

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST

DR. HILLA LIMANN 1934 – 1998:

HIS LIFE AND TIMES

BY

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## DECLARATION

### Candidate's Declaration

*I hereby declare that this dissertation is the result of my own original work and that no part of it has been presented for another degree in this university or elsewhere.*

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### Supervisors' Declaration

*We hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of this thesis were supervised in accordance with the guidelines on supervision of thesis laid down by the University of Cape Coast.*

Principal Supervisor's Name: Prof. B. G. Der

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## **ABSTRACT**

The work takes a critical look at the life and times of Dr. Hilla Limann, President of the Third Republic of Ghana. The thesis offers readers an insight into the life, struggle, works, successes and the failures of Hilla Limann. The work endeavours to examine the life of Hilla Limann and his meteoric rise to power in 1979. Through his own persuasion, determination and hard work, Limann pursued the educational ladder outside Ghana and became a well-educated man. The study discovered that Limann was not a novice in politics and social leadership. In theory he had undergone rigorous academic discipline. Between 1965 and 1978, he worked with Ghana's Ministry of Foreign Affairs where he played various high profile roles at the Foreign Missions. The studies also try to establish whether Limann had any CPP credentials before he was elected as the PNP Presidential candidate in 1979. It discovered that he was not a member of the Nkrumahist tradition and that it was the maneuverings of Alhaji Imoru Egala that brought Limann to the PNP.

This research has relied mostly on primary information obtained mainly through extensive interviews with Limann's family, former classmates and political associates and opponents of his time. Published works, articles in magazines and journals, party and government documents, newspaper report and secondary accounts relating to his life and political activities were used to corroborate the information obtained.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The scholarship enterprise is never the work of one person. Sir Isaac Newton is reported to have said that the reason why he managed to see further was because he had stood on the shoulders of giants. In this respect, it not easy to recall, let alone, repay one's intellectual debts. The authors on whose shoulders I have stood can easily be discerned from the notes and references.

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## **DEDICATION**

This work is dedicated to my children and to the memory of  
Dr. Hilla Limann, President of the Third Republic of Ghana.

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## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

*“A good biography reveals not only the life of its subject but also the time in which the person lived. If the biography is of a politician, the book should encompass insight into the politics of the era.”<sup>1</sup>*

Professor Ali Mazrui, 2007.

Politics in Ghana since 1957 has undergone manifold changes under different political leaders. In our search for democracy, Ghanaians have experienced a series of regimes each of which possessed a distinctive flavour and left its own unique legacy. Through their vision and work these political leaders inspired their people at different times. One such personality was Dr. Hilla Limann.

In 1979, Dr. Hilla Limann who was described as “a new and hitherto unknown in the national politics of Ghana” made history when he emerged from political obscurity to become the Peoples’ National Party (PNP) presidential candidate after he had initially failed to win the 1954 parliamentary election in the Sisaala Constituency. Many were those who asked in amazement “Dr. Li Who” when his name was mentioned as the presidential candidate of the PNP. This was largely because whilst he was carrying out national and international assignments behind his desk in the hierarchy of Ghana’s Foreign Service, Dr.Hilla Limann was

publicly heard of by only a few people among the communities of Ghana south of his own region of birth up north. Born to a humble family, Limann's life embodied the struggle of a youngman in search of his future through hard work and will power. He went to Britain in 1955 where he remained for ten years and acquired degrees in Economics, History, French, and Political Science and Constitutional Law. His government was violently overthrown on 31<sup>st</sup> December, 1981, after barely 27 months in power and thereafter he suffered ignominious existence. After the return of the country to multi-party constitutionalism in 1992, he founded the Peoples' National Convention and contested the 1992 election but lost. Hilla Limann however continued to be the leader of the PNP and championed the cause of unity of the Nkrumahist Family until his death on 23<sup>rd</sup> January, 1998. His tenure of office was particularly important because it marked one of the most critical periods in Ghana's political history. He contributed in no small way to certain reforms in independent Ghana. His vision and work can be compared to Nkrumah. His life and work need to be fully documented so that he will be immortalized in the annals of Ghanaian history.

This study is an attempt to examine the life, vision and work of Dr. Hilla Limann within the framework of historical biographical analysis. The study has examined Hilla Limann's personality, background, behaviour, attitude, career and his achievements and failures in the context of the political history of Ghana. The study spans the period from 1934, when he was born, to 1998, when he died. His life as a student, teacher, and a Foreign Service Officer are considered as

important parts of this study, but emphasis is placed on his life as a politician from 1979 to 1981 and his re-entry into politics from 1992 to 1996.

The study attempts not just to give a mere narration of Limann's life, but to make an analysis and interpretation of the life, vision and work of this illustrious son of Ghana. The attempt is not to paint a biographical portrait of Limann but to discover what light his acts and utterances throw on actions of the past and their consequences in society. Consideration is given to general and historical factors and antecedents within the period of his life. In many cases, an attempt is made to compare Limann's perception of a situation to others before him. In the study, considerable emphasis has been placed on how Limann viewed or conceived of the social, economic, and political situation of Ghana.

The most essential concept of this study is the "*trait*" and "*situational- interactional approach*" proposed by Sir Francis Galton in *Hereditary Genius*<sup>2</sup> in which he argued that individual and family traits that are genetic are inherited but conditions in one's environment can influence one's action and performance. Hilla Limann no doubt was born as a straight forward and honest person but his successes and failures can be attributed to the environment in which he found himself. As "a political actor's orientation to a situation, his opinion and his style of role behavior are shaped by the interplay of personality characteristics and the perceived demands of his political environment".<sup>3</sup> I examine Limann's political life by using a modified combination of the trait and situational-interactional approaches. Such an approach has helped me to relegate Limann's personality

traits from a determinantal status to a position of a contributing factor to be studied together with the following factors:

1. the social, economic and political norms and values in the Ghanaian political setting within which Limann and his party operated.
2. the nature of the task which confronted Limann and the way his party perceived the task and the expectation of the Ghanaian people.
3. the way Limann and his party sought political power and the factors which catapulted them eventually into and out of political power.
4. the way Limann and his party reacted to their supporters, opponents, critics, organized groups and the branches of government.

This approach “is based on the central findings of social scientists that leadership is not a matter of universal traits but rooted in a particular culture”.<sup>4</sup> In this vein, Hilla Limann’s political life can be understood only in terms of the political, economic, social, and ideological environment in which he operated. By doing this, the study hopes to draw a detailed picture of Limann.

The investigation of history is extremely important because as it was put by Karl Marx, one of the leading philosophers of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, “men make their own history but... not... as they please; they do not make it under circumstances chosen by themselves, but under circumstances directly encountered, given and transmitted from the past. The tradition of all the dead generations weighs like a nightmare in the brains of the living”.<sup>5</sup>

The study is worth the time and energy because, “Biography especially of the great and good, who have risen by their own exertions and eminence and

usefulness is an enabling study. Its direct tendency is to reproduce the excellence it records".<sup>6</sup> Since biographies can help "you to better understand some of the issues which historians and other scholars have struggled with in their teaching, research and writing".<sup>7</sup> a detailed biography of Limann would serve as a contribution to the historical records.

