4.1 There was no appreciable change in the activities of professional associations, although more and more groups began to initiate moves to organize themselves. Politics and issues of governance were still seen as the preserve of those within the professional classes, who had political ambitions.

**13TH JANUARY, 1972 – 3RD JUNE, 1979:
THE NATIONAL REDEMPTION COUNCIL (NRC)/
SUPREME MILITARY COUNCIL (SMC) I & II**

5.5 The NRC and SMC I

5.5.1 Involvement Of Professional Associations In Politics

5.5.1.1 The direct involvement of professional bodies in Ghanaian politics can be dated to the 1970s. In the 1970s, their engagement in politics became pronounced when the economy of the country began to show signs of collapse, as a result of misrule and mismanagement of the military rulers. The return of the country to constitutional or civilian rule became the dominant objective, obscuring any other concerns. Before this time, involvement in Ghanaian politics had been the province of individuals (professional or not) and private (non-professional) associations, who would comment on human rights issues selectively and periodically. In general the professional groups, whose members constituted the cream of Ghanaian society, showed the same attribute as the general population, in terms of the lack of appreciation of the intrinsic value of human rights, and of the need for commitment to defend and promote the enjoyment of human rights for all persons.

² The *Legon Observer* Vol. 1, No. 9, p.9, 1966.

VOLUME 4 CHAPTER 5**5.5.2 The Birth Of The Association Of Recognised Professional Bodies (ARPB)**

5.5.2.1 In 1977, SMC I regime, under Gen Acheampong, came under strong pressure to return the country to constitutional rule, and Gen Acheampong then introduced the concept of Union Government (Unigov) to which the professional associations took great exception. The Unigov idea was one in which the country was to be governed by representatives of the civilian population, the military and police. The professional associations came together to form the ARPB. The ARPB was formally incorporated on 20th May, 1981, although it had existed and functioned in the political arena since its birth in 1977.³

5.5.3 ARPB Begins To Oppose The Government

5.5.3.1 In June, 1977, the ARPB called on the government to resign and hand over power to an interim body to usher the country to a civilian rule, otherwise its members would resort to a strike action.⁴ On 4th July, 1977, the *Ghanaian Times* in its editorial comment appealed to the GMA to rescind its decision to embark on a strike action:

we had had the occasion to invite the ordinary people of this country to fight against and not to pander to the dangerous attempts by the Professionals to return this country to a class struggle. We now appeal to the Ghana Medical Association not to allow other professionals to hide behind the value of the doctor's service to the society to introduce politics into medical practice.⁵

5.5.3.2 Despite the hostility to the ARPB inherent in the appeal, members of the ARPB embarked on a nationwide withdrawal of services in protest against an inefficient and corrupt government on Monday, 6th July, 1977. The strikers called on the SMC Government to step down and until it did so, their services were to remain withdrawn.⁶ On the first day of the strike action, Gen Acheampong repealed the Professional Bodies Registration Decree, 1973 (NRCD 143), froze their assets and bank accounts under Professional Bodies Registration (Repeal) Decree, 1977 (SMCD 103), and put out a public statement to that effect.⁷

5.5.3.3 Prior to the repeal of the Professional Bodies Decree, there was a call by the Ashanti Youth Association (AYA) to repeal the Decree in June 1977. The AYA called on the SMC I Government to widen the scope of the Decree banning political parties to make it unlawful for one professional body to consult, discuss or act in concert with any other professional body, on political issues. In a statement signed by M T K Manu, the

³ Sam Okudzeto, "The role of association of Recognised Professional Bodies in the political Struggles of Ghana" in *Civil Society in Ghana* F.K. Drah and Mike Oquaye (eds) FES, Accra, 1996, p.109.

⁴ Mike Oquaye, *Politics in Ghana, (1972-1979)* Tornado Publications, Accra, 1980, pp. 58-59.

⁵ *Ghanaian Times* Vol. 6088 Monday, 4th July, 1977, p.4.

⁶ Oquaye, supra, p.58.

⁷ *Ghanaian Times* Vol. 6711 Saturday, 7th July, 1979, p.1.

VOLUME 4 CHAPTER 5

secretary, he contended that such measures had become necessary in view of the fact that some professional bodies had demonstrated clearly that they intended to rally together with a view to creating “monolithic professional bodies association” for the purpose of embarking on “general civil disobedience and other notorious political activities.”⁸ The newspapers published reports of comments from the general public that were critical of the ARPB,⁹ as well as events that showed that some professionals had not joined in the strike.¹⁰

5.5.4 The ARPB And The Unigov Campaign

5.5.4.1 On 12th October, 1977, the ARPB organized a seminar on the concept of Unigov at the Accra Community Centre. This seminar was broken up by government-sponsored thugs and many persons were assaulted. A Decree, the Union Government (Civil Proceedings) Decree, 1977 (SMCD 139), was passed to protect those who were involved in the assaults. It also prohibited any court from entertaining any civil action against anyone preaching or propagating the concept of Unigov, or for participating in, or attending any debate or discussion of the proposal of Unigov.¹¹

5.5.4.2 In 1977, in response to the campaign by the ARPB alleging corruption on the part of the SMC, the Prohibition of Rumours Decree, 1977 (SMCD 92) was passed. This decree provided as follows:

Any person who by print, writing, painting or word of mouth, publishes or reproduces any statement, rumour or report which is false or likely to disturb the public peace or to cause disaffection against the SMC or NRC among the public or among members of the Armed Forces or of the Police Force shall be guilty of an offence.

5.5.4.3 On 5th March, 1977, the *Ghanaian Times* wrote a scathing editorial, entitled: “The Korle-Bu Professors”, castigating the doctors for believing that they could hold the nation to ransom.¹² On 9th July, 1977, armed soldiers actually stormed the Korle Bu Teaching Hospital in a convoy of trucks and forcibly ejected doctors and their families from their homes. Many were physically assaulted. Some sustained serious injuries while soldiers burnt cars and other properties belonging to the doctors.¹³ Other members of the ARPB were harassed, trailed by security forces, and their telephones tapped.

5.5.4.4 Accusing some of the professionals of being agents of foreign powers, the government declared:

⁸ *Ghanaian Times* Vol. 6705 Friday, 30th June, 1977, p.1.

⁹ *Ghanaian Times* Vol. 6092 Friday, 8th July, 1977, p.1.

¹⁰ *Daily Graphic* Vol. 8310 Friday, 8th July, 1977, p. 1

¹¹ SMCD 139, section 2.

¹² *Ghanaian Times* Vol. 5,987 Saturday, 5th March, 1977 p.4.

¹³ Oquaye, supra, p. 59.

VOLUME 4 CHAPTER 5

... the Supreme Military Council is aware of the activities of some nation wreckers who are doing everything to bring confusion and unrest to our beloved nation. Within the past few weeks, some serious political developments have taken place in our country, which ought to be fully made known to you. The government became aware of the fact that some foreign powers, for reasons known to it, had funnelled huge sums of money to some irresponsible, over-ambitious, disgruntled and unpatriotic power seeking Ghanaians to be used to overthrow the government of the Supreme Military Council and to replace it with its lackeys. In pursuance of this objective, these same persons, using the masks of some lecturers of the nation's universities arrogated to themselves the role of the mouthpiece of the people to dictate terms to the government in the most arrogant and peremptory language.¹⁴

5.5.4.5 The ARPB later rescinded its decision and resumed work after receiving assurances from the government, giving a guarantee of protection from victimization and molestation of any of the members of the association who might have withheld their services.¹⁵ Many of the most eminent public figures had teamed up with the ARPB, the People's Movement for Freedom and Justice (PMFJ) and the Front for the Prevention of Dictatorship in order to oppose the Unigov proposal, which would have given the military a permanent stake in government.

5.5.4.6 In the crucial referendum of 30th March, 1978, Gen Acheampong was effectively humiliated, although the results that were announced after the Electoral Commissioner had been chased out of his office, indicated that Unigov had received massive endorsement by the citizenry. The results that were announced, did not reflect the real state of affairs, and agitations continued until, four months later, he was ousted in a "palace coup".

5.6 SMC II

5.6.1 On 5th July, 1978, Gen Acheampong was removed from power by his own colleagues on the SMC. He was replaced by General Frederick William Kwasi Akuffo as Chairman of SMC II and Head of State.¹⁶ The SMC II detained Gen Acheampong and also stripped him of his military rank and entitlements, declaring that he had now become a mere "Mr" Acheampong. He was also confined to his hometown, Trabuom in the Ashanti Region.¹⁷

5.6.2 The announcement declaring Gen Acheampong as "Mr. Acheampong", created strong resentment within civil society. Many people felt that it reflected the lack of

¹⁴ *Ghanaian Times* Vol. 6,094 Monday, 11th July, 1977, p.1.

¹⁵ *Daily Graphic* Vol. 8319 Tuesday, 19th July, 1977, p.1.

¹⁶ *Ibid.* p.29.

¹⁷ Armed Forces (Miscellaneous Provisions) Decree, 1979, (SMCD 235).

VOLUME 4 CHAPTER 5

respect that the military had for civilians, such that a penalty and a mark of disgrace, was to be a “mere ‘Mr.’”

5.6.3 The ARPB issued a statement in which it urged the government to prefer formal charges against “Mr” Acheampong and that he should be put before court without delay. The association also complained, that merely stripping “Mr.” Acheampong of the honours he bestowed on himself, and depriving him of his pension rights, were not enough punishment for the gross mismanagement that had taken place under his leadership.¹⁸ The government did nothing about this, until it was itself overthrown on 4th June, 1979.

5.6.4 The ARPB renewed its appeal to the government to restore the Professional Bodies Registration Decree, which was repealed by “Mr”. Acheampong. Consequently, the assets and bank accounts of the ARPB were defrozen by the Professional Bodies Registration (Repeal) (Amendment) Decree, 1978 (SMCD 171).

5.6.5 After some initial procrastination, the SMC set in motion a programme for a full return to civilian rule when the ARPB protested it’s concept of Transitional Interim National Government, arguing that it was just like the Unigov concept that they had opposed. Eventually, the government gave in, and constituted a Constituent Assembly, to draft a new Constitution for Ghana.

5.7 **4TH JUNE, 1979 – 23RD SEPTEMBER, 1979:**
ARMED FORCES REVOLUTIONARY COUNCIL (AFRC)

5.7.1 By 4th June, 1979, when the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC) assumed power, a transitional programme to restore constitutional rule in Ghana by the middle of July, 1979 had already been agreed by various political party leaders and the SMC II government, and even, elections had been slated for 18th June, 1979. From the standpoint of the political elite therefore, the coming of the AFRC was an unnecessary interruption of a process that they had already started. Despite initial fears, a sigh of relief greeted the decision of the AFRC to honour the transitional arrangements already put in place.¹⁹

5.7.2 The Ghanaian establishment was virtually oblivious to the tectonic shift that was taking place beneath its feet. One reason was that the successful campaign to drive the military from office actually appeared to vindicate ARPB leadership position. The ARPB did not, as a body, lend its support to the AFRC, although some of the members of the individual professional bodies participated actively in the governance activities of the AFRC.

5.7.3 During the June-September, 1979, period when the AFRC was in power, a number of atrocities were committed. In a meeting that took place between the political party

¹⁸ *Daily Graphic* Vol. 8880 Wednesday, 11th May, 1979.

¹⁹ *Ibid.* p.29.

VOLUME 4 CHAPTER 5

leaders and the AFRC, the politicians secured from the AFRC a firm promise to continue with the transitional programme to democratic rule, but nothing was said about the atrocities then taking place.

5.7.4 However, some political leaders, some workers groups and university students pledged open support, justified the “house-cleaning” exercise by the AFRC government, and called for its extension to other social sectors. However, there is no indication that the ARPB took a stand on any of the issues at stake.

5.7.5 In fact, what seemed to have happened during the AFRC period, was that the regime had support mostly from students and some members of the general public. From all over the country, individuals issued statements appealing to the general public to support the Revolution.²⁰ Many members of the ARPB were under fire, as they tended to be in senior positions in the public service. Indeed, there was a spate of resignations which caused the AFRC to issue a warning, and to insist that all letters of resignation were to be channelled through the AFRC for approval to be given, before the resignation would be accepted.²¹

5.7.6 When the AFRC government executed the former Heads of State and a number of Senior Military Officers, the *Daily Graphic* called it “a significant milestone”. There were no public protests from the ARPB, or any of its constituent bodies, except a statement issued by a group that called itself ‘Society for National Welfare’. The Society had issued a statement urging justice, fair play and the rule of law in the government’s effort to punish corrupt persons. In that statement, the Society also urged the AFRC not to abort the democratic process.

5.7.7 The AFRC government seized the assets of a large number of people; private houses were demolished, and special military tribunals were set up to try people alleged to have committed various crimes. Public opinion regarded the actions of the AFRC, as retribution for bad and corrupt leadership, and so tacitly supported them.

5.7.8 The short AFRC tenure graphically illustrated this lack of human rights culture that would move individuals and groups to struggle in defence of human rights. In other instances, the elites led the entire country to condone human rights violations. The leaders of the registered political parties, then engaged in electoral contest for power, were seemingly concerned more about securing the transition programme so that power would be transferred to one of them. The widespread human rights abuses that were committed by the AFRC appeared not to be their primary concern, until after the first round of the elections, when the top five political parties issued a joint statement expressing concern about the executions. They also urged the government to uphold the rule of law in all cases where a crime was alleged to have been committed.

²⁰ *Ghanaian Times*, Vol. 6,706 Monday, Monday, 2nd July, 1979, p.3; *Ghanaian Times*, vol. 6,722 Friday, July 20, 1979, p.3.

²¹ *Ghanaian Times*, Vol. 6,716 Friday, 13th July, 1979, p.1 “AFRC to approve resignations.”

VOLUME 4 CHAPTER 5**5.8 24TH SEPTEMBER, 1979 – 30TH DECEMBER, 1981
THE THIRD REPUBLIC PEOPLE’S NATIONAL PARTY
GOVERNMENT (PNP)**

5.8.1 The ARPB was functioning at a low level on account of the fact that the 1969 Constitution appeared to provide answers to the problems of governance to which it had committed itself. However, it continued to give advice on technical matters to the government. For instance, in 1980, it sent a memo to the Vice-President on the food situation in the country, and recommended action to be taken to address same.

5.8.2 On 20th May, ARPB Executive Council met with the Council of State on the security situation in the country. At this meeting, it advised the government on its handling of the Transitional Provisions as well as its attitude to the former Chairman of AFRC, advising the government to stop the “attempts to give Flt Lt Rawlings a bad name and allow him to settle down quietly into civilian life”.²²

**5.9 31ST DECEMBER, 1981 – 6TH JANUARY, 1993:
THE PROVISIONAL NATIONAL DEFENCE COUNCIL (PNDC)**

5.9.1 The Provisional National Defence Council (PNDC) came to power on 31st December, 1981, after a coup d’état led by Flt Lt Jerry John Rawlings, who became Chairman of PNDC and Head of State. There were human rights abuses during the PNDC era. People were assaulted, brutalized, maimed, imprisoned, abducted and killed. Others had their properties seized, vandalized or confiscated. In fact the PNDC period was a period of lawlessness, when the rule of law had completely broken down in the Ghanaian society, and citizens’ rights, freedom and liberties were thus taken away from them.