### **Statement of the Problem**

The role of political leaders in all societies is very crucial. They play an important role in national development. Society develops or fails to develop depending on the extent to which its political leadership is intelligent, creative, committed, has the ability to enlist support, induce loyalty, and to inspire confidence. They are awarded the accolades when nations succeed and given the blame for their failures. For these reasons the lives of political leaders need thorough examination. After taking time to study the trend of writing of history on post-independence leaders, I have realized that whereas much work has been done on the political lives of Nkrumah and Busia, no detailed biographical work has been produced on Limann. Indeed, in spite of his high profile role as a diplomat, politician, and a statesman, who assumed the mantle of leadership as President of the Third Republic of Ghana, very little is known about today. The little that has been done about him placed more emphasis on his administration rather than his life as a political leader in the rough and tumble of Ghanaian politics. The subject of the life, background, behavior, attitude and role of Limann in Ghanaian politics has received virtually no attention, as the available literature shows. In some cases, even where the effort is made, it is usually treated in a page or two or

sometimes in an expanded sentence. He is only profoundly remembered in Ghanaian politics as “Dr. Li Who” The story of Dr. Limann forms a legitimate and an indispensable part of the heritage which generations will have to remember. It is this defect and vacuum which has inspired me to carry out this study in order to remedy the situation by producing an in-depth biographical work on Dr. Hilla Limann and his contribution to the socio-economic and political developments in Ghana.

### **Literature Review**

Political leaders are often the most talked about and the the least known component of polity. Very little is known about their background, behavior and attitudes. This is primarily attributed to the scarcity of studies of the political lives of leaders. Lewis Edinger in his work *Political Leadership in Industrialized Societies: Studies in Comparative Analysis* attributed this scarcity to the shift in political science towards the behavioural approach in order to establish a science of politics.

Lewis Edinger, in his work *Kurt Schumacher: A Study of Personality and Political Behaviour*, made some very useful contribution to the study of political leadership. Edinger’s work examines the life of Kurt Schumacher, the post-war leader of the German Democratic Party until 1952. The work which focused on the interaction between Schumacher’s personality traits and the setting in which he operated, creates a better understanding not only of the leader’s behavior but also of other actors aspiring to be political leaders. However, Edinger’s study, like the trait approach, which attributes leadership qualities to the genetic

characteristics of the family, placed too much emphasis on the political actor. He attributes decisive influence on political developments to the individual leader rather than the effect of socio-economic forces on such leaders.

Equally, James MacGregor Burns in his work *Roosevelt, The Lion and the Fox 1882-1940*, used a similar approach in his study of the life of President Franklin Roosevelt. His analysis tends to be applicable to a single role leadership such as that of the American presidency as it functions in the American style of democracy. A better understanding of the life of Hilla Limann as a political actor will require a combination of both the trait and situational-interactional approaches which have been used by many scholars in their study of political leaders.

A critical examination of scholarly works on the political history of Ghana has revealed that there are volumes of literature on politics and political leaders in the Ghanaian political scene. Unfortunately, none of these writers have focused on the life and personality of Hilla Limann. What is often found in the available literature are passing references occasionally made to him especially books which discuss politics in Ghana. The result is that readers of these works become more curious for in-depth information on Hilla Limann in order to understand and appreciate his life, vision and work against existing knowledge, perceptions and viewpoints.

Mention can be made of Kevin Shillington work, *Ghana and the Rawlings Factor*, Naomi Chazan's *Ghana: Managing Political Recession 1969-1982*, Amamoo, J.G, *Ghana: 50 Years of Independence*, and Paul Nugent's *Big*

*Men, Small Boys and Politics in Ghana: Power, Ideology and the Burden of History, 1982-1994*. In their respective publications on the politics of Ghana, they traced some significant political developments. They all provide scraps of information on Limann's educational background his working experience and his entry into politics. They also shed some light on the Limann's personality. Shillington, for instance, views Limann's credentials as impeccable but describes him as "a new and hitherto unknown figure in the national politics of Ghana".<sup>8</sup> It is from Shillington work we learn that Limann was a compromise figure in the PNP choice of candidate for presidential office. He informs us that Limann had no personal power – base of his own within his party (PNP) and therefore he became a captive to those powerful interests group who had engineered his election and expected some returns on their investment. However, Shillington's work is based on own observation and does not have adequate documentation on Limann. Despite the valuable information he provided, the main thrust of his work is not the life Hilla Limann.

Amamoo expressed views similar to those of Shillington in his work *Ghana: 50 Years of Independence*. In that work, he describes Limann as a novice in national politics who had before his election established a good record for himself as an honest and a decent diplomat. He argues that although Limann was a novice to the politics of Ghana, he had around him men holding immense political clout, most notably Kwesi Armah, Imoru Egala, and Nana Okutwer, who could be of vital importance to him. The work, due to its broad focus on politics



in Ghana lacks major details on the life and works of Limann. My study fills this gap.

Naomi Chazan, whose work, reflects the political setting and the kinds of problems with which Ghanaian politicians have had to deal with in post independent Ghana, sheds some light on the Limann government. According to Chazan, the coming into office of the Limann government signified a major watershed in the political history of Ghana. In her analysis of the Limann's administration, Chazan identified the challenges the government faced and says that the condition under which the new civilian experiment started could not have been more dismal. She argues that the failure of the Limann regime was due to: its inability to consolidate its grasp of the state institutions, the inability to guide the economy on the path to recovery, and its forfeiture of the support of those segments of the society that had facilitated its rise to power. The book, which is well documented, makes a broad sweeps of various aspects of politics in Ghana and will serve as a reference material to this work.

Nana Essilfie – Conduah's book, *Ghana; The Third Republic* and Ebo Hutcful's *Ghana Adjustment Experience* provides some information on the administration of Hilla Limann. Essilfie-Conduah's work focuses exclusively on Limann's administration. The work provides useful information in the area of the Executive, the Legislature, party politics and the media during the Third Republic. The work also discusses the Executive's relationship with the media and Limann's relationship with his party. Conduah provides a narrative account of issues from a news reporter's perspective to enable people form a broadly fair

opinion about the successes and failures of the Limann government. Its exclusive focus on the Limann administration notwithstanding, the main thrust of this my thesis is not addressed.

Writing about the failures of the Limann regime, Hutchful mentioned among other things that an approach by Limann to the IMF was resisted by the right wing of the PNP, dominated by the party financiers, who were anxious to exploit the import – licensing and administrative control system. This, in his view, was to enable them recoup their investments in the party, and hence were opposed to devaluation and liberalization. Hutchful writes that Limann himself had little control over the party or the party bosses, and “it was doubtful that he possessed the political or moral authority to persuade the party or the country to acquiesce to a stabilization programme”.<sup>9</sup> Such observations on the personality of Limann were part of the reasons for the arguments that he was not his own man and did not have control over the party.

In their treatment of political occurrences and revolutionary politics in Ghana some writers throw light of the fall of the Limann administration. Mention can be made of Mike Ocquaye’s *Politics in Ghana 1982-1992*, K.N Awoonor’s *The Ghana Revolution*, Deborah Pellow and Naomi Chazan’s *Ghana: Coping with Uncertainty* and Donald Ray’s *Ghana: Politics Economy and Society*. For example, Ocquaye in his study of the Rawlings Revolution and democracy in Ghana provides useful hints on the 31<sup>st</sup> December coup which ousted Limann from power. He identified the threat posed by Rawlings to the Limann regime, the failure of the regime to devalue the cedi, the economic policies of the Limann

regime which were considered as sell-out by some segments of the ruling party and the political bickering among members of Limann's party as the factors that made Limann to lose control of the state. Pellow and Chazan agreed with Oquaye and recount that since its formation the PNP had suffered from internal conflict revolving around the rivalry of the old guards of CPP activists and new guards of the young politicians. They argue that Limann stood before the two factions, and when Imoru Egala died, a vicious struggle for party leadership erupted. In their own very different ways, Oquaye and Chazan further argue that because Limann was operating under severe constraints, he could not rise to the task of providing leadership. My work sketches the turf on which these writers traversed and seek to detail the lifestory, problems and failures of the Limann.

Awoonor on the other hand also makes similar arguments about the Limann civilian. Awoonor whose work seeks to justify the 31<sup>st</sup> December, 1981 event, writes that the Limann government had broken faith with the people, undermined political liberty, the rule of law, fundamental human rights and fostered sheer arbitrariness in determining and disposing of the rights of individuals. He recounts the harassment of Flt. Lt. Jerry Rawlings and Captain Kojo Tsikata by the security agents during Limann's era. Awoonor's scathing sarcasm about Limann cannot be over emphasized as he notes "Limann behaved like a punch drunk boxer who cannot see his opponent in the ring and starts throwing blows at everyone in sight including those who were in the ring to help him to his corner where he could regain his vision and senses".<sup>10</sup> A more dispassionate assessment of Limann era must take into consideration the

economic, social and political forces of the time, which Awoonor failed to do. The study hopes to fill the gap.

Donald Ray's book explores the political, economic and social structure of Ghana from the 1950s through the assumption of power by Flight – Lieutenant Jerry Rawlings. In his treatment of the coming of the 31<sup>st</sup> December Revolution, he argues that the failure of Limann's government to solve the economic crisis and the political corruption that it engendered, as well the failure of Limann to face the issues of devaluation and price controls contributed to his overthrow. Ray also helps us to understand some of the challenges Limann faced as a President from radical groups. Even though Ray's views in his work are helpful in understanding some of the factors that led to the fall of the regime, issues such as his life as a politician and how he fared in office are not addressed.

In his work *Ghana in Search of Development: The Challenge of Governance Economic Management and Institution Building*, Dan-Bright S.Dzorgbo discusses the challenges, policies and achievements of the Limann administration. He identified low foreign investment, gross mismanagement of the economy and political instability as the main challenges that confronted Limann and his government. Dzorgbo argues that the regime displayed a lack of purpose to tackle the national crisis it inherited. He writes that the Limann regime's claim to the CPP heritage was almost hollow because it refused to identify with socialist ideology preferring to portray its ideology as 'to save Ghana'. He also informs us that the regime could boast of some modest achievements in the areas of bilateral economic relations and the promulgation of a

new Investment Code. His assertion that political leaders are confined in one way or the other by external circumstances is instructive. These and other concerns are issues of further analysis in this thesis.

S. W. D. K Gandah, a close friend and colleague in his own autobiography, *The Silent Rebel*, provides us with valuable information on the life of Hilla Limann. Gandah demonstrates very well his knowledge of the first political leaders from the North, and the first President of northern origin, Hilla Limann, with whom he lodged in London. Gandah gives a vivid account of his personal interaction with Limann and Imoru Egala in Tumu in the early 1950s. He provides useful information on Limann's life as a teacher, his education, his active participation in the local and district council politics of the Sisaala District Council from 1952 to 1955 and his participation in the 1954 Parliamentary election in the Tumu Constituency. He informs us how Limann had to embark on private studies to further his education. Gandah also tells us the process leading to Limann's departure to the United Kingdom for further studies. It is from Gandah's work we learn that Limann received an amount of £200 from the Sisaala District Council to support his education. He also gives us an insight into the life Limann lived in London. The interspersed important information on Hilla Limann in a work on the personal memoir of Gandah shows how intimate they were. Though Gandah's work is informative, Limann's later life as a diplomat, his entry into politics, and his life as President of the Third Republic are not discussed. My work fills the gaps.

Kofi Batsa in his work, *The Spark: Times Behind Me, From Kwame Nkrumah To Hilla Limann*, recounts his personal experiences in politics in Ghana from the time of the First Republican government of Kwame Nkrumah to the time when Limann was ousted from power. Batsa synthesizes information on Limann and the People's National Party from an eye-witness account. He also outlines the intractable economic problems the country was facing at the time as well as the policies and programmes the regime initiated to deal with those problems. In that work, Batsa gives us a vivid account about the formation of the People's National Party, the policies of the Party, the process leading to the selection of Limann as the party's presidential candidate. The major challenges the PNP administration faced, particularly the security threats are mentioned. The author tells us that he was the only person who kicked against the candidature of Dr. Hilla Limann because in his estimation, "Limann was not an experienced politician"<sup>11</sup> and that he was not an accomplished speaker. Batsa's work only discusses Limann's life only within the context of his role as the leader of the PNP and president of the Third Republic. His views are, however, very useful in understanding issues relating to the PNP and its administration.

It could be seen that these scattered and fragmentary pieces of information from the available literature do not cover the entire life of Limann which the research seeks to investigate. No single material adequately deals with the entire life and times of Limann. This lacuna in historical research means that many important issues that need to be discussed concerning the life, vision and works of Hilla Limann within the context of Ghana's political history to pave way for a

comparative analysis of our post-independent leaders have remained obscured. There is the need for a painstaking research to fill the vacuum for posterity. These fragments of information from the literature will, however, serve as secondary sources of information to broaden the background knowledge of the researcher and to help him in his interaction with primary sources.

### **Objectives of the Study**

This study has three main objectives:

1. To present an in-depth biography of Hilla Limann to offer the opportunity for people to know, appreciate and evaluate his life and contribution to political and democratic development in Ghana.
2. To find out whether Limann was a member of the Nkrumahist Tradition or not, and where the Peoples' National Party stood in terms of its ideological orientation.
3. To establish why Ghana's attempt at democracy under Limann foundered.

### **Methodology**

In this study, the researcher used the qualitative method of research. This method involved interpreting, analyzing and critical examination of historical data. In using this approach, the researcher did not formulate any hypothesis since historical studies generally do not formulate hypotheses but rather pick information which is useful for their purpose.