5.9.2 Under the PNDC, when some of the most heinous crimes were committed against fellow Ghanaians, the lack of a culture of human rights struggle, became very obvious. In 1982, resistance to the PNDC by the GBA²³ and ARPB was driven as much by the demand for the restoration of constitutional rule, as by a commitment to defend human rights, although the struggle was not couched in human rights language. Gross human rights violations took place, and were rampant. The murder of the three High Court Judges and a retired Army Officer, shook the rank and file of Ghanaian citizenry, as much because of the gruesome nature of the killings, as by the fact that Ghanaians deeply valued the sanctity of life. However, those horrendous acts could not ignite a movement to stop further human rights abuses, even though the protests and condemnations by the ARPB, religious and other civic bodies were loud and consistent.

²² Okudzeto, *supra*, p.113.

²³ *Daily Graphic* vol. 9709 Monday, 18th January, 1982, pp.4 & 5.

VOLUME 4 CHAPTER 5**5.9.3 ARPB's Struggles With The PNDC**

5.9.3.1 The ARPB began its struggle against the PNDC soon after it came to power. It began to issue statements, critical of various government policies which it felt to be against the interests of the Ghanaian public. On 21st July, 1982, the ARPB held a press conference at which it read a resolution which, among other things, urged the PNDC to hand over power to a "Government of National Unity", while making arrangements to return the country to a constitutionally elected government by 1983. On the state of the nation, the ARPB criticized the PNDC Government on the murder of the three High Court Judges and a retired Army Officer in the following words:

We wish to express our revulsion at the callous manner in which three eminent High Court Judges and a retired Army Officer were abducted from their houses on the night of the 30th of June 1982 and murdered and the attempt made to obliterate the evidence by burning their bodies.²⁴

Since the 31st December 1981, the law of the jungle has taken over a once decent and law abiding people of Ghana. Law and order has broken down and there is callous disregard for Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms.²⁵

5.9.3.2 The ARPB also called for a lifting of the curfew, because it had become a licence for killings and robbery, and condemned the destruction of the Army hierarchical structure by the introduction of the Defence Committee System into the Ghana Armed Forces. This criticism was promptly denounced by the *Daily Graphic*, which lambasted the ARPB for those views.²⁶ The June Fourth Movement (JFM) also condemned the statement as "waging a campaign against the democratic gains that the other ranks have acquired through the PDCs". The JFM also described the statement as "insulting to the workers of Ghana who are striving to organise themselves to effectively participate in the decision-making process of the country."²⁷ This statement elicited a comment from a columnist, perhaps conscious of the futility of press statements to restrain a military government:

This brings to mind a similar demand made of another military regime some five years ago by the same body. In 1977, the military regime "did not mind" the professionals, and there is little chance that the PNDC will hand over just because the professionals say so.²⁸

²⁴ *Daily Graphic* Vol.9846 Saturday, 3rd July, 1982, p.1.

²⁵ ARPB statement, 20th July, 1982.

²⁶ *Daily Graphic* Vol. 9862 Thursday 22nd July, 1982 editorial.

²⁷ *Daily Graphic* vol. 9864 Saturday 24th July, 1982, p.1.

²⁸ *The Legon Observer*, August 1982, No.8 Vol. XIV Editorial Comment.

VOLUME 4 CHAPTER 5

5.9.3.3 In reaction to the demand by the GBA and ARPB for the PNDC Government to hand over power in September, 1983, two groups, the People's Revolutionary League of Ghana (PRLG) and the JFM issued statements condemning them. The statements were signed by T. Kodjo Ababio Nubuor, the General Secretary of PRLG and Kwasi Adu, President of JFM, accusing the two associations and *The Echo* newspaper, of making efforts to negate the good intentions of the people's revolution. The statements further described the call to hand over power as:

one more attempt at the philosophy of restorationism, and they fell neatly into the framework of a well-thought out master plan, and an attempt to overthrow the revolution and restore the anti-people old order.

The most casual study of the demands made by the professionals point out clearly that they are underscored by a philosophy of restoration. We remember that well before the murder of the judges and the retired major, the professionals wrote various articles in "The Echo" claiming that certain revolutionary forces had planned to commit assassination of some people without ever indicating any concrete evidence to support their claims.²⁹

5.9.3.4 Following this statement, there was a workers' demonstration against the ARPB, whose members were described by the demonstrators as "Selfish yet vocal minority who call themselves men of distinction."³⁰ Other demonstrations in other parts of the country followed,³¹ and soon thereafter, *The Echo* was suspended from publication. A prominent engineer who was a PNDC appointee, Professor Mawusi Dake, criticized the ARPB in a feature article in the *Ghanaian Times* accusing the professionals of wanting to further their own political ambitions by calling for a government of National Unity

The professional bodies are asking for a government of national unity, which will take four years to restore the old institutions. But the same intelligent and supposedly efficient people, who obviously will man the government of national unity, have expected the PNDC, which is committed to building new structures in the face of an inherited bankrupt economy to have realized its goal in fifteen months.³²

Meanwhile, Dake's own GhiE colleagues in the ARPB had been arrested and detained by the new government.

5.9.3.5 On 28th July, 1982, the ARPB held a funeral service at the Supreme Court Buildings, at which the Chief Justice was present. The ARPB issued a list of over 200 names of individuals who had, by that date, been killed by soldiers, and for which acts no

²⁹ *The Voice*, No. 14, 26th July, 1982.

³⁰ *Daily Graphic*, 24th July, 1982, p.9.

³¹ *Ibid.*

³² *Ghanaian Times*, Vol 7,883 Tuesday, 3rd May, 1983, p.4.

VOLUME 4 CHAPTER 5

prosecution had taken place, or was likely to take place. The effort was a monumental one, as it covered killings that had occurred, region by region. This effort has left a historical record of those who were killed in those heady days of lawlessness.

5.9.3.6 In April, 1983, the PNDC amended its 1981 Proclamation with PNDC Law 42. The ARPB responded to its provisions by pointing out that it “contains essential elements and highlights the point of arbitrariness and dictatorship which have never seen a parallel in the 26-year history of Ghana”.³³ The statement further questioned why Ghanaians had not been consulted about the law and queried: “Were Ghanaians not promised that this was the time for them to be involved in the decision-making process. Is this the substitute for the Parliament which the people of Ghana elected their representatives to?”³⁴ These activities did not please the government and it was not long before reprisals followed.

5.9.3.7 On 12th May, 1983, the ARPB issued a statement alleging that one of the Food and Drugs Aid parcels sent from Libya to Ghana, and sent to Cape Coast from the Tema Central Medical Stores, was found to contain arms, and not drugs. This allegation was promptly denied by a doctor, Dr. Edwin O. Quaynor, Central Regional Medical Officer of Health. Dr. Quaynor stated categorically “there is no truth in the allegation by the Professional Bodies Association”.³⁵

5.9.3.8 Following a National Union of Ghana Students (NUGS) Congress which he had addressed in May, 1983, the President of ARPB, Sam Okudzeto, was put before the Citizens’ Vetting Committee (CVC) to be vetted. He was subsequently ridiculed in the press for responses he gave when being interrogated by that body. Later he was arrested on 26th June, 1983, and detained without charges, from that date, to May, 1984. In July, 1985, he was arrested again and detained for about six months, and then released without charge.

5.9.3.9 In May, 1983, an attempt was made to arrest and prosecute JAN Attoh and HDL Yartey, the Vice President and the Honorary Secretary of the ARPB respectively, for sedition. They were alleged to have printed ARPB material that was seditious, ie material that tended to put the government into disrepute, or that was critical of the PNDC’s policies. Fearing for his life, Attoh fled Ghana in May, 1983, and never returned. The two men were prosecuted and convicted. Yartey, who had been in detention until the day the judgment was delivered, was discharged. However, Attoh, who had been tried in Absentia, was sentenced to ten month’s imprisonment. The tribunal ordered that his mini-bus, on which some of the material had been found, be confiscated to the State, for use by the National Mobilisation Committee.³⁶

³³ Okudzeto, supra, p.122.

³⁴ Okudzeto, supra, p124.

³⁵ *Ghanaian Times* Vol. 7,903 Thursday, 26th May, 1983, pp. 1&3.

³⁶ *Ghanaian Times* Vol. 8,049 Saturday, 12th November, 1983, p1.

VOLUME 4 CHAPTER 5**5.9.4 The ARPB Loses Steam**

5.9.4.1 The ill-treatment of the leaders of the ARPB had an impact on the life of the ARPB. In January, 1990, its President, Sam Okudzeto, made a report to his mother-association, the GBA, that the ARPB existed only in name. He blamed the ARPB's moribund state on the suffering that the leaders had undergone at the hands of the government.³⁷ Although the GBA encouraged him to try and revive the meetings of the ARPB, it had lost the will to fight and had been intimidated into silence.

5.9.4.2 In 1991, the ARPB was able to revive itself and held a symposium on the Draft 1992 Constitution. However, it was clear that the ARPB had lost steam.³⁸ It did not feature on the list of bodies allocated places on the Consultative Assembly, although each of its constituent groups had representation.

5.9.5 Conclusion

5.9.5.1 The professionals have asserted a level of influence over national affairs which is generally far more profound than their limited numbers might suggest. The clout of the GBA and the ARPB has always been much greater than that of the business associations. In that sense, the professionals have functioned as the political vanguard of the dominant class in Ghana.³⁹

PART II**CIVIL SOCIETY GROUPS****5.10 RE-INDEPENDENCE****5.10.1 Introduction**

5.10.1.1 The formation of civil society groups with political orientation began to be a feature of the national landscape as a result of the introduction of the modern political economy, the subsequent urbanization and post World War II social developments that released young people from traditional control without putting in place any measure to include them in the new political arrangements.

³⁷ Minutes of GBA Annual Conference held in Kumasi, 9th –11th January, 1990.

³⁸ Okudzeto, *supra*, p.128.

³⁹ Paul Nugent, *Big men, Small Boys and Politics in Ghana, Power, Ideology and the Burden of History, 1982-1994* Asempra Publishers, Christian Council of Ghana, Accra, 1996, p.9.

THE FORMATION OF POLITICAL PARTIES IN THE GOLD COAST

5.10.2 The United Gold Coast Convention (UGCC)

5.10.2.1 At the end of the Second World War, the war veterans who had gone to fight in other lands for freedom, on behalf of the colonial power returned home with ideas about the quality of life that they ought to have. However, they were not trained in civil life with appropriate income-earning and marketable skills to achieve that standard, nor were they given any financial package to ease their transition into civil life. Their return, coupled with the rapid urbanisation and expansion of social amenities and infrastructure in the urban areas, produced a class of politically-conscious young men and women who began to appreciate the anti-colonial posture of the intelligentsia. It was in the midst of all this social ferment that the first mass party, the United Gold Coast Convention (UGCC), was formed at Saltpond in August, 1947, under the chairmanship and financial sponsorship of George Grant, better known as Paa Grant, a wealthy Nzima businessman.

5.10.2.2 With its slogan of “Self-Government within the shortest possible time”, the UGCC quickly attracted a large following, particularly among the educated persons, chiefs and farmers. The speed with which the party gained numbers made its proper organization somewhat difficult for the leaders who were mostly professionals and therefore only part-time politicians. A member of the UGCC Executive, Ernest Ako Adjei, proposed the employment of an energetic young man he had met in England, Kwame Nkrumah, as General Secretary, to do the work of political mobilization full time. Paa Grant paid the £100 passage for the return of Nkrumah to the Gold Coast.

5.10.2.3 The young Nkrumah arrived at the end of 1947, and soon got down to work, establishing structures through which the party could function effectively. In February, 1948, barely two months after he took office, Kwame Nkrumah and five leaders of the UGCC – Edward Akufo-Addo, Emmanuel Obetsebi Lamptey, William Ofori-Atta, Ernest Ako Adjei and Dr. Joseph Boakye Danquah - were arrested because they were blamed for the rioting and looting that occurred as a result of the killing of some ex-servicemen who had gone on a protest march.

5.10.2.4 The ex-servicemen had gone on the march to protest against high prices of goods and general hardship in their living conditions, exacerbated by the failure of the British Government to honour promises made to them on their demobilization benefits. Whilst on the march, they decided to change course and march to the Osu Christiansborg Castle, the seat of government, instead of remaining on the route for which official approval had previously been obtained. At the Osu crossroads, they were fired on when they would not heed an order to halt. Three ex-servicemen, Sergeant Adjetey, Corporal Attipoe and Private Odartey Lamptey, were killed and many others injured. This incident sparked off riots and looting of European and Syrian/Lebanese owned stores in many of the towns in

VOLUME 4 CHAPTER 5

the Gold Coast. By the end of the day, the death toll had reached 29 with 237 injured and property damage to the tune of £2,000,000 had occurred.

5.10.2.5 Although it was not the UGCC that had organized the march, political responsibility for what had happened was laid at the door of the party. The six leaders of the UGCC, who were arrested, were later affectionately named “The Big Six”. They became national heroes overnight as news of their arrest spread around the country. They were sent to prisons across the country.

5.10.2.6 After the release of the ‘Big Six’, Nkrumah set out to organize in earnest. He linked up with political youth groups and formed the Committee on Youth Organisation (CYO). He also established a newspaper, the *Evening News*, which he used to great advantage. Conflict over strategy soon developed between him and other leaders of the UGCC. They began to feel that Nkrumah was promoting himself and his personal agenda at the expense of the party that employed him, and he began to feel that they were not ready for his style of organization.

5.10.2.7 A break became inevitable, and on 12th June, 1949, Nkrumah broke away from the UGCC and formed the Convention People’s Party (CPP) at Saltpond, taking with him most of the young people he had so successfully mobilised. The period thereafter heralded the nurturing of bad blood between the leaders of the two parties. Attacks in the *Evening News* on the leaders of the UGCC, especially on Dr. Danquah, as well as a whispering campaign of bribe-taking and allegations of other dubious activities made against the leadership of the UGCC, did a lot to embitter the relationships.

5.10.3 The Convention People’s Party (CPP)

5.10.3.1 The CPP under the leadership of Nkrumah grew from strength to strength. During the time when he ran the UGCC, he discovered some very energetic and good organizers who left with him to form the new party. Komla Agbeli Gbedemah and Kojo Botsio were two of these young men who came to be recognized for their organizational abilities as they recruited many other young people to join the fold. Indeed the CPP was virtually a youth movement at its inception, and it had the energy and strategy to match.

5.10.3.2 It adopted a slogan of “Self-Government Now” (“S.G. Now”) and this resonated with the youth. In January, 1950, the CPP organized an action of civil disobedience termed ‘Positive Action’, in order to compel the colonial government to grant immediate self-government. Although planned as a non-violent action, it eventually turned violent and the leadership of the CPP was arrested and imprisoned.

5.10.3.3 Whilst in prison, Nkrumah’s party won a majority of seats in the 1951 elections held under the 1951 Constitution (Coussey Constitution). Being the leader of the party that had won majority seats in the elections, he was released from prison to head the government under the title of “Leader of Government Business”. The CPP successfully maintained its leadership in the politics of the country, winning majority votes in both the

VOLUME 4 CHAPTER 5

1954 and 1956 Elections. Ghana attained Independence on 6th March, 1957, under its leadership, after a bitter struggle with some of its opponents.