The research began with the reading of several books, magazines and articles on the subject matter. It was this background reading that by and large

guided me in developing the necessary questionnaire and a list of people to interview. Data for this study was obtained mainly from primary and secondary sources. The primary materials included government official publications, party and government documents, articles in journals, magazines, reports of commissions of enquiry, and reports in newspapers and periodicals. Some important documents and unpublished material, notably Dr. Limann's papers and personal written communication were also obtained from some of his friends and family members. Archival information was also obtained from the Public Records and Archives Administration Department, Accra, as well as Parliamentary Debates (Hansard). These documents proved very useful as they provided valuable information which supplemented and corroborated other pieces of information.

Primary information was also gathered through extensive interviews with older family members of Dr. Limann at Gwollu, friends, classmates, former political associates, opponents and intimates in the erstwhile People's National Party and the erstwhile Popular Front Party and the United National Convention as well as independent observers. This group of people was chosen mainly because they lived, worked and had been in close contact with Hilla Limann over the period of time, which this work covers. The interviewees responded to questions that were posed to them by this researcher during the field trips. The interviews were recorded on tapes and later transcribed to make it easy to use. In all, a total of fifty-four people were interviewed. The interviews offered me first hand information about the life of Hilla Limann. Some information was also obtained from audio tapes which consist of radio interviews with Hilla Limann discussing a



variety of issues. Information gathered from these sources corroborated some pieces of information from the secondary sources.

The secondary sources include previous scholarly work (books and articles) which contains valuable information of the subject matter including Dr.Hilla Limann (published) speeches and various biographies of political leaders. These materials were mostly obtained from the Balm Library, Legon, and George Padmore Research Library on African Affairs, Accra. Owing to political struggles in Ghana and the tendency for each side of the political divide to either hide or reveal information considered political damaging to the other, I have cross-checked my data as much as possible. The information obtained from the various sources were therefore critically analyzed and crosschecked from the other sources to avoid inconsistencies and exaggeration in order to ensure reliability and authenticity of the information.

### **Organisation of Work**

The work is organized into six chapters. Chapter one is the introductory chapter which covers the background to the study, the statement of the problem, literature review, the methodology and objectives of the study. Chapter two, which covers 1934-1964, examined the early life and education of Hilla Limann, his work as a teacher and his early political stint with the Sisaala District Assembly and his studies abroad. Chapter three discusses Dr Limann as a diplomat in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (1965-1979), the process leading to the rebirth of party politics in 1979, Limann and the Peoples' National Party and its

ideological position. Chapter four reviews the role of Limann as president of the Third Republic of Ghana [September 1979 – 31<sup>st</sup> December 1981). Chapter five is concerned with the reasons leading to the fall of Dr Limann, while chapter six dealt with Limann's re- entry into politics and his subsequent formation of the People's National Convention [PNC] until his death in 1998. The conclusion summarizes the key issues in the study.

**Shortcomings:** This work has been carried out with much reliance on primary sources. This is due to the paucity of secondary materials necessitating this reliance. The biggest setback I encountered was that Limann's house was once gutted by fire which destroyed all his documents. Thus; I had to rely on some of his intimate friends for some documents. The desire to protect the personality of Limann led to the unwillingness of some interviewees to give information. In some cases, it took me several weeks to get some people to interview. On the contrary, other people were more than willing to provide every bit of information about him. Also, some former associates of Limann, including former cabinet ministers and other high ranking government and party officials I interviewed, pleaded anonymity which I have granted. These daunting challenges did not in anyway undermine the authenticity of the information provided in this thesis.

## NOTES AND REFERENCES

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## CHAPTER TWO

### EARLY LIFE AND EDUCATION (1934-1965)

Some admirers of Hilla Limann generally suppose, from his name, that he was a Muslim. However, although the name *Liman* is common in Islamic circles, his family was well steeped in African and Isaala (corrupted as Sisaala) cultural values. Indeed, despite Hilla Limann's cosmopolitan outlook, he did not adhere to any religious denomination but stayed in touch with traditional values and practices.<sup>1</sup> His forebears were Isaala from an illustrious royal ancestry of an ancient but little known village in the north-western part of the Northern Territories of the Gold Coast (now Upper West Region of Ghana), who were mainly engaged in subsistence farming and blacksmithing. The Isaala are perhaps related to the Tampulma, Kasena, Mo, and Vagla since they belong to the Isal-Kasem speaking group of African languages.<sup>2</sup> His home village was Gwollu, an ancient village of historical significance which is now the District Capital of the newly created Sisaala West District. Its historicity and antiquity lies in the fact that there is surviving evidence of a slave defense wall. Gwollu, one of the principal towns of the Isaala people, lies thirty-four miles to the West of Tumu. It is this ancient village that was to produce Ghana's President of the Third Republic, after a succession of an assortment of Heads of State in the country's rather chequered history.

There is no official record of Hilla Limann's date of birth, but by his own reckoning he was born at Gwollu, near Tumu in the north-western part of the Northern Territories in 1934.<sup>3</sup> However, his classmates and contemporaries are of the view that his date of birth is debatable.<sup>4</sup> His father, Babini Yomo, was a subsistence farmer blacksmith of the "*Suubala*" clan and his mother was called Hayawa. Both were from Gwollu. It is interesting to know that Hilla Limann was a product of the Levi rite System of marriage, which allowed a brother to inherit the wife of his deceased brother and to raise up children with the woman.<sup>5</sup> This practice was common in most communities in Northern Ghana of which the Isaala are no exception. Indeed, when Hayawa's husband died she was married to Babini Yomo from which the child Hilla was born. Hilla was followed by his brother Bajo. Hayawa had had two boys from her previous marriage in the family. They were Hasi and Yawure who were to play a significant role in Hilla's life after the unfortunate death of his mother under mysterious circumstances when he was at the tender age of six.<sup>6</sup>

Even though Hilla Limann's father was still alive he was brought up by his great uncle Heli Limann I, the then Gwollu Kuoro, who ascended the Gwollu skin in 1939.<sup>7</sup> Indeed, among the Isaala and other ethnic groups in Northern Ghana, the upbringing of children in large compound families was the responsibility of the head of the family. This was to ensure unity and oneness in the family. The Limann royal family therefore cherished the extended family system with its attendant communal farming and consumption of food. The family was traditional in their worship and believed in strict discipline and

honesty and they were renowned for their great skill in hunting.<sup>8</sup> Indeed, one key hereditary skill which seemed to have persisted in Hilla Limann's early life was his love for hunting inherited no doubt from his forebears. During his pre-school life Hilla and other boys of his age were entrusted with the responsibility of taking care of the goats, sheep and cattle, and occasionally cutting fodder to feed the horses of Heli Limann.<sup>9</sup>

As a royal house the compound was always full of people who came with their cases for adjudication. This gave him the opportunity to learn the palace language and its associated proverbs as well as issues concerning Isaala customary Law. It was in fact during this period that his interest and respect for traditional values took shape.<sup>10</sup>