5.10.3.4 The part played by the youth in the independence movement and the place of the youth in the formation of the CPP, put the youth at the centre of the socio-political arrangements of the country after Independence.⁴⁰ A start was made to organize the youth soon after Independence with the formation of the CPP Youth League which was made up of young people with affiliation to the CPP.⁴¹ It functioned as the youth wing of the CPP and it had the same aims as the mother-party. However, it was formally abolished in 1959.

5.10.4 The National Liberation Movement (NLM)

5.10.4.1 In 1954, the National Liberation Movement (NLM) was born. The immediate cause was the agitation for higher prices for cocoa and so it gained popularity in the Ashanti, Akyem Abuakwa and the Krobo areas which had large tracts of cocoa farms. The remote cause was however, the marginalisation of the traditional ruling classes as a result of the rise of the CPP. The chiefs were also suspicious of the centralist policies of the CPP and feared marginalisation in the governance of the country.

5.10.4.2 The NLM's Ashanti base and the obvious support it enjoyed from the Asantehene as well as the fact that its chairman was the senior linguist of the Asantehene, Baffour Osei Akoto, brought to the fore the fear of domination that had existed between Ashanti and the Colony since Ashanti became a part of the Gold Coast. The NLM's proposal of a federal form of government was a reaction to the highly centralized form of government that they feared would lead to dictatorship from Accra.

5.10.4.3 The pitched battles that were fought in Kumasi between the NLM and the CPP and the political murders that were committed by both sides, showed the ugly face of partisan politics. The NLM with its Action Troopers and the CPP with its Action Groupers so terrorised residents of Kumasi that the political scars created took a long time to disappear, and led to many people being unwilling to be associated with partisan politics.

5.10.4.4 By the time the NLM problem was resolved by the amendment of the proposed Independence Constitution to provide for Regional Assemblies, a lot of harm had been done. There was a great deal of bad blood between adherents of the NLM and the CPP especially because many of the NLM leaders were also dissident CPP members; and thus there were personal animosities between the leadership of the two parties.

⁴⁰ Mike Oquaye, "Youth, Politics and Society in Ghana" in *Civil Society in Ghana* F.K. Drah and M. Oquaye (eds) Accra, Friedrich Ebert Foundation, 1996; chapter 10, pp.163-167.

⁴¹M.N. Tetteh, *The Ghana Young Pioneer Movement*, Ghana Publicity Ltd, Accra, 1999, p.53.

VOLUME 4 CHAPTER 5**5.10.5 The Ghana Congress Party (GCP)**

5.10.5.1 The remnants of the UGCC suffered other crises as most of its youth had broken away to join the CPP. In 1951, it merged with another party, the National Democratic Party, formed under the leadership of Nii Amaah Ollennu, a barrister. The merged parties came to be known as the Ghana Congress Party with Saki Scheck as the General Secretary.

5.10.5.2 The Ghana Congress Party was bedevilled by a leadership struggle between Nii Amaah Ollennu and Dr. Danquah. Ollennu eventually left politics and joined the Bench. The next stage of the leadership struggle took place between Dr. Kofi Abrefa Busia and Emmanuel Obetsebi-Lamptey. Eventually the party broke up into two when Obetsebi-Lamptey broke away and formed the Nationalist Party. This break greatly reduced the strength of the GCP. In the 1954 Elections Dr. Busia was the only one to win a seat on the ticket of the GCP. The Nationalist Party achieved little prominence as it never really attracted a following outside Accra.

5.10.6 Togoland Congress Party (TC)

5.10.6.1 This party was formed under the leadership of SG Antor, Kojo Ayeke and Emmanuel Dumoga, to champion the cause of separation of the British Trust Territory of Togoland, from the Gold Coast. The basis of this desire for separation lay in the arrangements that were made for German Colonies under the Treaty of Versailles, following the defeat of Germany in the First World War. The German colony of Togoland was split into two and administered under the Mandate of the League of Nations, the immediate predecessor body to the United Nations Organisation, by Britain and France.

5.10.6.2 The 'Mandated Territories' (as they came to be known) contained ethnic groups, such as the Ewe, Dagomba, Konkomba, etc., that had been split up by the administrative arrangements of the two powers. When the United Nations Organisation was born, the mandate was changed into a Trust, and therefore the territories became 'Trust Territories' and continued to be administered as separate entities. In the mean time, the Ewe people of the southern part of the Trust Territories had, since the end of the Second World War, been campaigning for the two Trust Territories of Britain and France respectively, to merge as one independent country, in order to re-unite the Ewe peoples who had been split up by the Mandate of the League of Nations. They feared that the split would become permanent, should separate arrangements be made for the two Trust Territories.

5.10.6.3 Agitation picked up pace. Leading to the birth of the Togoland Congress when, in 1954, the British Government informed the United Nations that it would not be in a position to administer the Trust Territory after the Gold Coast gained Independence. Ewe nationalists in Trans-Volta Togoland (TVT) as the British Trust Territory was known, believed that their chances of re-unification with their kith and kin would be destroyed, if the British Trust Territory integrated with the Gold Coast upon its Independence, as the

VOLUME 4 CHAPTER 5

French were likely to annex the French-speaking part, leading to a permanent split of the ethnic group. This gave them a reason for wanting the TVT to remain separate, until a decision could be taken about the French portion.

5.10.6.4 The issue was made somewhat more complicated by the fact that the peoples of the northern TVT, preferred integration with the Gold Coast so that they could be with their kith and kin as the split had had tragic results for some of the kingdoms. For instance, the capital of the kingdom of Dagbon, Yendi, was located in the Trust Territory whilst a part of it was in the British-held Northern Territories. Other groups also had blood ties with some of the peoples of the Northern Territories and also felt a closer affinity to them than to those of the northern French Trust Territory.⁴² These considerations led the General Assembly of the United Nations to decide in December, 1955, that the peoples of the Trust Territory should be given a chance in a plebiscite, to determine if they wished to be integrated with the Gold Coast upon its attainment of Independence, or to remain separate until a decision was taken in respect of the French-administered part.

5.10.6.5 The plebiscite was held on 9th May, 1956, amidst very vigorous campaigning by the Togoland Congress (or *Ablorde* group), for a “No to integration” vote. Consequently, the plebiscite registered a 55% majority vote in favour of separation in the South. However, the Northern TVT voted massively in favour of integration, and so the ‘Yes to integration’ vote, won by an overall majority of 58%, counting the two parts of the TVT as one whole.

5.10.6.6 The separatists were dissatisfied with the result of the plebiscite and believed that the decision in favour of integration had been procured by manipulation by the CPP. They protested against the vote, and in 1957, there were many disturbances. Efforts to suppress these agitations led to repression of those political activists who refused to accept integration. Many were arrested and detained, and others fled into exile in Togo, and remained there until 1966.

5.10.6.7 Following the passage of the Avoidance of Discrimination Act, 1957 (CA 38), the Togoland Congress joined up with the other opposition groups to become the United Party.

5.10.7 Northern Peoples’ Party (NPP)

5.10.7.1 Chief Simon Diedong Dombo and other educated persons from the Northern Territories formed the Northern Peoples’ Party (NPP) in 1954.⁴³ This Party quickly attracted a large following from among the traditional rulers, and it won twelve seats in the 1954 elections. Considering that it had not been formed for very long before the

⁴² Mumuni Bawumia (Alhaji), *A Life In The Political History Of Ghana Memoirs of Alhaji Mumuni Bawumia* Ghana Universities Press, Accra, 2004, pp.51-63.

⁴³ Bawumia , *supra*, pp.44-49.

VOLUME 4 CHAPTER 5

elections took place, it was a remarkable feat. It also showed how attached the people of the North were to their traditional leaders.

5.10.8 The Anlo Youth Organisation

5.10.8.1 The Anlo Youth Organisation was formed by Modesto Apaloo. It operated in the south-eastern corner of the Gold Coast where the Anlo ethnic group is located. It also won one seat in the 1954 elections.

5.10.9 The Moslem Association Party (MAP)

5.10.9.1 The Moslem Association Party was an Islam-based party. Its leadership and followers were drawn largely from the immigrant group of Muslims from neighbouring West African countries. The ranks of its leadership were decimated by a policy of deportations soon after Independence. What was left of it joined up with other political parties and groups to form the United Party.

5.10.10 Ga *Shifimo Kpee* (Ga Standfast Association)⁴⁴

5.10.10.1 This movement was born as a result of the pressures that urbanization put on lands in Accra in the post- World War II years. These years also coincided with the period when lands were being compulsorily acquired for national projects and when private developers were also acquiring large tracts of land from the Ga Chiefs for private purposes. This created a feeling that Gas were being pushed off their ancestral lands by strangers.

5.10.10.2 To make matters worse for the landowners, the Government of the CPP decided to develop housing units to re-house those who had been displaced by an earthquake that devastated Accra in 1939. The estate houses that were built at various localities such as Kaneshie, Mamprobi and Abossey Okai, also required the acquisition of wide expanses of Ga ancestral lands. Since the goal was a noble one, there were few complaints about the land acquisitions until it was time to allocate the houses that had been built. The houses were allotted in a manner that caused great disaffection against the government, as it was widely believed that non-Ga members of the ruling party (CPP) had benefitted to the exclusion of those in whose name the project had been developed. It thus formally began its life with a major grievance against the CPP.

5.10.10.3 The Ga *Shifimo Kpee* was formally inaugurated as “Ga-Dangbe *Shifimo Kpee*” on 7th July, 1957, under the chairmanship of Nii Amunakwa II, Otublohum Mantse, after a sheep had been slaughtered and customary libation had been poured by the Nai Wulomo, the Chief Priest of the Ga State, to ask for the blessings of the ancestors. With the slogan “*Ga shikpon Gamei anoni*” (Ga lands are for Ga people) “*Gboi mli ngbe wo*”

⁴⁴ Much of the information on this association was culled from SS Quarcoopome. *The Impact of Urbanization on the socio-political history of the Ga People of Accra: 1877-1957*. Unpublished Ph D Thesis, Institute of African Studies, University of Ghana, Legon, June, 1993, pp.192-199.

VOLUME 4 CHAPTER 5

(Foreigners are killing us), the association was supposed to represent all Ga-Dangbe people and to fight for the protection of their common heritage. However, it ended up being a largely Ga-Mashie based association and was thus a protest movement against the creation of landlessness among the youth of Ga-Mashie. Membership was drawn from the teaching, artisanal and clerical class, with a large number of unemployed youth known as “Tokyo Joes” after the hairstyle the young men affected. Despite its avowed aim of being a non-political group, the presence of senior United Party (UP) members in the persons of Dr. JB Danquah and SG Antor at the inaugural ceremony spoke volumes about its political leanings.

5.10.10.4 The movement soon alienated the chiefs by attacking them for selling off Ga lands to foreigners. The violence, vandalism and hooliganism of the “Tokyo Joes” alienated most people and the formation of a rival organization affiliated to the CPP, *Ga Ekome Feemo Kpee* (Ga Unity Party) helped to undermine the support base of the *Shifimo Kpee*.

5.10.10.5 The *Ga Shifimo Kpee* was finally dealt a mortal blow when it was banned, and it had to affiliate with the United Party, in 1958.

5.10 **6TH MARCH, 1957 – 23RD FEBRUARY, 1966:
THE FIRST REPUBLIC - CPP GOVERNMENT**

5.11.1 THE UNITED PARTY (UP)

5.11.1.1 Soon after Independence was attained in 1957, Parliament passed the Avoidance of Discrimination Act, 1957 (C.A. 38), to prohibit the formation or existence of any political grouping that was based on ethnic, religious, or other sectional interest, with effect from 31st December, 1957. According to the long title of the Act, it was:

An Act to prohibit organizations using or engaging in tribal, regional, racial and religious propaganda to the detriment of any community, or securing the election of persons on account of their tribal, regional or religious affiliations and for other purpose connected therewith.

5.11.1.2 The formulation of the provisions immediately made it illegal to form a political party with the words “Ga”, “Anlo”, “Northern people”, “Togoland” and “Moslem”, since they referred to “tribe”, “region” or “religion”. The political groups that had participated in the elections and even won seats, found that their continued existence had been rendered illegal. Consequently, in early 1958, at risk of being declared “prohibited organizations” and wound up under the supervision of the High Court,⁴⁵ they all came together as one Party, the UP, since they were all in opposition to the CPP. These groups, in the main, were: the National Liberation Movement (NLM); Moslem Association Party

⁴⁵ Avoidance of Discrimination Act, 1957 (C.A. 38), section 9.

VOLUME 4 CHAPTER 5

(MAP); Northern Peoples' Party (NPP); Togoland Congress; Anlo Youth Association; and *Ga Shifimo Kpee*.

5.11.1.3 In November, 1958, 43 of its members, including the entire executive of the Accra branch of the party, still described as members of "*Ga Shifimo Kpee*", were arrested, and detained under the Preventive Detention Act of 1958. Some of the persons detained were very young people under 20 years of age and indeed, two of them, Yartey Annan and Oti Ankrah, were only 14 years and 16 years old respectively.⁴⁶ They remained in detention until the 1966 overthrow of the CPP Government when they were released. In Ashanti, Volta Region and in Northern Region, similar arrests of activists were made. Some were even arrested and detained for booing at the President whilst he was travelling through their village. By 1962, the leader of the party, Dr. Kofi Abrefa Busia, had fled into exile, and of the 32 Members of Parliament of the UP, three were in detention, one had gone into exile, and twelve had crossed over to the Government-side, leaving only sixteen to sit on the Opposition Bench.⁴⁷

5.11.1.4 There were a number of bomb outrages in Accra, as well as assassination attempts on President, Nkrumah. These outrages caused great suffering, as there were many casualties. The UP was blamed for these outrages, and every such incident resulted in arrests of UP activists. There was a lot of political violence between the two main Parties – the UP and the CPP.

5.11.1.5 The UP, as a legal entity, ceased to exist when the country was declared a One-Party State, in 1964. In reality, the activists had suffered such harassment that the party was all but dead, since its activists were either in detention or in exile in the neighbouring countries.

5.11.2 The CPP

5.11.2.1 On 2nd April, 1960, at the Party Headquarters, Dr. Nkrumah, the Prime Minister, declared:

The Convention People's Party is a powerful force, more powerful indeed, than anything that has yet appeared in the history of Ghana. It is the uniting force that guides and pilots the nation and is the nerve centre of the positive operation in the struggle for Africa irredentism. Its supremacy cannot be challenged. The Convention People's Party is Ghana, and Ghana is the Convention People's Party.⁴⁸

⁴⁶ See: *Parliamentary Debates*, Official Reports, 15th June, 1971, p.7.

⁴⁷ Albert Adu Boahen, *Ghana: Evolution and Change in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries*, Sankofa Educational Publishers, Accra, 2000 p.195.

⁴⁸ Kwame Nkrumah, *I SPEAK OF FREEDOM* Panaf Books Ltd, London, 1971, p.209.

VOLUME 4 CHAPTER 5

With these views on the CPP, it did not take long for every attempt possible to be made, to actualize the statement that “Convention People’s Party is Ghana, and Ghana is the Convention People’s Party”.

5.11.2.2 On 1st May, 1961, President Nkrumah informed the nation that he had taken over the post of General Secretary of the party, at the request of the Central Committee of the Party. He further announced that as from that date, Regional Commissioners would become the Regional Secretaries of the Party in their respective regions, whilst re-designating the Regional Secretaries of the Trades Union Congress (TUC), United Ghana Farmers’ Council (UGFC), National Co-operative Council (NCC), National Council of Ghana Women (NCGW), as Assistant Regional Secretaries.⁴⁹ Thus, the named organizations became merged into the party structure, and this was, in turn, merged with the government’s structure.

5.11.2.3 In that speech, he outlined the duties and rights of members of the CPP as follows:

Duties of members:

1. To protect the solidarity and unity of the party at all times.
2. To pay dues regularly
3. To protect the good name of the party under all circumstances and to correct wrong views held against the party.
4. To carry out party decisions and directives to the best of his ability and to ensure that any disregard of such decisions or directives is promptly reported to the appropriate party authority.
5. To be the first to obey the laws of the country passed by the government.
6. To defend any action of the party or the government.
7. To try to understand all party government matters and to explain the same to the people.
8. To set an example by working hard, efficiently and honestly and by showing a keen sense of responsibility and duty.
9. To pursue a study of the principles of African Socialism and to endeavour to be guided in action by these [principles.
10. To guard jealously any secrets of the party and to maintain constant vigilance in this respect.
11. To criticize and accept criticism in good faith and spirit and to make frequent self-examination for correction, remembering that all criticism and correction should be made not to destroy, but to build.
12. To be faithful and loyal to the party always and to eschew all qualities of opportunism, nepotism, ostentation, vanity and self-seeking.
13. To remember that the party is supreme and to do everything within his power to uphold this supremacy.

The rights of members are as follows:

1. To take part in all party activities.

⁴⁹ Kwame Nkrumah, *Selected Speeches* Vol 2 compiled by Samuel Obeng. Afram Publications (Ghana) limited, Accra, 1979, p.85.

VOLUME 4 CHAPTER 5

2. To attend meetings and freely express views on all matters in discussion, and to vote according to conviction.
3. To elect and be elected to party bodies.
4. To be present in person whenever decisions are taken regarding his activities or conduct.
5. To address any question or statement to any party body including the national executive and the central committee.
6. To appeal against any adverse decision against him from his branch party upwards to the central committee and to the leader of the party in person.
7. To appeal as a last resort to the national delegates' conference.⁵⁰

5.11.3 Ghana As One-Party State

5.11.3.1 In 1964, Ghana officially became a one-party state with the CPP as the national party.⁵¹ This was after a referendum had been held on 24th, 28th and 31st January 1964, to ask the people to approve that step and give the President power to dismiss judges. Following the results of the referendum, variously stated as 99.9 percent⁵² and 92.81 percent.⁵³ The transformation of Ghana into a one-party state was born out of the feeling that the elimination of official opposition would make governance easier as there would be little opposition to government policies. It was also born out of the philosophy, then current, that the need to achieve economic and social rights for people in developing countries necessitated the deferment of enjoyment of civil and political rights. This philosophy, which had a respectable following, particularly in countries inclined towards socialism, suggested that the enjoyment of civil and political rights would be meaningful only if people were well-fed and had shelter as well as other basic necessities of life. Opposition could thus not be tolerated. According to Madam Regina Asamany, Deputy Minister for Labour and Social Welfare, the “No” voters during the referendum, were going to be “mercilessly crushed” because they “thought their display of selfishness and organized assassination could deter us from our progressive course have rather taught us a lesson to reinforce our determination and solidarity...”⁵⁴

5.11.3.2 In reality, Ghana became a de facto one-party state by the end of 1961, when the opposition bench had been virtually emptied by carpet-crossing in Parliament and detentions under the PDA. By the time the one-party status became a legal fact after the referendum of January, 1964, the reality had long been achieved. The farmers, workers and students who, within their unions could have mounted a viable opposition, had all been co-opted to become members of the CPP as the various unions became wings of the CPP. When President Nkrumah charged the students to ensure the “Cippification” of Ghana because “Ghana was the CPP and the CPP was Ghana”, it was clear that it was

⁵⁰ Kwame Nkrumah, *Selected Speeches* Vol 2, supra, p.88.

⁵¹ Constitution (Amendment) Act, 1964 (Act 224), amending Articles of the 1960 Constitution.

⁵² Figure announced as the result of the election.

⁵³ Figure given in Parliament. See *Parliamentary Debates* Official Report, First Series Vol.34. 15th October, 1963-21st February, 1964. Debate of 18th February, 1964, p.1125.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p.1128.

VOLUME 4 CHAPTER 5

government policy to exclude all other political organizations or philosophies opposed to that of the CPP.

5.11.3.3 To make the point of the complete “cippification” of Ghana, the colours of the Ghana Flag: red, gold, green, with the Black Star in the middle of the gold band of the Ghana Flag, was changed to the CPP colours, of red, white (with the Black Star in the white band), and green.⁵⁵

5.11.3.4 The perversion of the electoral process, as evidenced by malpractices at many public elections, effectively closed the avenue for ensuring that the government could be compelled to change its style of governance.

5.11.3.5 The declaration of Dr. Nkrumah as the Life President of Ghana effectively put paid to any notions of competitive politics in the country. In 1965, when a date for elections was set down, no elections took place because all parliamentary candidates had been returned unopposed in the general elections. This was because there was a requirement that only candidates approved by the Central Committee would be permitted to compete for office. Since only one candidate per constituency was approved to stand in the elections by the Central Committee of the Party anyway, it was not surprising that all of them were returned unopposed.

5.11.3.6 This mode of giving prior approval to candidates before they could present themselves at elections undermined the notion of parliamentarians being representatives freely chosen by their constituencies to represent them. Effectively, the Members of Parliament were lame ducks from the start, since they were not going to be able to offer any criticism of government or government policy, even if the interests of the constituents demanded it. All these events created their own brand of problems and difficulties that left indelible scars on the national psyche.

5.11.3.7 Corruption began to rear its head early in the government, and President Nkrumah sought to deal with it, even if ineffectively. In May, 1961, he also announced the setting up of a commission to investigate ministers. Consequently on 28th September, 1961, he announced that he had asked six of his ministers to resign:

Komla Agbeli Gbedemah – Health
Ashford E Inkumsah – Interior
Kojo Botsio - Agriculture
Krobo Edusei – Transport
Emmanuel K Bensah – Works and Housing
C. de Graft Dickson – Defence

⁵⁵ Constitution (Amendment) Act, 1964 (Act 224), amending Article 7 of the 1960 Constitution.

VOLUME 4 CHAPTER 5

5.11.3.8 They were also ordered to surrender properties in excess of two houses with a combined value of £ 20, 000, two cars and plots of land valued at more than £500.⁵⁶ Gbedemah and Botsio were subsequently expelled from the party on 23rd January 1962.⁵⁷

5.11.3.9 President Nkrumah wrote a fresh will dated 18th February, 1966, in which he willed all his property to the CPP. He also instructed his executors thus:

On my demise, [they shall] cause my body to be embalmed and preserved. But if this cannot be done for any reason then I prefer my body to be cremated and the ashes scattered throughout the African continent, in rivers and streams, deserts, savannas, etc and a few ashes placed in an urn and deposited at a place to be decided upon later. I am not godless but I request on my demise that no religious ceremony shall be performed at my funeral.⁵⁸

It is uncertain whether this will was changed, but it is clear that “Kwame Nkrumah of Africa” (as he described himself in the will), did not envisage a burial in his hometown. Indeed, his wishes for the disposal of his mortal remains as expressed in the 1966 will, were merely a repeat of like provisions in a previous will, dated 26th June, 1965.

**5.11 24TH FEBRUARY, 1966 – 30TH SEPTEMBER, 1969:
 NATIONAL LIBERATION COUNCIL (NLC)**

5.12.1 CPP

5.12.1.1 The End Of CPP

5.12.1.1.1 The NLC seized power on 24th February, 1966. Early on the morning of that day, an announcement on Radio Ghana was made by Col Emmanuel Kwasi Kotoka, leader of the troops that seized power, as follows:

Fellow citizens of Ghana, I have come to inform you that the Military in co-operation with the Ghana Police have taken over the government of Ghana today. The myth surrounding Nkrumah has been broken. Parliament is dissolved and Kwame Nkrumah is dismissed from office. All ministers are also dismissed; the Convention People’s Party is disbanded with effect from now. It will be illegal for any person to belong to it...⁵⁹

⁵⁶ Thomas A. Howell and Jeffrey P. Rajasooria, *GHANA & NKRUMAH*, Facts on File Inc, NY NY, 1972, p. 72.

⁵⁷ Ibid, p.82.

⁵⁸ T. Peter Omari, *KWAME NKRUMAH The Anatomy of an African Dictatorship* Sankofa Educational Publishers Ltd., Accra,2000, p.219.

⁵⁹ A.A. Afrifa (Col), *The Ghana Coup 24th February, 1966* FRANK CASS Ltd., London, 1966, pp. 34-35.

VOLUME 4 CHAPTER 5

5.12.1.1.2 The NLC, which was formed under the chairmanship of newly-promoted Lieutenant-General Joseph A. Ankrah,⁶⁰ began to dismantle the monolith that the CPP had become. One of the first legislative acts of the NLC was to formalize the dismissal of the President from office, the dismissal of all parliamentarians and the dissolution of Parliament, the banning of the CPP, the only political party at the time, and prohibition of membership of it. The original colours of the Ghana Flag of red, gold, green, with the Black Star in the middle of the gold band of the Ghana Flag, were restored.⁶¹

5.12.1.1.3 The NLC passed the Protective Custody Decree, 1966 (NLCD 2), under which all ministers, parliamentarians, regional commissioners, district commissioners and senior functionaries of the CPP were detained without trial. The CPP Party and Ghana Young Pioneers' paraphernalia were banned. Books and publications, related to Dr. Nkrumah and scientific socialism, as well as communist propaganda materials were burnt. Public exhibition of effigies of Dr. Nkrumah, as well as symbols of the CPP, were also prohibited. Persons found with these objects were molested by the security forces.

5.12.1.1.4 The rule of the NLC also saw the freezing of assets and bank accounts of CPP functionaries and CPP-related organisations.⁶² The Auditor-General was mandated to audit the accounts of the CPP and CPP-related organisations,⁶³ and following his findings, the assets were confiscated to the state.⁶⁴ Commissions of Enquiry were established to probe the assets of CPP functionaries and assets found to have been acquired by unlawful means were confiscated.

5.12.1.1.5 The NLC banned most of the leading members of the defunct CPP from contesting the 1969 elections.⁶⁵ They were also banned from holding public office for ten years. This was applied to members of the CPP after their release from prison.

5.12.1.1.6 Another act of injustice was the enactment of legislation that imposed legal bans on CPP officials and activists for a period of ten years, without a possibility of anyone challenging the ban in a court of law. The NLC enacted two laws, Elections and Public Offices Disqualification Decree, 1968 (NLCD 223), and Elections and Public Offices Disqualification Decree, 1969 (NLCD 332), which disqualified 152 functionaries of the CPP from holding any public office, and disenfranchised them from exercising their democratic rights to choose their representatives.

5.12.1.1.7 This law, which deprived some Ghanaians of the fundamental right of citizenship, was considered justified by the elite of this country, hence its inclusion, even

⁶⁰ His rank at the time of his dismissal was Major-General and he was promoted by the leadership- of the coup in order for him to take charge as the highest ranking officer of the Ghana Armed Forces.

⁶¹ National Liberation Council Proclamation, as amended by National Liberation Council Decree, 1966 (NLCD 1).

⁶² National Liberation Council (Assets and Bank Accounts) Decree 1966 (NLCD 7).

⁶³ National Liberation Council (Auditor-General's functions Decree, 1966 (NLCD 12).

⁶⁴ National Liberation Council Forfeiture of Assets Decree, 1966 (NLCD 23).

⁶⁵ F.K. Buah, *A History of Ghana of Ghana*, 1998, (London and Oxford: Macmillan Education Ltd.), p 198.

VOLUME 4 CHAPTER 5

in the 1969 Constitution as article 71. Under this article, Komla Gbedemah was disqualified from taking his seat in the 1969 Parliament, after he had won an election.⁶⁶

5.12.1.1.8 The NLC enacted the Armed Forces Act, 1962 (Amendment) Decree, 1967 (NLCD 131), to enable it to set up military tribunals to try people, including the military, police personnel, and even civilians, charged with sedition. Conviction carried a maximum sentence of 25 years, and there was no right of appeal. It is a principle of the rule of law that a law must not be made retrospective, yet the NLC D 131 of 1967, which took retrospective effect from 24th February, 1966, came into force without public protest as to the unfairness of changing the legal entitlements of citizens, with retrospective effect.

5.12.1.1.9 On 1st October 1966, the NLC enacted the National Liberation Council (Prohibition of Rumours) Decree, 1966 (NLCD 92), and the Criminal Procedure Code (Amendment) Decree, 1966 (NLCD 93). The first dealt with rumour-mongering as a subversive act, while the second gave the police unlimited powers of detention. The oppressive nature of NLCD 93 compelled the Legon Society on National Affairs to describe it as “preventive detention without the Preventive Detention Act of 1958”. There were no other public protests and the law remained on the statute books for two years, before being repealed.

5.12.1.1.10 The NLC enacted the Kwame Nkrumah Property Decree, 1967 (NLCD 154), the Kwame Nkrumah Property Amendment Decree, 1967 (NLCD 180), and the Public Property (Protection) and Corrupt Practices (Prevention) Act, 1962 (Amendment) Decree, 1967 (NLCD 130), and made them retroactive, with from 1962, to cover acts committed in the A.G. Leventis case. By these laws the NLC Government seized the properties of CPP functionaries who were implicated in that case. In the case of Dr. Nkrumah, the properties seized by the State, included those of his wife, children and mother.⁶⁷ There was no public protest against such seizure of property.

5.12.2.1 Reaction Of Civil Society

5.12.2.1.1 The CPP Government was generally regarded as dictatorial and corrupt. Therefore when the NLC overthrew it, Ghanaian opinion welcomed the NLC as liberators;⁶⁸ their assumption of power, though unconstitutional, was seen as marking the birth of freedom and democracy.⁶⁹ These feelings were not lessened by statements from former leading members of the banned CPP, as to the undemocratic nature of leadership within the party. Indeed, a former Minister, Kwaku Boateng, stated that they had all been reduced to ‘gaping sychophants’ in the affairs of governance. With such national

⁶⁶ *Daily Graphic* Vol. 5957 Tuesday, 25th November, 1969, p.1.

⁶⁷ NLCD 154 and NLCD 180.

⁶⁸ *Daily Graphic*, Vol. 4798, Wednesday, 3rd March, 1966, p.9.

⁶⁹ Even Accra Market Women, who were regarded as arch supporters of the CPP Government, denounced the government and pledged unflinching support to the NLC.

VOLUME 4 CHAPTER 5

disposition, public opinion welcomed the policies and actions of that government as a sense of liberation and freedom swept all across the country.⁷⁰

5.12.2.1.2 Many serious abuses were perpetrated against members of the CPP by both the government and society at large. CPP activists were arrested and detained. Officials of the party and its wings such as the Ghana Young Pioneer movement (GYP), suffered brutalities at the hands of their neighbours. Their properties were stolen or vandalized and their books and other movement-paraphernalia were set ablaze. The military, the police and prison officials subjected CPP functionaries to a great deal of ill-treatment. Only a few voices were raised in protest. For instance, whilst P.A.V. Ansah, a member of the LSNA, wrote in the *Legon Observer* decrying the “rough and ready” justice being meted out by military personnel in various parts of the country, others in the same medium were expressing views supportive of the ill-treatment, as their just deserts.