When Western formal education was introduced into Northern Ghana, it was considered as an alien institution. Sending children to school was considered another way of enslaving them. This was due largely to the fact that the majority of the people wanted to preserve the status-quo. Besides, the lingering effects of the slave trade made people to be afraid of sending their children to other communities. The school calendar was also a whole year round and pupils who went to school were not seen by their parents until the end of the year. For these reasons many parents detested their children going to school. However, in order to ensure that the newly established school got the required enrolment, chiefs were tasked by the colonial administration in the North Western Province to provide children to fill the vacancies in the newly established schools. The colonial administration saw the schools as instruments for producing literate

chiefs and Clerks and Assistant Storekeepers.<sup>11</sup> Such people with the prestige of birth and knowledge of the local history and customs, were the most likely to become influential and helpful to traditional rulers, elected chiefs and the British administration even if they failed to obtain chief ship.<sup>12</sup>

Like many others in Northern Ghana such as S.D. Dombo, Mumuni Bawumia, Aba-efaa Karbo, J.A Braimah, S.K Owulonaa and Yakubu Tali, Hilla Limann owed his education to the colonial government policy of educating children from the royal families in Northern Ghana. It is also significant to note that at the time when mothers resisted attempts to send their children to school, Hilla Limann had no mother to protect him. Indeed, in those days it became customary for orphans to be sent to school.<sup>13</sup>

It was under these circumstances that the Gwollu Kuoro, Heli Limann I, when approached by the District Commissioner readily sent Hilla Limann to the Lawra Native Authority Confederacy Primary School in 1941.<sup>14</sup> The practice was that for the start all pupils selected by the various sub-divisional chiefs under the Tumu Kuoro (Luri Kanton) were assembled at Tumu to be escorted by two Native Authority Policemen to Lawra, a distance of about 80 Kilometers. In his subsequent journeys from Gwollu to Lawra the task of escorting Hilla Limann became the responsibility of his older brothers, Hasi and Yawure. As was the practice during the period, educational Institutions in the Northern Territories had only one vacation period for each year and this was from December to January.

Each time Hilla Limann went to school after holidays a whole year would elapse before he was seen in his family compound at Gwollu. Among some of the



most influential teachers Hilla Limann met in the Lawra Native Authority Confederacy Primary School were Dawson Andoh, Gonna Montia, Benin Duori and Kwame Wiafe Debra. They were joined two years later by Imoru Egala. Even though the students were not paying school fees the Chiefs were tasked to contribute foodstuffs towards their feeding. The prescribed uniform was a smock and a shorts.<sup>15</sup>

At the Lawra Native Authority Confederacy Primary School, the brilliance of Hilla began to emerge. He topped his class in many areas and showed discipline in the conduct of his academic pursuits and he immediately caught the attention of his teachers. Little wonder therefore that he was promoted to Standard I and spent four years instead of six years in Primary School.<sup>16</sup> It was during this stage of his life that Hilla Limann's qualities as a leader and a serious minded person became manifest. Consequently, he was made a Senior Prefect. He was extremely bright and smart and was easily made out wherever he was and in whatever he did among his peers both at Gwollu and in school. Due to his intelligence and hard work in all the disciplines in school, he won the All Round Boy (ARB) award at the Lawra Primary School.<sup>17</sup> One very significant incident which demonstrated his determination and courage during his formative years took place when he was in standard III. In that incident the Headteacher, who had a disagreement with Limann, had told him that he would block his entry into the Middle School in Tamale. He is reported to have told the Headteacher that if the Lawra Primary School had one vacancy under the quota he would fill it.<sup>18</sup>

The social and economic conditions in the Northern Territories in the 1940s were very appalling. Health and educational facilities were hopelessly inadequate. There was only one Middle School in Tamale serving the Northern Territories which then covered parts of Bono-Ahafo and the Volta Regions. That was the only Middle School which was to provide formal education to the level of Standard VII. With the exception of St.Mary's Senior School at Navrongo, the Tamale Middle School was the highest institution of learning for the people the Northern Territories until a Teacher Training College was established. There were a few satellite primary schools from which pupils were selected under a quota system to continue their education in the Tamale Middle School. These satellite primary schools were cited at Gambaga, Wa, Lawra, Yendi, Kpembe and Krachi.<sup>19</sup>

In 1946, Hilla Limann gained admission into the Tamale Middle Boarding School to continue his education. Some of the intimate friends in school were Alhaji Alhassan Bin Salih, a retired Principal Secretary, Dr. Dobara Baeinge, a medical Doctor and Roland Issifu Alhassan, a lawyer. Among their inspirational teachers were Mark William and C.T Candler. These teachers again noticed the sterling qualities in Hilla and encouraged him to take his studies more serious. His intellectual prowess, discipline and hard work placed him above his colleagues and he was subsequently made a Senior Prefect while in Standard VI over his seniors in Standard VII. This was a rare achievement. He gained the respect and admiration of the students and the school authorities. He was nicknamed "Hitla" due to his stern and principled nature in school.<sup>20</sup> His intellectual

proWess continued to manifests itself until he passed his Standard VII Examinations in 1949. This was no mean achievement at the time since the highest educated Northerners were those with Standard VII certificates except for those who were lucky enough to have been trained as Certificate “B” teachers by the White Fathers College in Navrongo, or the few such as Egala who were sent to Achimota to be trained as certificate ‘A’ Teachers.

One important development which took place during this stage of his life was the formation of the Northern Territories Council [NTC]. The NTC was initially a ‘chiefs’ council’ and its establishment was in line with the long-held British view that political power in the West African territories, if it was to devolve at all, should be to the ‘natural rulers of the people’, the chiefs.<sup>21</sup> It was to serve as a nerve centre for Northern opinion. The Council therefore tasked itself to secure constitutional safeguards for the chiefs and people of the North and also to secure rapid development for the north in education, health, communication, social and administrative services before independence.<sup>22</sup> At that crucial period(1950s) in its political development, Northern Ghana did not have a single university or secondary school graduate to represent it: little wonder, since it was only in the mid-1950s that the first Northerner, Ahassan Gbanzaba entered a university (University of Cambridge in the U.K) and there were not more than five or six secondary school graduates in 1954.<sup>23</sup> The restricted nature of educational and employment opportunities in the North was highlighted in the speech of a Northern Member of the Legislative Assembly:

I should like to say that the voice of the Northern Territories shall continue to ring in the ears of the Government day in and day out so long as education is concerned. It is a sad affair to find a country which is moving towards independence having one section of it so absolutely backward as to be unable to keep pace with the movement. Many times we complain to the Government and ask them to try to find means by which Northern Territories educated boys could be encouraged to take their place in the senior service of the country. But all the time the answer given to us is. Oh, your boys have not got the qualifications to enter the University College...but our main complaint is that it is unfortunate that some of our boys now working have no hope of getting higher education. ... If our boys cannot enter the University College of the Gold Coast the Government should award special scholarships to deserving Northern Territories boys to attend Polytechnic Colleges in the United Kingdom.<sup>24</sup>

The Northern Territories Council having given priority in its scheme of development programme to education decided to award its own scholarships to Northern students in Tamale Middle Boarding School to pursue secondary education in Achimota and to continue further to the University at Legon. Funds for the scholarships were contributed from the various Native Authorities throughout the Northern Territories. The first of these awards were made to Batong Hor and Feli in 1949. In 1950, the NTC awarded four more scholarships, the recipients of which included Dr. A. A. Illiasu, L. K Molbila Dr. Andani Andan and A. A. Luguterah.<sup>25</sup> At the time this noble idea came Hilla Limann had completed StandardVII and his immediate juniors became the beneficiaries. The awards eluded him and he became very much agitated. Hilla Limann therefore did not have the benefit of secondary education but that did not in any way deter him from pursuing higher academic education.