5.12.2.1.3 Public protests were non-existent even to such cruel acts as the public display accorded an aide of President Nkrumah, Boye Moses, who was captured and paraded in the streets of Accra in a metal cage. According to the *Daily Graphic*, the crowd hooted and shouted, “kill him”, “He is now a monkey”.⁷¹ This public reaction was not unusual, judging by the treatment to which suspected criminals were, and still are, subjected.

5.12.2.1.4 The public disposition towards a tendency to take advantage of the vulnerable, was affirmed many times when individuals and groups took advantage of the political situation to attack fellow citizens and/or their properties for their alleged association with the CPP Government.

5.12.3 The Abortive Coup Of 1967

5.12.3.1 Following the abortive coup on 17th April, 1967, and the killing of Lt-Gen Kotoka, his personal Orderly, Sgt Osei Grunshie, and two officers, Capt Cephas Y. Borkloe and Capt A. Avevor, the public was outraged. There was loud condemnation of the coup-makers. Many people gave money as donation to the family of Lt-Gen Kotoka, and people hailed the NLC when it decided to name the Accra International Airport after him.

5.12.3.2 The government also established a Trust Fund named the Kotoka Trust, to provide for the families of the fallen soldiers, and many public-spirited persons, as well as chiefs, paid money into the coffers of the Trust. For reasons that are not clear, Brig Afrifa was blamed for the coup attempt, with a whispering campaign that he master-minded the coup in order to become Head of State. This unsubstantiated allegation was to

⁷⁰ *Daily Graphic*, Vol. 4801 Monday, 7th March, 1966, p.19.

⁷¹ *Daily Graphic* Vol. 5075 Tuesday, 24th January, 1967, p.1.

VOLUME 4 CHAPTER 5

dog his steps in the years that followed, and is rumoured to be the basis for his execution in 1979.

5.12.3.3 A military tribunal tried and sentenced Lt Samuel B Arthur and Lt Moses Yeboah to death by firing squad, for their part in the coup; whilst the third Officer, 2nd Lt Osei-Poku was sentenced to 30 years imprisonment. The two condemned men were executed in public at 9.00 a.m. on 26th May, 1967, and a large crowd of people went to the spot, almost in a carnival mood, to watch the public execution.

5.12.3.4 Many other officers were sentenced to prison terms, whilst five officers and about 200 Other Ranks were placed in Protective Custody.⁷² Under about ten Protective Custody Decrees made that year, hundreds of people were put into custody on the accusation of jubilating upon hearing news of the coup, before it was foiled. The public played an active part in causing the arrests of the “jubilants”, who were mostly former activists of the CPP. Those arrests were made upon information supplied by the general public, to the military authorities.

5.12 **1ST OCTOBER, 1969 - 12TH JANUARY, 1972:
THE SECOND REPUBLIC -PROGRESS PARTY
(PP) GOVERNMENT**

5.13.1 THE PROGRESS PARTY

5.13.1.1 The Progress Party (PP) won the elections of August, 1969, and the government was inaugurated on 1st October, 1969. The elections were marred by a campaign tainted by ethnic tensions.

5.13.1.2 The Aliens Compliance Order And Civil Society Reaction

5.13.1.2.1 Soon after the government came to power, pressure began to mount for firm action to be taken against the influx of aliens into the country. The matter was discussed in Parliament and the government announced that it was going to enforce the provisions of the Aliens Act, 1963 (Act 160) and its accompanying regulations in L.I. 265 as amended by L.I. 553. On 19th November, 1969, the government issued the following statement:

All aliens both African and non-African without residence permits should leave the country within 14 days – not later than December 2, 1969.⁷³

⁷² National Liberation Council (Protective Custody) (Amendment) (No. 9) Decree, 1967 (NLCD 172).

⁷³ *Daily Graphic*, Vol. 5952 Wednesday, 19th November, 1969, p.1.

VOLUME 4 CHAPTER 5

5.13.1.2.2 This “Aliens Compliance Order”, as this Order came to be known, gave all aliens a period of fourteen days within which to regularize their stay in Ghana, or leave. The Leader of the Opposition, Dr. GK Agama, indicated that the opposition was in agreement with the government in enforcing the order that aliens without resident permits should leave the country.⁷⁴The problem with the Order was not the policy, but the manner of its implementation. While the government was within its legal rights to check illegal immigration, the nature and history of cross-border migration within the West African sub-region, as well as Ghana’s own policy on African unity, should have been taken into account. These factors of sub-regional migration, meant that the potential number of affected persons was large. It was estimated that there were about 250,000 Togolese nationals, about 5,000 Biafran (Eastern Nigerian) refugees under the protection of United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), hundreds of thousands of Nigerians, Malians, and nationals of Upper Volta (Burkina Faso), Niger and Dahomey (Benin). Ambassadors of these neighbouring countries pleaded for more time to enable them process the necessary documentation, but these entreaties did not change the government’s stand.

5.13.1.2.3 In the event, there was a lot of human suffering as families which had resided in Ghana for more than three generations, and persons who had lost touch with their original homelands, were given only fourteen days to regularize their stay or leave the country. Many who had established thriving businesses had to wind them up or sell them off cheaply. Those who owned buildings and land sold them off at very low prices. Many were trapped under inhuman living conditions as they waited for inadequate or non-existent transportation to carry them home. There were many reports of Ghanaians attacking and molesting aliens, to the extent that the government had to issue a warning to the public to desist from such acts. It even became necessary for police protection to be given to some aliens in Kumasi.

5.13.1.2.4 The urgent need to procure residence permits and other identity papers created an opportunity for unscrupulous civil servants to exploit the desperation of the affected aliens by indulging in corrupt practices. Many were the heart-rending tales of suffering that were told and the sad spectacles that were seen during the implementation of this Order. After 2nd December, 1969, aliens who had not complied with the Order were arrested and kept at police stations under inhuman conditions. Since their numbers were so large, they sat out in the open, around police stations, waiting for the police to take action. These incidents caused a lot of disaffection for Ghana in the sub-region, and the Aliens Compliance Order of Nigeria in 1983, was perceived to be in retaliation for what happened to her citizens of those of other West African countries, in 1969.

⁷⁴ *Ghanaian Times* Vol. 3,771 Monday, 5th January, 1970, p.1.

VOLUME 4 CHAPTER 5**5.13**

**13TH JANUARY, 1972 – 3RD JUNE, 1979:
NATIONAL REDEMPTION COUNCIL (NRC)/
SUPREME MILITARY COUNCILS (SMC) I & II**

5.14.1 End Of PP

5.14.1.1 The National Redemption Council (NRC) came to power on 13th January, 1972, suspended the 1969 Constitution; proscribed all political parties; and asked all government officials, party functionaries and activists to report to the nearest police station. They were subsequently sent to prisons around the country to be detained.⁷⁵ Many members of the proscribed PP fled into exile in the neighbouring countries.⁷⁶ In May, 1972, many of the detainees were freed from custody.⁷⁷

5.14.1.2 Commissions of Enquiry were established to investigate the assets of PP functionaries, including Dr. Busia, the Prime Minister. Dr. Busia's assets, including those acquired before coming into political office, were confiscated to the State, although he was outside the country at the time and could not be present to defend himself. There was very little public sympathy for the members of the erstwhile PP members as the precedent of ill-treatment of officials of overthrown political parties had already been set.

5.14.2 Trade Organisations' Support For NRC

5.14.2.1 Market women in Accra and Kumasi took to the streets, demonstrating in support of the NRC, chanting anti-PP slogans. The women paraded through the principal streets bearing placards, some of which read: "Busia's Democracy is a sham", "Afrifa must face the Firing Squad", "Down with Busia's Tribalism",⁷⁸ "Afrifa must face trial", "Open up more employment avenues", "Busia is a thief" and "Down with capitalism."⁷⁹ Other groups such as the Volta Region Association of Gold and Silver Smiths sent a message of congratulations to the Chairman of the NRC,⁸⁰ whilst others pledged their support to the NRC.⁸¹ The Ghana Co-operative Cattle Dealers and Butchers Association even congratulated the Chairman of the NRC, the Armed Forces and the Police for "the able manner in which they ousted the Busia Administration".⁸² With such messages of

⁷⁵ *Ghanaian Times* Vol. 4,408 Friday, 28th January, 1972, back page "PP Activists Are Back In Custody."

⁷⁶ *Daily Graphic*, Vol. 6711 5th May 1972, p.16.

⁷⁷ *Daily Graphic*, Vol. 6620 Tuesday, 18th January 1972, p.1.

⁷⁸ *Ghanaian Times* Vol. 4,402 Friday, 21st January, 1972.

⁷⁹ *Ghanaian Times* Vol. 4,428 Saturday, 21st February, 1972, p.1.

⁸⁰ *Ghanaian Times*, 21st January, 1972, supra; *Ghanaian Times*, Vol. 4,416 Monday, 7th February, 1972, p.5.

⁸¹ *Ghanaian Times*, vol. 4,400 Wednesday, 19th January, 1972, p.5.; *Ghanaian Times*, Vol. 4,407 Thursday, 27th January, 1972, p.7.

⁸² *Ghanaian Times*, Vol. 4,401 Thursday, 20th January, 1972, p.3.

VOLUME 4 CHAPTER 5

support, it was unlikely that anyone would criticize the detention of the PP Government functionaries and activists.⁸³

5.14.2.2 This form of sycophancy, often motivated by greed and opportunism, accounts partly for the inability to properly appreciate conduct on the part of rulers, that ought not to be condoned. When the NRC/SMC I rule came under immense pressure to relinquish power, and resorted to violence as an instrument for retaining power, it exposed the nation's culture of sycophancy in its most sadistic form.

5.14.2.3 Before and during the struggle over the Union Government (Unigov) proposal, a cross-section of Ghanaians declared support just to enable them to enter the huge lucrative patronage network that the government had constructed. The groups ranged from chiefs, (including individual paramount chiefs, traditional councils, regional houses of chiefs and the National House of Chiefs), civic associations like the Ashanti Youth Association and the Kumasi Youngsters Club, Volta Development and Youth Association, High Blood, Farmers Association, African Youth Command and the Ghana Peace and Solidarity Council.

5.14.2.4 While the government was under intense pressure to return the country to constitutional rule, a number of leading professionals were accepting Cabinet appointments to serve in it, but civil society did not criticize them for doing so. For example, Dr. RKA Gardiner was appointed Commissioner for Economic Planning; Dr. AK Appiah, as Commissioner for Finance; E R K Dwemoh, Commissioner for Transport and Communications; A. Karbo, as Commissioner for Health; and C K Tedam, as Commissioner in charge of Local Government.⁸⁴

5.14.2.5 In January, 1977, a Committee on Unigov was established to collate opinions on the concept. The committee, chaired by Dr. Gustav Koranteng-Addow, had the following membership:

- Dr. Modibo Ocran;
- Togbe Adja Tekpor VI;
- Kofi Badu;
- Maj Yaw Larson;
- Joe Appiah;
- DCOP B.S.K. Kwakye;
- Nii Okai Pesemaku III;
- Dr. M.M. Owusu-Ansah;
- Dr. Yaw Manu;
- Dr. A Adda;
- F. Wulff Tagoe; and

⁸³ *Ghanaian Times*, 20th January, 1972, supra; *Ghanaian Times*, 4,405 Tuesday, 25th January, 1972, p.7.

⁸⁴ *Daily Graphic* Vol. 8290 Wednesday, 15th June, 1977; *Daily Graphic* vol.8295 Tuesday, 21st June, 1977, p.1.

VOLUME 4 CHAPTER 5

- Two other unnamed representatives of the Military Advisory Council and Research Bureau of Ministry of Information.⁸⁵

5.14.2.6 This committee drew up a programme for implementation of the concept, which they preferred to be named “National Government instead of Unigov”. A referendum to determine if Ghanaians wanted that form of government was fixed for 30th March, 1978. Immediately thereafter, many pro-Unigov groups sprang up, as it became clear that the government was willing to spread money around in order to purchase the people’s support. Associations such as “The Friends”, suddenly sprang up and spearheaded the campaign in support of the concept. Everyday, chiefs and opinion leaders from every part of the country made their way to the Castle, to “pledge unflinching support” for Unigov.

5.14.2.7 The symbols representing the “Yes” and “No” vote were eloquent in the images they cultivated in the public mind. The “Yes” vote was represented by two hands in a warm handshake (signifying unity) against a sky-blue background, and the “No” by three heads of two males and one female, all facing different directions in obvious disagreement (signifying discord), against a red background. These pictorial gimmicks notwithstanding, the “No” group had massive support.

5.14.3 THE PEOPLE’S MOVEMENT FOR FREEDOM AND JUSTICE (PMFJ)

5.14.3.1 The PMFJ was formed in the mid-1970s to spearhead opposition to the government of Gen Acheampong, and his idea of Unigov as the most suitable form of government for Ghana. The PMFJ, though made up various personalities attracted a large number of young people. Its leaders were prominent politicians such as Lt-Gen Akwasi Amankwah Afrifa, Professor Albert Adu Boahen, William Ofori-Atta (popularly known as Paa Willie), K A Gbedemah, G W Amarteifio (popularly known as “Mr. No”) and Nana Addo D Akufo-Addo.

5.14.3.2 The PMFJ organized public protests and anti-Unigov demonstrations which were brutally suppressed by the State. On one occasion, a PMFJ rally was broken up with force, resulting in the death of three people, with many injured, including Gbedemah.⁸⁶

5.14.3.3 Subsequently, the government ordered that no police permits were to be issued to the PMFJ, alleging that as people hated them very much, if they held rallies in public places, the public might attack them. The PMFJ was therefore deprived of the opportunity to lawfully assemble to campaign against Unigov. There was even an occasion when a police permit that had been issued was withdrawn, only hours before the publicized event.

5.14.3.4 The PMFJ managed to continue campaigning in the face of serious official threats and intimidation until the referendum was conducted on 30th March, 1978, when

⁸⁵ *Ghanaian Times* Vol. 5,940 Tuesday, 11th January, 1977, p.1.

⁸⁶ Oquaye, *Politics in Ghana*, supra, p.89.

VOLUME 4 CHAPTER 5

in the face of massive rigging, the majority vote was alleged to have been cast in favour of the Unigov concept. Very few people, familiar with the events of the Referendum, and the chasing out of the Electoral Commissioner by soldiers, believed the official results that declared to be genuine. However, one of the prominent supporters of Unigov disputed the good faith of such doubters, querying why the “No” votes were believed to be correct and not the ‘Yes’ votes.⁸⁷

5.14.3.5 Thereafter, by the Voluntary Associations (Prohibition) Decree, 1978 (SMCD 161), passed on 4th April, 1978, the PMFJ, together with two other anti-Unigov associations, Front for the Prevention of Dictatorship and Third Force were prohibited by the government.

5.14.4 NATIONAL LIBERATION MOVEMENT OF WESTERN TOGOLAND AND TOGOLAND LIBERATION MOVEMENT

5.14.4.1 In about 1975, the unabated desire of certain persons to secede from Ghana, based upon the dissatisfaction with the results of the 1956 Plebiscite that incorporated the former Trust Territory of Togoland (also known by the earlier name of “Mandated Territories”) into Ghana, resurfaced. Some people began to organize themselves to push for secession from Ghana, and these two movements were formed, with objects which included “advocating and promoting the secession from Ghana of the former British Mandated territory of Togoland”.

5.14.4.2 These “secessionist organizations” were promptly banned, under the Prohibited Organisations Decree, 1976.⁸⁸ The Decree also prohibited membership of the organizations or any other organizations with the same objects, as well as advertising meetings or even putting up notices for such meetings to take place. It also made it an offence for anyone to provide financial support by way of contribution, or granting of a loan or even guarantee of a loan, to such an organization.

5.14.4.3 The government followed the promulgation of the Decree with interaction with chiefs from those areas, and the problem abated to some degree.

⁸⁷ Joseph Appiah, *JOE APPIAH The Autobiography of An African Patriot* Asempa Publishers, Accra, 1996, p.299.

⁸⁸ SMCD 20.

VOLUME 4 CHAPTER 5**5.15** **24TH SEPTEMBER, 1979 - 30TH DECEMBER, 1981:
THIRD REPUBLIC -PEOPLE'S NATIONAL PARTY
(PNP) GOVERNMENT****5.15.1** **THE PEOPLE'S NATIONAL PARTY (PNP)**

5.15.1.1 The Third Republic was ushered in with the formal inauguration at the Parliament House in Accra, on the 24th September, 1979. At the handing over ceremony, Flt Lt Rawlings told President Limann that his government was on probation, but this veiled threat against the constitutional government did not elicit any public disapproval.

5.15.1.2 The PNP itself did not help matters, in the manner in which it conducted its affairs. Very early in the life of the government, the party secured a loan of US \$ 1 million from an Italian, Dr. Marino Chiavelli, ostensibly to resettle the members of the AFRC and their associates. A scandal soon broke over the handling of the funds, with allegations of misappropriation of the funds. Such scandals, coming so soon after the era of "house-cleaning", did not improve the public's acceptance of, and loyalty to the constitutionally-elected government.

5.15.1.3 In 1981, a member of the PNP, Addae Amoako, sued his party over the disbursement of the Chiavelli loan. The fact of a member of the ruling party suing his own party for an account money involved in a currency-printing contract, caused ripples in the public domain. Whilst some hailed it as a positive mark in the democratic development of the country, others saw it as a weakness in the system; evidence of how corrupt civilian politicians were; and how quickly the new civilian rulers had returned to the "bad old ways".

5.15.1.4 The factors that made for instability, were enhanced by the impatience of the general populace in the face of constitutionalism and its seemingly slow nature and pace of governance. Against such a background, there were, unfortunately, serious wranglings taking place within the ruling PNP. The PNP appeared to be feeding on itself as factions and groups within it battled the leadership, or harangued it for its inability to articulate and adhere to a leftist ideology.

5.15.1.5 On 31st December, 1981, a band of military personnel, both serving and retired, launched an attack on the State, and succeeded in overthrowing the government. It came as no surprise when, upon the fall of the Limann Government, some members of the youth wing of the PNP took up prominent positions in the new government.

5.15.2 **NEW DEMOCRATIC MOVEMENT (NDM)**

VOLUME 4 CHAPTER 5

5.15.2.1 The New Democratic Movement (NDM) was a leftist intellectual organization that shared the ideals of the JFM although it was more in the nature of providing intellectual support for revolutionary change. It was formed in 1980, after the Third Republic had come into being, but its formative period pre-dated 1980.⁸⁹

5.15.2.2 Its roots lay in the mid 1970s, when those who later on formed the NDM operated as part of the group generally known as the “progressive intellectuals” on the various university campuses, but particularly at Legon. By the time the NDM was formed, the members had been operating in about five Study Cells. In 1979, it began to publish a journal called *Direction*, which was intended to help espouse the views of the progressive intellectuals on national affairs. Although many of its members were supportive of the 4th June Uprising, the group was also critical of attacks on small propertied people because the feeling was that the real culprits of the country’s economic problems were the “big boys” of the economy but they had been left intact. The group also criticized the demolition of the Makola Market, as well as the execution of the Senior Military Officers, including three former Heads of State, even though both events were very attractive to a section of the student movement.

5.15.2.3 After the AFRC handed over, the group examined its options and decided that although the group was close in philosophy to the CPP tradition, it would form a new movement known as the New Democratic Movement (NDM). Not all of the members of the amorphous progressive intellectuals group, made the transition to the NDM. However, many other progressive intellectuals joined the NDM as a natural transition from activism in the student movement. Principal among the original members of the Movement were: Ofei Nkansah, Kwame Karikari, Ms Takyiwaa Manuh, Kwasi Adu-Amankwah, Kwame Mfodwo, Tsatsu Tsikata, Fui Tsikata, Dr. Kwesi Botchwey, Ato Austin, Anthony Akoto Ampaw, Jude Quarshie and Ms Cynthia Aninkora Nuamah. In April, 1980, one Dodoo, a Public Servant, became the chairperson.⁹⁰

5.15.2.4 The NDM was basically leftist in philosophy, and its main purpose was to create a platform for the propagation of socialist ideology through seminars, workshops, etc. It functioned through its study groups and study cells, but did not engage in active field operations as did the JFM. It focused on education because it felt that Self-Rule and Independence had not been meaningful to the people of Ghana since the national economy was still dominated by external forces. Consequently, the need to raise the consciousness of the people in order to ensure that social and political policy would be directed at promoting indigenous Ghanaian enterprise. Such awareness-raising would also ensure that democracy would go beyond the articulation of formal political rights to meaningfully impact on the lives of the people. It also believed that Africa stood a better chance of winning the economic war if it operated on a united front. For this reason, the group was committed to promoting pan-Africanism as well as gender consciousness.

⁸⁹ Memorandum to National Reconciliation Commission.

⁹⁰ Contrary to what some authors have stated, Sgt Akata Pore was never a member.

VOLUME 4 CHAPTER 5

5.15.2.5 When the 31st December, 1981 coup occurred, its members became active in the People's /Workers Defence Committees (PDCs/WDCs) since the establishment of the Defence Committees was an idea that ran through all popular socialist movements because they were seen to be the means by which the people could maximize their power. The NDM also embarked on a programme to provide the people with political guidance, and were active in both the Student and Labour movements. It was in the light of this commitment to conscientise the people that, in 1982, it was active in holding educational seminars on various national issues.

5.15.2.6 The NDM opposed certain aspects of the exercise of people's power, and it remonstrated with those PDCs which were harassing traders to desist from doing so, as well as with the Greater Accra Regional Secretary, for adopting certain measures against vendors in Accra, arguing that those actions did not advance the revolution in any way since its main aim was to fight imperialism.⁹¹

5.15.2.7 The intellectual debates within the National Defence Committee (NDC) were not idle intellectual debates, but had significance for the direction of the national economy. This was because at the time of the coup of 31st December, 1981, the economy was in shambles, a major justification for the take-over. Thus, right from the first day, a major challenge to the PNDC Government as well as a major threat to its stability was how it was going to manage the economy.

5.15.2.8 The threat to stability increased with every passing day, but the options seemed to be limited. The economy needed a major infusion of capital, but approaches to socialist economies had not yielded much. Therefore it appeared that the economy could get support only if it would agree to the IMF way, and this ignited a huge debate within the regime. Economists, such as Dr. Joe Abbey, were pushing the orthodox line and the debate was as to whether the currency should be devalued, according to the prescription of the IMF. The extreme leftists who dominated the NDC, were completely opposed to any notion of devaluation. Therefore when the Economic Review Team that had been established to manage the economy did a presentation to the NDC on the new direction of the economy, the NDC rejected it. The NDC then appointed another committee to review the plan and propose more acceptable options.

5.15.2.9 Subsequently, from these ideological clashes, it became clear that "government by ideology" was not going to work, and therefore, a move was made to purge the extreme leftists from the PNDC and NDC. The NDC was reorganized, to make the Chairman of the PNDC its Chairman.

5.15.2.10 The NDM was sidelined, and it moved into opposition by December, 1984. It linked up with a Catholic action group led by Rev Fr Joop Visser, a Dutch Catholic priest, and criticized the government's social commitment. It had thus embarked upon a collision course with the government, and it was only a matter of time before the government mounted an attack on it.

⁹¹ *Daily Graphic*, Vol. 9748 Saturday, 6th March, 1982, p.14.

VOLUME 4 CHAPTER 5

5.15.2.11 The time came, when the government announced a programme of decentralization of government structures. This was in 1986. The NDM and other progressive groups opposed the concept and they protested because they suspected that the government was transforming itself from a “provisional government” to a “permanent government” by using the hierarchical structure of District Assemblies, Regional Assemblies, National Assemblies with Chairman Rawlings at the top. The NDM’s protest led to the arrest of its principal activists in 1986. However, they were soon released.

5.15.2.12 In 1987, some leading members of NDM were arrested again for opposing government policies. This time, they were detained without trial, for periods ranging from a few months, up to two years.

5.15.2.13.0 Funding

5.15.2.13.1 Evidence put before the Commission, was to the effect that the NDM had no external funding, and that it was the members themselves who funded everything from their own pockets, because the members were motivated by ideas and a will to achieve social transformation.

5.15.2.14 In 1990, on the initiative of the Kwame Nkrumah Revolutionary Guards (KNRG), many of the groups involved in the struggle for a return to civilian rule agreed to work together in one organization known as Movement for Freedom and Justice (MFJ). This body that included the NDM, was inaugurated in August, 1990, with the avowed aim of fighting for the return to constitutional rule.

5.15.3 KWAME NKURUMAH REVOLUTIONARY GUARDS⁹²

5.15.3.1 Kwame Nkrumah Revolutionary Guards (KNRG) was conceived, originally, as the left wing of the PNP. It was made up of senior CPP members of the extreme left, such as KSP Jantuah, FA Jantuah, Johnny Hansen, Sonny T Provencal and Emmanuel Owusu Gyimah. Its main concern was the maintenance of ideological purity of the PNP, and to protest the policy of deference to the IMF and World Bank; the government’s failure to participate in the Moscow Olympics of 1980; President Limann’s statement that he had no ideology, etc. It was also to be instrumental in the attempt to secure leftist unity in the country. The group participated in the Forum of leftist groups at Labone Secondary School, at which a decision was taken that Limann’s Government was not a socialist government and so was not to be given support by the socialist groups.

5.15.3.2 The KNRG was the first to issue a statement of support for the PNDC. In the *Daily Graphic* of 4th January, 1982, the KNRG sent a message of congratulations, signed by Provencal, to the newly-formed PNDC. In the statement, the KNRG complained about

⁹² Memorandum to the National Reconciliation Commission.

VOLUME 4 CHAPTER 5

the “laissez-faire policies” of the Limann Administration that had destroyed many homes and turned many Ghanaians into economic refugees in foreign lands. This attack on the PNP government by a senior member of the PNP was not really surprising since the Labone Forum had reached a consensus that the PNP Government had abandoned the socialist path. In any case, a number of its members who were also senior members of the PNP, quickly found their way into the new PNDC Government, and took up prominent positions.

5.15.3.3 Within the first year of the PNDC, the KNRG began to have problems with the government. When the murder of the three High Court Judges and the retired Army Officer occurred in June, 1982, the KNRG expressed its disapproval and issued a statement condemning the event, although the organization was perceived to be part of the PNDC.

5.15.3.4 In 1985, new personalities were recruited into the leadership. Kwesi Pratt (Jnr), a journalist with leftist credentials, became its General Secretary. By this time, the leftist credentials of the PNDC were being questioned, and so the programme of the new leadership was to attempt a unification of all the truly left-wing groups.

5.15.3.5 In early 1986, the KNRG built an alliance with the NDM and Africa Youth Command (AYC), all leftist groups, although the AYC did not last long in the alliance. The KNRG, joined a campaign for the release of Victor Owusu, leader of the former rightist Popular Front Party (PFP), who had been arrested on suspicion of involvement in a coup plot. This campaign had an interesting aspect: the leftist groups in the country, had joined up with rightist groups, to work for the release of the leader of a proscribed rightist party.

5.15.3.6 The KNRG was also one of the early advocates of a return to multi-party democracy when in 1986, it published a document rejecting the District Assembly concept and calling for a restoration of multi-party democracy. After this period, some of its activists such as John Ndebugre and Kwesi Pratt (Jnr) were arrested in 1987, and again in 1991, when Owusu Gyimah and Kwesi Pratt (Jnr) were arrested at Kwame Nkrumah Circle for putting up posters advocating a return to multi-party politics in 1991.

5.15.3.7 The KNRG began to disintegrate in 1992, when it became clear from the Report of the National Commission for Democracy (NCD) that multi-partyism was about to be restored, and various possibilities for joining various political parties of Nkrumaist persuasion had opened up. The members joined some of the new political associations they believed best represented the interests of the CPP family.

5.15.3.8 Funding Of The Kwame Nkrumah Revolutionary Guards

5.15.3.8.1 The KNRG was financed mostly by members such as Johnny Hansen, Lord Ocloo of ICU and many other people from the CPP. Ebo Tawiah, member of the PNDC,

VOLUME 4 CHAPTER 5

was also a member and provided some funds until he began to disapprove of the direction of the movement.

5.16 31ST DECEMBER, 1981 - 6TH JANUARY, 1993 PROVISIONAL NATIONAL DEFENCE COUNCIL (PNDC)

5.16.1 The Demise Of PNP Government

5.16.1.1 On 31st December, 1981, Flt Lt J.J. Rawlings took over the administration of the country and declared a “Holy War”. In the usual manner of seizures of power, the 1979 Constitution was suspended, the members of the government were dismissed; Parliament was dissolved; and all political parties were banned. Members of Parliament, the PNP leadership and other functionaries, were ordered to report to the nearest police station, where they were detained, and later sent to prisons around the country. This time round, the detentions were not limited to members of the ruling government, but included Members of Parliament of the minority parties as well. Some of these persons were thereby forced to go into exile in the neighbouring countries.

5.16.2 THE 31ST DECEMBER WOMEN’S MOVEMENT

5.16.2.1 It has been stated that no “analysis of the relation between the State and Women in Ghana would be complete without a consideration of the 31st December Women’s Movement.”⁹³ This statement is no exaggeration as the role of the movement is wound up with the course of the 31st December “revolution.”

5.16.2.2 On 15th May, 1982, a new women’s organization, the 31st December Women’s Movement was launched by Flt Lt Rawlings at the Nicholson Stadium in Accra. In his address, Flt Lt Rawlings was reported to have said:

Ghanaians could solve their problems if they would put an end to the habit of making the woman responsible for only bringing up children in the home. This habit, he noted had forced women to turn to ‘kalabule’ and trading because they could not feed their children... Flt Lt Rawlings hoped that with the formation of the movement, there was no doubt that a genuine and real revolution was taking place.⁹⁴

5.16.2.3 Formed to be the “Women’s wing of the revolution”, women were advised to join the revolution and fight alongside the men and be prepared to die in defence of the motherland.⁹⁵ The logo of the movement was a young woman holding a gun above her

⁹³ Takyiwaa Manuh, “Women, the State and Society under the PNDC” in *GHANA Under PNDC Rule*, E. Gyimah-Boadi (ed) CODESRIA BOOK SERIES, p.176, at p. 185.

⁹⁴ *Daily Graphic* Vol. 9806 Monday, 17th May, 1982, p.1.

⁹⁵ *Daily Graphic* Vol. 9842 Monday, 28th June, 1982, pp.1, 4/5.