When Hilla Limann left Standard VII in 1949, he went to teach as a pupil teacher in Tumu, for that was the norm. Since Tumu is not far from Gwollu, he acquainted himself with the problems of his people through constant interaction. He paid frequent visits to his native home town Gwollu to see his uncle Heli Limann and his brothers. As a child of a large family and a polygamous father, Limann grew up to be independent and resourceful very early in his life as he did not receive any special attention from his family. If anything was to change or improve Limann's fortune it was his acquisition of a gun while he was a pupil teacher.<sup>26</sup> Undaunted by the lack of family support and the paucity of educational facilities, he was very much determined to continue his education even though most of his colleagues were satisfied with their Standard VII certificates.

Consequently, in 1951, he entered the Government Training College in Tamale which was opened by the colonial administration on 31 January 1944 to provide "a two-year post primary course adapted to the needs of men of the Northern Territories birth who will teach in Native administration infant-Junior day school".<sup>27</sup> All students and pupils alike were sponsored by the various Native Administrations in the Region and became automatically employees of the sponsoring Native administration. Thus the teachers on completion became Native Authority teachers.<sup>28</sup> Once again while at the Government Training College his teachers who were predominantly European immediately noticed his capabilities and encouraged him never to relent in his efforts to further his education.<sup>29</sup> In 1952, he successfully completed his Certificate 'B' course and was subsequently posted by the Finance and Staff Committee of the Sisaala

District Council to Zini Day School. He initially objected to going there because he was rather interested in Gwollu Day school”<sup>30</sup>

Hilla Limann had the strong desire to serve his own village in order to demonstrate his love and affection for his natal home. Whatever the motive was, he did not get the chance to serve his native village and eventually accepted the posting and went to Zini to teach under one Benson Bawol. Zini was only a few miles from Gwollu which he could always visit any time he so wished. His desire to serve his own village again failed to materialize when after a year he was transferred from Zini to Tumu Day Primary School.

If there was any indication of his future leadership, it came from his days, as a student and later as a teacher. There was no doubt that his inspirational leadership during his student days and his mastery of his subject during his teaching days coupled with his ability to impart it made most of his students to believe in his teaching. One very important observation of his colleagues was that he was a workaholic and a book worm<sup>31</sup>. This period of his life was characterized as was a later period, by absorption in his job, service to his people and hunting game to supplement his income from the teaching. According to family sources during his days as a people teacher, Hilla Limann had acquired a gun and took to hunting as a pastime the proceeds of which was used to partly finance his education abroad in later years. <sup>32</sup>

The year 1951 marked an important milestone in the political history of the North. In 1951 the Local Government Act was passed to supersede the old Native Authority Act of 1933, which established the Native Authorities in the North and

later in the South. Significantly, the Act of 1951 enabled the setting up of Local and District Councils in each of the Administrative areas. The elections to these Councils were supposed to be non-party. By this arrangement, the north was for the first time incorporated into the Legislative union with the rest of the Gold Coast and was mandated to send representatives to the Legislative Assembly.<sup>33</sup>

In 1952 the Local Government elections were to take place in the Northern Territories and in Tumu this took place about May. In the Tumu Local Council nine members were to be elected by popular vote and three nominated by the Chiefs as traditional members. Imoru Egala was elected as a traditional member of the Tumu Local Council. In 1953 there was a vacancy in the Gwollu Local Council and Hilla Limann was elected by the Gwollu-Kuoro, Heli Limann I and his elders and from there he was elected into the District Council. He was subsequently elected to chair the Finance and Staff Committee of the Council after the incumbent, George Nandzo had returned to the College for his certificate 'A' Course.<sup>34</sup>

Apart from the fact that Egala was the former teacher of Hilla Limann, the period of the 1950's also marked the beginning of yet another relationship. Imoru Egala was the son of Sgt-Major Egala of the Northern Territories Constabulary force. He hailed from the village of Pieng, about 12 miles from Tumu town. He was educated in the Tamale Middle School and became one of the first Senior Prefects of that school. He was appointed as a Native Authority Clerk in Tumu and was later appointed a pupil teacher in Lawra. He trained as a teacher at the Teacher Training College at Achimota School from 1938 to 1941,

where he was given the name “N.T horse” because of his athleticism. He taught in Lawra Primary School and Hilla Limann was one of his pupils and later opened the Tumu Primary School. Imoru Egala became a local Councilor for the Tumu Local Council and shortly after that was sent to the University College at Legon for a course in education. On his return he was appointed to teach at the Tamale Teacher Training College.<sup>35</sup> In fact Egala’s impact on Hilla Limann was tremendous as he was to play a leading role in Limann becoming a president in 1979. Other members of the Sisaala District Council included George Nandzo Dimbie, Mumuni Dimbie, Bawa Wallembalia and Benin Duori.<sup>36</sup>

By accepting to serve his own people in the Isaala land, Limann was able to learn and acquaint himself with the social, economic, political and the cultural institutions of his people. Besides, he had the opportunity to witness traditional ceremonies and issues relating to the chieftaincy institution. In effect it must be pointed out that Hilla Limann was exposed to a variety of influences at this stage in his life which undoubtedly helped to shape his future life.