VOLUME 4 CHAPTER 5

head with her left hand. The women wanted to be given military training so that they could shoot just as effectively as men, and so the women called upon the PNDC “to institute military training for them too so they could fight alongside their menfolk to defend and rebuilt [sic] the nation.”⁹⁶

5.16.2.4 The founders of the movement persuaded the wife of the Chairman of the PNDC, Nana Konadu Agyeman Rawlings, to become the president of the movement, and this act lent it the political clout and influence it needed.⁹⁷

5.16.2.5 The Movement (known as the DWM) began to spread across the country, using the network of queenmothers for its membership drive. By 1990, it was represented in every region, district and even locality. This massive drive, was said to be on account of the exposure that the First Lady, Nana Konadu Agyeman Rawlings, the DWM’s President had, on a visit to Cuba in 1983 to visit women’s organizations.⁹⁸ Credited with being the turning point in the life of the DWM, the visit to Cuba exposed the political advantages that an organization of that nature carried when represented at the remotest village level, in the country. Indeed, to mark the 5th anniversary of the 31st December revolution, 18 branches were inaugurated at the same time at Cape Coast.⁹⁹ According to Takyiwaa Manuh:

Queenmothers were also asked to put the power and the influence they wielded in the community behind the movement and to help in its mobilising and membership drives. In return for supporting the movement, queenmothers were promised representation with male chiefs on chieftaincy committees of traditional councils a move which boosted their power and influence and also carried some pecuniary advantages.¹⁰⁰

5.16.2.6 The DWM abandoned its initial militant approach and began to tackle projects aimed at providing income-generating resources for its members. It described itself as “a broad based development oriented Non Governmental Organisation which aspires to achieve these objectives through the effective mobilisation of women.”¹⁰¹ With its political clout, it soon had tentacles in every facet of economic activity. It became involved in a bakery project at Burma Camp, that had allegedly been begun on the initiative of some soldiers’ wives. The DWM wrestled the project from them, and took over the baking of bread for the Ghana Armed Forces (GAF). Soon a contract for the supply of kenkey with the GAF was also secured.

⁹⁶ *Daily Graphic* Vol. 9871 Monday, 2nd August, 1982, pp.1, 4/5.

⁹⁷ Kevin Shillington, *Ghana and the Rawlings Factor*, MACMILLAN PRESS LTD, 1992, p.152.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, p.153.

⁹⁹ *Ghanaian Times*, Vol. 9,120 Tuesday, 16th December, 1986, p.4.

¹⁰⁰ Manuh, *op cit supra*, p.118.

¹⁰¹ *31ST DECEMBER WOMEN’S MOVEMENT OF GHANA* Official Brochure of the Movement, p.2.

VOLUME 4 CHAPTER 5

5.16.2.7 The period 1986-1989 was a busy time for the DWM as it spread rapidly around the country. Various branches were inaugurated in villages around the country and given publicity in national newspapers. At the end of 1989, it was estimated that there were 450 branches of DWM in Ashanti Region alone.¹⁰² The DWM was organized along the lines of the Committees for the Defence of the Revolution (CDRs): it had zonal organizers; district organizers; regional organizers; and national officers. It co-operated with the “other revolutionary organs” and engaged in community clean-up programmes together during the various anniversary celebrations of the 31st December revolution.

5.16.2.8 The DWM also got involved in gari-making, palm oil processing, shea-butter processing, bead-making, pottery, etc. Apart from these businesses, the DWM was also into cultivation of the various crops, shea-nut picking, afforestation, etc. With the onset of HIV/AIDS, health projects also joined the list of the DWM’s projects.

5.16.2.9 With their involvement with women, it rapidly became clear that one of the major concerns and therefore the major obstacle to women’s participation in activities, economic or otherwise, was the welfare of their pre-school children. Therefore, in 1986, the DWM began to open Day-Care Centres all over the country and encouraged their branches to put up structures to serve this purpose.¹⁰³ At these day-care centers, pre-school education was subsidized.

5.16.2.10 Many of these centres were not new, or were alleged to belong to private persons, but they were all taken over and branded as the property of the DWM. It is estimated that by 1991, the DWM was financing 500 Day-Care Centres all over the country.¹⁰⁴ However, since there are no independently verifiable statistics of the DWM’s Day-Care Centres, it is impossible to be certain of these figures. For instance, in May, 1990, the estimated figure of what the DWM was reputed to own, stood at 252 Day-Care Centres,¹⁰⁵ but within a space of one year, the estimate stood at 500, making it difficult to give credit to either figure. According to a former member of the DWM:

carved a niche for itself in the gender and development terrain by championing the economic empowerment of women. It also facilitated the participation of women in small-scale income generating activities through the establishment of day nurseries which enabled women to free themselves of childcare to participate in entrepreneurial activities.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰² *Daily Graphic* Vol. 12158 Wednesday, 20th December, 1989, p.4.

¹⁰³ Edzodzinam Tsikata, “Women’s Political Organisations 1951-1987” in *The State Development and Politics in Ghana*, Emmanuel Hansen and Kwame A. Ninsin (eds), CODESRIA BOOK SERIES, Dakar, 1989, p.73, at p.86.

¹⁰⁴ Shillington, p.154.

¹⁰⁵ *People’s Daily Graphic* Vol. 12280 Wednesday, 16th May, 1990.

¹⁰⁶ Memorandum to the National Reconciliation Commission.

VOLUME 4 CHAPTER 5**5.16.2.11 Relationship With National Council On Women And Development (NCWD)**

5.16.2.11.1 In March, 1982, an activity organized by NCWD was picketed by a group of women, calling themselves “Concerned Women of Ghana”. In truth, these young women were activists of the nucleus group that became the DWM. The take-over of NCWD was therefore on the agenda right from its formation, and so it was not surprising that eventually, DWM used its immense political clout to get its members into the leadership of the NCWD.

5.16.2.11.2 The leadership of the DWM, determined that the NCWD, the national institution, set up in 1975¹⁰⁷ to mobilize women for national development, had gone outside its mandate of policy-making, into project implementation, and that such functions would be better performed by implementing agencies, such as the DWM, working under the oversight of the NCWD. It also criticized the NCWD for not doing enough gender-advocacy, and for losing focus in the execution of its mandate.

5.16.2.11.3 In 1986, the Governing Council of the NCWD, chaired by Prof Florence Dolphyne of the University of Ghana, was dissolved and an Interim Management Committee (IMC), with Mrs. Selina Taylor, a member of DWM, as its chairperson. Later, Mrs. Gertrude Zakaria-Ali, a founding member of the DWM, became the NCWD’s Executive Secretary. Other members of the DWM assumed various roles and ensured that the once-vibrant NCWD became a quiet little government organization, advising the government on women’s issues. By 1989, the NCWD had become completely emasculated by the DWM, and it was probably because of its statutory nature that it was permitted to exist, and not fully absorbed into the structures of the DWM.

5.16.2.11.4 In other aspects of national life, the DWM was equally prominent. According to Shillington:

It is believed that through the organization and its President, members gained the ear of the Head of State. Petitions and appeals against injustice are referred to Mrs. Rawlings in the sure knowledge that if the case is strong enough, and the allegations of injustice or corruption firmly founded, the details will be passed on to her husband. Then woe betide the wrong-doer as the Head of State, with his customary vigour, activates the full process of law. Similarly it is feared that the converse is also true and that the 31 December Women’s Movement is the eyes and ears of the Head of State.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁷ National Council on Women and Development Decree, 1975 (NRCD 322).

¹⁰⁸ Shillington, p.156.

VOLUME 4 CHAPTER 5

5.16.2.11.5 Indeed, it was even reported in May, 1989, that the Head of State himself and other members of the PNDC attended meetings of the DWM's executive committee. These acts gave it the aura of a state-sponsored agency.

5.16.2.11.6 The perception of the DWM as the only recognized national women's organization was given form and substance by the appointment of some of its members to district assemblies as government nominees. Wherever there was a requirement of representation for women, the DWM was the body that supplied candidates and so it had representation on many committees and bodies dealing with issues affecting women, children and the community. Prominent members of the DWM usually filled the slot for women on government delegations travelling abroad. The DWM was even reputed to be the official body administering scholarship schemes for women, especially to countries of Eastern Europe and Cuba.¹⁰⁹

5.16.2.11.7 The DWM also had affiliate bodies. Some of these were:

- Accra Markets Associations;
- Regional Administration Staff;
- Zion Women's Union;
- West E P Church Women;
- Battor Women's Union;
- Murtarmar Women's Association;
- Financial Institutions (Ladies' Clubs) ;
- Police Wives Association;
- Prisons Wives Association;
- Armed Forces Wives Association;
- Fire Service Wives;
- Achimota Brewery Ladies Club;
- GNATLASSs (Ghana National Association of Teachers Ladies' Associations);
- Dzodze Women's Union;
- Tsui Shitoo Alajo GBC;
- Beverages and Dispensers and Shacks [sic] Association (BEDSA);
- Information Ladies Club;
- Departmental Stores (Ladies' Club);
- Nurses Association;
- Media Ladies club;
- Power Queens Club;
- Ghana Hairdressers and Beauticians;
- Accra Zonal Co-operative Bakers Union Ltd; and
- Prison Officers Wives Association¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁹ Manuh, *supra*, p.188.

¹¹⁰ Manuh, *supra*, p. 195.

VOLUME 4 CHAPTER 5

5.16.2.11.8 In 1988 and 1992, a majority of the women who were elected to the District Assemblies and Parliament respectively, were those with strong links to the DWM as the DWM had created opportunities for women's participation in politics at the local level.¹¹¹

5.16.2.12 Funding Of December Women's Movement

5.16.2.12.1 The funding for this massive institutional structure was always a source of speculation. Many people suspected that it was largely state-funded, although this was vigorously denied often. However, it is incontrovertible that state-funding, by way of subsidies for the remuneration of its employees, was what enabled the organization to function to the levels that it operated during the mandate period. Many of its Day-Care Centre staff as well as its Regional Organisers and District Organisers were usually teachers still on the payroll of the Ministry of Education, although working full-time for the DWM.

5.16.2.12.2 The DWM did manage to attract funding from international agencies, such as the United Nations agencies of UNFPA and UNDP, etc. Since the DWM usually developed projects in areas where foreign funding was available, it procured funds for its programmes and projects. "Its influence and access to finance and logistics and resultant power or clout in directing policies was unimaginable".¹¹² Diplomatic Missions that wished to have improved relations with the country through social relations also made donations to the DWM.¹¹³

5.16.2.12.3 Direct funding from national resources was also secured, when the Programme of Action for the Mitigation of the Social Consequences of Adjustment (PAMSCAD) policies was initiated. This made sizeable sums of money available to the DWM for those of its operations that qualified for support.

5.16.3 CIVIL SOCIETY REACTION**5.16.3.1 The Early Years Of PNDC Rule**

5.16.3.1.1 Workers, farmers, fishermen, drivers, market women all began to declare their support for the revolution.¹¹⁴ The Greater Accra Branch of the National Canoe Fishermen Council also organized a demonstration to re-affirm the unflinching loyalty of the fishermen to the PNDC and the People's Revolution.¹¹⁵ When as usual, Makola Market

¹¹¹ Beatrix Allah-Mensah, *Women in Politics and Public Office in Ghana 1993-2004* Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, Accra, 2004, p.12 (forthcoming).

¹¹² Memorandum to National Reconciliation Commission.

¹¹³ *People's Daily Graphic* Vol. 10536 Thursday, 27th September, 1984, p.1.

¹¹⁴ *Daily Graphic*, Vol. 9772 Saturday 3rd April, 1982, p.5.

¹¹⁵ *Daily Graphic*, Vol. 9699, Friday, 8th January, 1982, p.1.

VOLUME 4 CHAPTER 5

Women also went to the Burma Camp too, to demonstrate in support of the revolution but were, ominously, chased out by soldiers.¹¹⁶ Soon, anger began to mount against the market women for increasing their prices.¹¹⁷

5.16.3.1.2 Many “mushroom” groups sprang up, each one trying to outdo the other, in their display of revolutionary favour. However, many did not last.

5.16.3.1.3 Cheered on by chants of “J.J.”, “J.J.” and “Junior Jesus”, the Chairman of the PNDC was very much in the centre of national life, as he cleared choked drains himself; helped to lay rail lines; dived to help clear the Volta Lake of aquatic weeds; and generally showed himself to be “a man of the people”. Consequently, there were expressions of popular support for the Chairman of the PNDC, and even the forces of disorder that had been unleashed on the society, did not appear to dim civil society support and reaction.

5.16.3.1.4 The attempted coup of Sunday, 19th June, 1983 (otherwise known as the Gyiwah coup¹), and the reaction of a part of civil society, was the first obvious display of the extent of disaffection against the PNDC Government in the country. Following the foiling of the attempt, there were mass arrests of persons (termed ‘jubilants’) because they were alleged to have expressed jubilation on hearing the news, as well as those who were accused of having been a part of the plot (termed ‘dissidents’). There was also a crackdown on dissent generally.

5.16.3.2 The Later Years

5.16.3.2.1 The vigorous suppression of dissent, as well as the implementation of strategies for co-optation, produced a general silence in the public domain towards officialdom. Labelled the “culture of silence”, this silence was ominous for the development of the nation because it excluded carefully crafted praise of all official action. A sociologist has lamented on the development thus:

The fact that we applaud certain utterances and behaviour patterns, instead of showing deserved contempt for such conduct, shows the abysmal absence of standards of public decency and decorum in social life, and for reasoned, dispassionate debate in contemporary Ghanaian society. What is even more pitiable is the manner in which people applaud enthusiastically in public, only for the same people to complain bitterly in privacy to confidantes.¹¹⁸

5.16.3.2.2 There was mass retrenchment (officially termed “redeployment”) from the public services. This created mass unemployment, as many quickly expended the amounts paid to them as the financial package that went with being “redeployed”. Promises of re-training were not honoured for a vast majority of the labour-force that was

¹¹⁶ *The Mirror*, Vol. 1461 Friday 8th January, 1982, p.3.

¹¹⁷ *Daily Graphic*, Vol. 9869 Friday, 30th July, 1982.

¹¹⁸ J. Max Assimeng, *An Anatomy of Modern Ghana*, J. B. Danquah Memorial Lectures, 28th Series, March, 1995, Ghana Academy of Arts and Sciences, Accra, 1996, p.43.

VOLUME 4 CHAPTER 5

shed. Consequently, poverty, particularly in urban areas, as manifested by a rise in female-headed households, began to produce the usual social problems, such as child labour in its modern manifestations, and “streetism”.

5.16.4 MOVEMENT FOR FREEDOM AND JUSTICE (MFJ)

5.16.4.1 This group was inaugurated on 2nd August, 1990,¹¹⁹ to spearhead the struggle for a return to civilian rule despite attempts by the government through the BNI to scuttle it. Its executive officers were the following:

- Prof. Albert Adu-Boahen - National Chairman;
- Johnny F.S.Hansen - 1st National Vice-Chairman;
- Ray Kakraba-Quarshie - 2nd National Vice-Chairman;
- Dan Lartey - National Treasurer;
- Obeng Manu - National Secretary
- Kwesi Pratt (Jnr) - Deputy National Secretary;
- John Ndebugre - National Organiser;
- Akoto Ampaw - National Executive Member;
- A.Owusu Gyimah - National Executive Member; and
- Dr. T . Darko - National Executive Member.

5.16.4.2 In August, 1990, the MFJ issued a statement condemning the suppression of free speech on account of the existence of “oppressive laws as the Preventive Custody Law”.¹²⁰ In 1991, it criticized various aspects of the transition process, such as the composition of the National Commission for Democracy (NCD), charged with devising rules for the transition. The MFJ also took issue with the government over the manner in which the programme for transition was being pursued without due representation of the citizenry.

5.16.5 THE POLITICAL PARTIES OF 1992

5.16.5.1 The country had been under military rule since 31st December, 1981. In the late 1980s, agitation began to be felt for a return to civilian rule. The NCD under the chairmanship of Mr. Justice Annan, a member of the PNDC, was tasked to go around the country and collate views on the form of civilian government that should be adopted. The NCD reported that the generality of Ghanaians favoured a multi-party democracy. A Committee of Experts was therefore commissioned to prepare proposals for a new constitution and they submitted a report in 1991. A Consultative Assembly was established to prepare a draft constitution for approval in a referendum.

¹¹⁹ Kabral Blay-Amihere, *Fighting For Freedom (The Autobiography of an African Journalist)*, Trans Afrika News Ltd. Accra, 2001, p.342.

¹²⁰ *Current Political Situation and the PNDC's Evolving Democratic Process* Press Statement on 5th April, 1991.

VOLUME 4 CHAPTER 5

5.16.5.2 Civil society organizations began to spring up which bore names that were indicative of their political agenda. The most prominent of these were: the Danquah-Busia Memorial Club, Our Heritage club, Kwame Nkrumah Welfare Society, Kwame Nkrumah Youngsters Club, Great Unity Club, the Ex-CPP Group, etc. In response to the emergence of these groups, the pro-Rawlings groups also formed the following clubs: Eagle Club, Friends of the Progressive Decade, Rawlings Fan Club, New Nation Club, Development Union, Development Club.¹²¹ These clubs eventually formed the nucleus of the political parties that were formed when the ban on political activities by the PNDC was lifted on 18th May, 1992.

5.16.5.3 A Referendum to approve the draft Constitution was held, amid criticisms that it was a waste of money. The GBA had argued that the Consultative Assembly should be given power to promulgate the Constitution. This was not done, nor was the Referendum made the occasion for the promulgation of the Constitution. The question for the Referendum was:

Do you approve of the Draft Constitution presented by the Consultative Assembly to the Provisional National Defence Council on Tuesday, 31st March, 1992 and published in the Gazette as the Constitution of the Republic of Ghana to come into force with effect from the 7th day of January, 1993?¹²²

5.16.5.4 The GBA complained that the formulation of the question for the referendum was unfair as it had rolled two questions into one:

namely whether the voter approves of the constitution as a whole, unreasonable though the question is, and secondly, whether the voter agrees that the constitution should come into force on 7th day of January, 1993, instead of immediately. These are two separate ideas and it should be possible to give a 'Yes' answer to the first while giving a 'No' answer to the second. To roll both questions into one question is, therefore, to prevent the people of Ghana from expressing effectively their views as to whether the Constitution should come into force from the moment of approval or whether its coming into force should be postponed for another 8 months after it has been approved.¹²³

5.16.5.5 A new Law on political parties was also promulgated to regulate the formation and administration of political parties. The Law set out the conditions and rules for the formation of political parties, as well as who was competent to form a party. The Law also dealt with the registration of political parties and stipulated among other conditions, that no party was to be formed on ethnic, regional, professional or religious basis; or use

¹²¹ Kwame Ninsin *GHANA'S POLITICAL TRANSITION 1990-1993 Selected Documents* Freedom Publications, Accra, 1996, p.129.

¹²² Executive Instrument No.18 of 1992.

¹²³ Ninsin, *supra*, p.145.

VOLUME 4 CHAPTER 5

words, slogans, symbols which could arouse ethnic, regional, professional or religious division, or use the symbols of the proscribed political parties.¹²⁴

5.16.5.6 As soon as the Political Parties Law was passed, and the lifting of the ban on political activities announced, there was a proliferation of parties, all of which announced their intention to contest the 1992 Presidential and Parliamentary Elections. Among the parties which emerged were the National Democratic Congress (NDC), the New Patriotic Party (NPP), the People's National Convention (PNC), the National Independence Party (NIP), the People's Heritage Party (PHP), the Ghana Democratic Republican Party (GDPP), the National Convention Party (NCP), the Egle Party, the New Generation Alliance (NGA), the National Justice Party, Good Citizens Party, Democratic People's Party (DPP), the Nkrumah National Party (NNP), the Concerned Citizens, Redemption Congress, Obaatan Pa Association, People's Party for Democracy and Development (PPDD), Great Consolidated People's Party (GCPP), etc. The manner in which political parties sprang up was criticized as being likely to create a situation in which some parties would end up "being composed of only founding and leading members, without a broad based membership"¹²⁵ Many of these did not survive to participate in the election.

5.16.5.7 These Political Parties claimed to be the inheritors of the legacy of Ghana's previous leaders. Those claiming the legacy of Dr. Kwame Nkrumah, President of the First Republic were: the PNC, PHP, NCP, NIP, NNP and PPDD. The NPP also traced its roots to the political tradition founded by Dr. J B Danquah and Dr. K A Busia. The NDC, the DPP and Egle claimed to be a continuation of the PNDC.

5.16.5.8 Some of these parties presented presidential candidates for the elections which were slated to be held one month ahead of the Parliamentary Elections in November and December respectively. Flt Lt J J Rawlings, Chairman of the PNDC was put up as the presidential candidate for four parties: the NDC, Egle Party, DPP and NCP, that had formed 'the Progressive Alliance'. The other parties had the following as their presidential candidates:

- NIP – Kwabena Darko;
- NPP -- Professor Adu Boahen;
- PHP – Lt-Gen Emmanuel A Erskine;
- PNC – Dr. Hilla Limann.

5.16.5.9 The banning of the old political parties and the prohibition of the use of their symbols under the Political Parties Law, was seen by the leaders of the new political parties as a violation of the fundamental human rights, in particular, freedom of association. They therefore decided to contest the issue in court, and 29 persons, all leaders of the opposition, joined in the suit. They were led by K A Gbedemah, and

¹²⁴ Political Parties Law, 1992 (PNDC L 281), sections 2, 10 and 11; *Ghanaian Times*, vol. 10,892 Wednesday, 13th May, 1992, p.1.

¹²⁵ *Ghanaian Times*, Vol. 10,964 Thursday, 6th August, 1992, p.3. Comment by Kwaku Baah, a veteran politician and an Accra-based Legal Practitioner.

VOLUME 4 CHAPTER 5

included such prominent politicians as B.J. da Rocha, Dr. Hilla Limann, and Professor A. Adu Boahen.¹²⁶ They sought a declaration that the Political Parties Law as published by the PNDC was a violation of the fundamental human rights of freedom of association of Ghanaians.

5.16.5.10 This action was dismissed by the High Court, which invoked its inherent jurisdiction in order to declare that it had no jurisdiction to entertain the plaintiffs' action.¹²⁷ The Judge, Mr Justice Kwadu Amponsem, merely wished Ghana the "peace of God which passeth all understanding", and dismissed the suit. The newspapers reported that the court had struck out the case because it was frivolous and vexatious, yet the judge specifically stated that the court "was not saying that the Plaintiffs' action is frivolous and vexatious" (emphasis in original).¹²⁸ The Interim National Electoral Commission (INEC) therefore proceeded to put arrangements in place for the elections.

5.16.5.11 The parties warmed themselves up into the political game in 1992, when they received their certificates of registration and started vigorous campaigns to win political power. During the elections, soldiers were deployed in Kumasi to keep order, but it was generally felt that they had been deployed to intimidate the electorate. In spite of the fact that the political temperature was high, Ghanaians went through the Presidential Elections peacefully, with the National Democratic Congress (NDC) winning the Presidential Elections in November, 1992.

5.16.5.12 The opposition parties were not satisfied with the results, alleging various electoral malpractices. Consequently, all the parties, with the exception of the NCP, Egle party and DPP announced a boycott of the parliamentary elections.¹²⁹ These were the only elections for constitutional government that were held outside the terms of the 1992 Constitution that was to govern the affairs of the Republic.

5.16.5.13 Some activists of opposing parties in Kumasi, in particular, were arrested and detained for two weeks at the offices of the Bureau of National Investigations (BNI) in Accra. They were later released without charge. At Kwesimintsim in Takoradi, a man who was a well-known activist of the NDC was the victim of arson, leaving him nearly dead from severe burns. Activists of the NPP were immediately suspected and some prominent activists from Kwesimintsim were arrested and detained for about two months. There was evidence before the Commission that they were subjected to severe ill-treatment during the time in custody. They were eventually released when no evidence was found against them, and rumours emerged that the source of the arson was due to intra-party squabbles, and not inter-party rivalry.

¹²⁶ *Ghanaian Times*, Vol. 10,895 Saturday, 16th May, 1992, p.3.

¹²⁷ *K.A. Gbedemah and 28 Others v. Interim National Electoral Commission*. SUIT No 1087/1992; decided on 26th May, 1992 by Kwadu Amponsem J High Court, Accra.

¹²⁸ *Ghanaian Times*, Vol. 10,904 Wednesday, 27th May, 1992, p.1.

¹²⁹ *Ghanaian Times* Vol 11,034 Thursday, 5th November, 1992, p.1.

VOLUME 4 CHAPTER 5

5.16.5.14 The Fourth Republic was inaugurated on 7th January, 1993, the date for the coming into force of the 1992 Constitution.

5.17 CONCLUSION

5.17.1 Apart from a few which were formed between 1958 and 1968, most Professional Bodies (other than legal) and Civil Society Groups were formed in the 1970s and later. Professional Bodies and Civil Society Organizations are generally expected, by virtue of their learning and expertise, to be more concerned about and more actively involved in human rights issues and, therefore, spearhead the fight against human rights violations and abuses.

5.17.2 Admittedly, some voices were raised by some of the Professional Bodies and Civil Society organizations at gross human rights violations and abuses during the mandate period. However, these were too feeble, too sporadic and too disjointed to make the desired impact on society, because it was generally felt by professionals that human rights issues are the preserve of political parties and that politics was a vocation that could not be mixed with one's professional practice. Thus, the culture of respect for, and tutelage of human rights *per se* was hardly one of the objects of the Professional Bodies and Civil Society organizations dealt with in this chapter.

5.17.3 Evidence shows the Professional Bodies (as represented by the ARPB), and the Civil Society Organizations, were very active in the fight for constitutional governance, in particular, during the latter days of the SMC I, through the short-lived SMC II, the AFRC days and finally, during the PNDC regime. The ARPB deserves commendation; it was the loudest voice of opposition, at the time, to unconstitutionality, which was and gave rise to several gross violations and abuses of the human rights of the citizenry

5.17.4 Professional Bodies should not confine themselves to the pecuniary interests of their respective associations alone, but also avail themselves of the opportunity to make human rights interventions when necessary. They should make human rights education and protection an integral part of their professional responsibility and ethics.

5.17.5 Of the four Civil Society Organizations that sprang from the roots of the AFRC Revolution that are discussed in this chapter, only the MFJ was anti-PNDC right from its inception. The others, NDM, KNRG and DWM were overtly pro-PNDC, and therefore saw nothing wrong vis-à-vis human rights issues of the regime. Their concerns were merely ideological, or were focused on widening the support base for the PNDC, and could not be said to have championed human rights issues *per se*.

5.17.6 It has to be admitted, though, that at the time, in a country where nearly everyone and every institution had either been cowed into silence or co-opted by the PNDC Government, it was no surprise that most Civil Society organizations could only mind their own business, or join the government band wagon in perpetrating further violations

VOLUME 4 CHAPTER 5

and abuses against fellow citizens and institutions that dared march out of step and tune with the “revolution.”

5.17.7 During the mandate period, political parties however, had a lot to do either defending human rights or violating them or even condoning with their violations and abuse. In the pre-Independence period, political associations and groupings were themselves founded, based inadvertently or otherwise, on considerations that promoted one abuse or the other of human and social rights. They were mostly founded on ethnic or religious or regional affiliations. Only later, were those ethnic – religion – region-based political associations compelled by law to team up and form an opposition that was nationalist in aspect. This was good for the promotion of a sense of nationhood, in a newly-independent country.

5.17.8 Throughout the mandate period, however, the two main political traditions, namely, the CPP and the UP took turns in violating and abusing the human rights of sections of the citizenry, or in condoning violations and abuses as and when they (the parties) were in power or were allied with the military regime that had usurped constitutional governance. Thus, one cannot say of the political parties that they pursued an agenda of championing human rights. Indeed, when in power, they abused and violated them and seemed insensitive to the human rights of those supposedly in opposition.

5.17.9 Invariably, these political parties and their membership too suffered violations and abuses of their human and institutional rights, whenever their governments were ousted in the military take-overs that characterized the mandate period. The power to suppress the human rights of the opponent, was seen as one of the spoils of victory over the opponent.

5.17.10 All said and done, there was not, indeed, a good or even fair sense of the notion of fighting human rights causes, let alone their respect and support among the elite, the leadership and practitioners of party politics. This is a serious shortcoming that calls for remedial action. There is the need to inculcate into the rank and file of the citizenry and also into institutions and organizations such as Professional Bodies and Civil Society Organizations, the need to champion, and so develop the culture of respect for the human and civil rights of all.

5.17.11 In the context of the political parties, this need is paramount, if the art and good practice of partisan politics, the bedrock of good and democratic governance, is to be sustained and the harmonious co-existence of citizens, irrespective of their ethnic, religious or political affiliation, is to be ensured.

5.17.12 On Civil Society generally, an expert on national security has outlined the part that Civil Society plays in maintaining national political stability. According to him,

An irresponsible citizenry is as much a threat to national security as an irresponsible leadership... Where the people do not know their basic

VOLUME 4 CHAPTER 5

rights, or do not care to know, there is a problem, because they can be tossed about and manipulated not only by politicians, but by all those who seek to exercise authority over others. Again where the citizenry is irresponsible to the extent that basic laws and rules that regulate good conduct in the society are violated, in some cases with impunity, there is a problem... An irresponsible or discontented or frustrated or disillusioned people constitute a fertile base for insecurity.¹³⁰

5.17.13 Civil Society must take its share of the blame in the events that have produced massive human rights abuses in the country. It must now be appreciated by all, that taking to the streets and dancing to welcome a usurper, has always been the first step towards condoning, and even giving approval to, all human rights abuses committed by a particular regime. The need to know, respect, uphold and defend human rights is of paramount importance in the march for peace, freedom and justice.

5.17.14 It is clear on the evidence, that abuses are most brutal and rampant during periods of non-constitutional rule. Therefore, it is in the interest of all citizens that democratic and constitutional forms of government be maintained, to create space for the nurturing of a culture of respect for human and civil rights of the citizenry. Therefore, Civil Society also plays a part in ensuring that no usurper is tolerated, or given room to operate, even in the event of seizure of power. Civil Society and Civil Society Organizations must stand up and give meaning to those words in our National Anthem:

“And help us to resist oppressors rule with all our will and might forever more.”

¹³⁰ K B Quantson, *Ghana: NATIONAL SECURITY: The Dilemma*, NAPASVIL VENTURES, Accra, 2003, p.94.