While serving as a teacher and a District Councilor, he was also interested in broadening his horizon beyond his home district. Consequently, he had the opportunity to attend the New Year School in 1953 which was organized by the Extra Mural Department of the University College, Legon, in conjunction with the Peoples Education Association. The event was held at Kumasi College of Technology. The participants were addressed by David Kimble, the Director of the Department of Extra-Mural Studies and Sir Lennox Boyd who was then the Foreign Secretary.<sup>37</sup>



The responsible and onerous role Hilla Limann played through his practical participation in the local politics of his District in the 1950s was significant. It may well be said that unknown to him, he had embarked upon his apprenticeship for political leadership, beginning, with his home District. In 1953 Hilla Limann became the Chairman of the Sisaala District Council, a post he held creditably until 1955, so much so that Sir Charles Noble Arden Clerk and the Leader of Government Business singled him out for special mention after their visit to the Council during his tenure of office as Chairman. In fact it was around this period that Dr Kwame Nkrumah spotted him and approached him with the request that he should set up the CPP in the Sisaala District which he declined on the grounds that he was too young and wanted to study.<sup>38</sup>

Interestingly, it was during his work as a teacher that he made a runaway marriage with a young lady by the name Rukiya from a village called Kusali, near Gwollu in the Sisaala District. No specific date for the consummation of this marriage is given. It is most likely, however, that it was during his pupil teaching days or during his first posting to Zini after completing his certificate 'B' course that he spotted this lady. This marriage which was arranged by Rukiya's father, an ex-policeman, was meant to cement the bond of friendship between him and the Gwollu Kuoro, Heli Limann I. It was from Rukiya that Hilla Limann got his first child, Lariba Limann, in 1955, who is now married to one Amadu Montia of the Bank of Ghana.<sup>39</sup>

According to family sources, before his final departure to Europe to further his education, he had sent the family to Gwollu under the care of his

brother Yawure and Heli Limann I pending the time he would return home. Unfortunately, Hilla Limann stayed for ten years and the woman ran out of patience. The woman had to go her separate way. In his later years Limann remembered the contribution and support of Rikiya Mahama to his education for she used to sell the meat from his hunting expedition and saved the money which was used to finance his journey abroad.<sup>40</sup> It must be stated that his unyielding desire to further his education took him outside Ghana and that eventually led to a break in his marriage. Indeed, the system of education in the Gold Coast which emphasized the individual and competitive achievement had stimulated some vigorous strains of ambition, and so, he had to pursue his education in a very single-minded manner at the expense of his family.

By 1954, the growth of political consciousness or awareness had gathered momentum in northern Ghana. The process of the evolution of this awareness started in 1946 with the formation of the Northern Territories Territorial Council (NTTC). Northerners were admitted to the Legislative Council as special members on 27 July, 1950, based on the recommendation of a Select Committee of the Legislative Council, under the chairmanship of Kenneth Ewart. J.A Braimah, S.D Dombo and Yakubu Tali, all of whom were chiefs, were selected by the Chief Commissioner from five persons nominated by the Northern Territories Territorial Council. The participation of the three Northerners in the deliberations of the Legislative Council was the second occasion on which Northerners were formally represented at deliberations affecting the future of the Gold Coast, the first having been the Coussey Committee.<sup>41</sup> Further reforms led to

the election of nineteen members by an Electoral College comprising the Northern Territories Council and representatives of the District Councils to represent the North in the Legislative Assembly. Northern agitation for improvement in the social and economic conditions of the north gained currency during the 1950s and culminated in the formation of the Northern Peoples' Party (NPP) in 1954. It was inaugurated on the 10<sup>th</sup> – 11 April, 1954 at a public rally in Tamale. S.D Dombo rode a horse at the launch to show the chiefly aspect of the party.<sup>42</sup> According to S.D Dombo, the formation of the NPP was borne out of the concern for lack of development in the Northern Territories and the impending independence of the Gold Coast. They wanted a way northerners could come together and to fight a united front, for development, education, agriculture, communications<sup>43</sup>

J. A. Braimah and S. D. Dombo were the first to raise the possibility of a Northern political party which would play much the same role as had the Northern group under the 1951 constitution. The basis of the northern party was a skilful combination of traditional authority and an educated leadership. It was by far the strongest challenger to the CPP that had yet emerged. The party later elected as its officers S. D. Dombo, Mumuni Bawumia, A. F. Dramani, Imoru Salifu and J. B. Fuseini as Chairman, Vice Chairman, General Secretary, Propaganda Secretary and Treasurer Respectively.<sup>44</sup>

Perhaps one of Hilla Limann's biggest influences during the formative year was S. D. Dombo, Leader of Opposition in Parliament. S. D. Dombo trained as a teacher in the Government Training College in 1946 and was posted to

Eremon near Lawra. He became the chief of his village, Duori, when the skin became vacant and still taught for some time. He became a member of the Northern Territories Territorial Council and later served on the J. H. Coussey Committee on constitutional Reforms in 1949. Dombo was appointed a member of the Legislative Council in 1950 and was later elected from the Northern Territories Electoral College in 1951 into the new legislative Assembly with Nkrumah as Leader of the House. He became the first leader of Her Majesty's Opposition in Parliament.

During the formation of the NPP, S. D. Dombo was given the task of convincing the chiefs and people of the North-west District of Bole, Wa, Lawra, and Tumu and the Kasena-Nankani Confederacy and Builsa areas to lend their support to that party.<sup>45</sup> It is very probable that the role played by S. D. Dombo particularly in the struggle for the social, political and economic reforms in the 1940s and 1950s might have served as an impetus to young and educated men like Hilla Limann to venture into national politics in the 1950's.

One very important manifestation of Hilla Limann's political inclination was his participation in the 1954 parliamentary elections. By this time he had developed the flair for politics. There were five candidates who contested the single seat in Tumu, all of whom stood as Independent candidates. They were Alidu Kanton, who was then the outgoing Member of Parliament, Abu Nankpa, a Native Authority Dresser, Imoru Egala, a college lecturer, Hilla Limann and Mumuni Dimbie, both certificate 'B' teachers.<sup>46</sup> The 1954 parliamentary election

was the first to be contested in the Northern Territories. According to information from oral accounts, Imoru Egala was approached by the four others on the basis of seniority to contest as the sole candidate but he declined on the ground that he was not interested in politics. Unable to reach a consensus, Hilla Limann and his colleagues decided to go their separate ways by contesting as independent candidates. Nkrumah later met Egala in Tamale, where he was then teaching and promised him a ministerial position if he contested the Tumu seat and won. With this development Egala hurriedly went back to Tumu pleading with Limann and his colleagues to step down for him. They all declined and Egala had to file his nomination as the fifth Independent candidate for the Sisaala constituency.<sup>47</sup>

All the five candidates contesting the Tumu seat ran as independents, but in reality Imoru Egala was a CPP candidate in disguise. The Tumu traditional area had five divisional chiefs all nominally equal. Each divisional chief decided to support a candidate from his traditional area. The distribution of support in the Tumu Constituency illustrates the patronage system operating on a micro- level. However, Alidu Kanton Member of the Legislative Assembly from 1951 to 1954, failed to receive the support of his brother Luri Kanton, the Tumukuoro, who decided to support Imoru Egala. How these chiefs supported the candidates is shown below.<sup>48</sup>

### **Election Results, Tumu Constituency, 1954**

<i>Candidate</i>	<i>Supported by</i>	<i>Votes obtained</i>
Imoru Egala	Tumukuoro	3,599
Hilla Limann	Gwollukuoro	2,185
E. K. Mumuni Dimbie	Walembelekuoro	1,664
Abu Nankpa	Pulimakuoro	1,082
Alidu Kanton	Nil	383

It is therefore instructive to note that the 1954 Parliamentary election in the Sisaala constituency was never contested on any political party basis. Only Imoru Egala was a CPP candidate in disguise, for it has been revealed that the CPP had paid his deposit for election fees <sup>49</sup>.

These pieces of information so far adduced seem to contradict Professor Ivan Addae – Mensah assertion that Imoru Egala, Hilla Limann, Alidu Kanton, Abu Nankpa and Mumuni Dimble were all members of the CPP. According to him:

That year, (1954) there was as many as five CPP candidates who vied during the primaries for the nomination. Since it proved impossible to pick any one of them, Dr Nkrumah asked all of them, including Egala to contest as Independent Candidates, and whoever won would then declared as the CPP Member of Parliament ... The CPP adopted this strategy in a number of other difficult constituencies. <sup>50</sup>

This claim can hardly be right and should be debunked as having no credibility. Evidence adduced point to the fact that the CPP organization in the north was rudimentary. It was not liked in the north-western area and the Sisaala

constituency in particular at that time. The CPP did not organize any primaries for the nomination of candidates. Hilla Limann did not belong to the CPP at that time and had earlier declined Nkrumah's offer to set up the CPP in the Sisaala area. Mumuni Dimbie was a staunch member of the NPP and later won the parliamentary seat of the constituency in 1956 on that party's ticket. Imoru Egala himself had earlier on detested Nkrumah and his CPP but had to contest the election clandestinely under the guise of the CPP based on Nkrumah's promise to him. It is therefore most unlikely that the CPP would have been able to parade five stalwarts from the Sisaala constituency all belonging to the CPP family. The reason is that the Northern Peoples' Party (NPP) was more popular and was largely supported by the chiefs and the educated people particularly in the north-western Ghana.

At any rate, Imoru Egala beat Hilla Limann to the second place in the election which took place on 10<sup>th</sup> June 1954.<sup>51</sup> Days after the declaration of the results Dr. Kwame Nkrumah was called upon to form a government and Egala was called to Accra and offered the post of Minister of Health, a post that was also promised the then Birifu-Na, Nu-natuo Gandah to bait him to stand in the Lawra-Nandom constituency on the ticket of the CPP.<sup>52</sup> On this particular issue Gandah wrote:

In the Lawra-Nandom constituency there were five candidates contesting that seat... Abayifaa Karbo stood on the NPP ticket whilst Nu-natuo Gandah the Birifu Naa stood as CPP. The other three stood as Independent Candidates. Nu-natuo had never been a CPP follower but just like Mr Egala in Tumu he was bribed with an offer of a Ministerial post in the Ministry of Health. I

wondered what would have happened had they both won their seats.<sup>53</sup>

The NPP was barely two months old when the election campaign began in earnest. But it nevertheless put up a spirited performance winning four parliamentary seats as against one for the CPP. In the Nandom Constituency Abayifaa Karbo won, In the Jirapa – Lambussie constituency, S. D Dombo won, and in Wala-South and Wala-North, B.K Adama, of the Medical Field Unit (MFU) and Jatoe Kaleo were respectively elected members of parliament. The results clearly demonstrated that the NPP had gained grounds in the North with its slogan of “the north for the northerners”. Indeed, the Party’s hope was to capture all or most of the Northern seats in the Legislative Assembly in the hope that they could have united force to bargain with the emerging government in terms of development for the north. In all, the CPP won 72 seats and the opposition 32 seats. The NPP was recognized as the official opposition in Parliament and S.D Dombo was immediately made the Leader of the Opposition in Parliament but that was after an initial objection by Dr Kwame Nkrumah.<sup>54</sup> Dennis Austin observed that:

the NPP in particular was a portent: its sudden formation, rapid growth, and unexpected success, showed how far the pendulum could travel away from the national appeal of self government to a practical desire to see that local interests were safeguarded before independence was won.<sup>55</sup>

Indeed, northern intelligentsia and their chiefs often pointed out that if a man’s wives conceived at different times they cannot be coerced to give birth at



the same time. So, most of them initially threw their weight behind the NPP in demanding a slower pace in the progress towards the attainment of political independence.

Undaunted by his failure to win the 1954 parliamentary election, Hilla Limann decided to pursue his agenda of furthering his education. His ambition to go abroad for further studies increased. As a determined young man in search of a future and a vision he had realized that education was a key to success and he therefore decided to pursue it in a very single minded manner. Perhaps he was also touched by Imoru Egala's purported statement during the aftermath of the election that he was not prepared to subject himself to the leadership of a certificate 'B' teacher.<sup>56</sup> Considering his background and the condition of his time, he must be commended for conceiving such a noble idea for not many youth in his generation could have thought of this. To this end, he decided to embark on private studies for the General Certificate of Education first at the Ordinary Level and later the Advanced level. During this period Hilla Limann had to burn the candle very deep in the night which attracted his neighbours' attention to the extent that they regarded him as a wizard.<sup>57</sup>

Whilst preparing for the General Certification of Education examination, Hilla Limann did not confine himself to his books alone to broaden his knowledge base. In 1954, he attended a conference which was organized by the newly formed United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in his capacity as a member of the Peoples Education Association. The event took place in the University College of the Gold Coast, Legon. The

conference was attended by Dr. Milton Magai, then Prime Minister of Sierra Leone, Siaka Stevens, the then leader of the Opposition in Sierra Leone, and Dr Davidson Nicols, Principal of Fourah Bay College.<sup>58</sup> The conference broadened his horizon. Perhaps his contact with such great men might have added impetus to his determination to become a scholar one day and possibly step in their shoes.

Hilla Limann sat for the General Certificate of Education (GCE) Examination at Kumasi and passed. His dream to further his education beyond the shores of the Gold Coast had almost come true. It was during this period of his preparation to further his studies that he lost his father Babini Yomo. This took place in 1955.<sup>59</sup> After the performance of his father's final funeral rites in accordance with Isaala customary practices, all was now set for Hilla Limann to leave for the United Kingdom.

Through his own ingenuity, hard work and determination, Hilla Limann almost self financed his education abroad. His personal savings and proceeds from his hunting business was what almost did the job. He wrote to the Great Tutorial College and got himself registered. As soon as he got the letter of acceptance from the College, he applied to the Sisaala District Council for financial assistance. It was referred to the Staff and Finance Committee for discussion. Although Limann was a committee member, by the Standing Orders of the Local Government Act he could not participate in the discussion since he had a personal interest in the matter. The Committee unanimously accepted his application and approved a lump sum of £200 to help him with his education.<sup>60</sup> .

Prior to his departure he had resigned from the teaching service a month earlier, to enable him prepare adequately for the journey. A farewell party was organized for him during which he promised Mumuni Dimbie, the NPP candidate, the support of Gwollu since the party stood for the interest of the North. He had to resettle his family at Gwollu through the help of his friend S.W.D K Gandah at the cost of £17 before he finally left for the U.K in October 1955.<sup>61</sup>

It is worthy of note that at the time Hilla Limann went to London, there were only a handful of students from the Northern Territories of the Gold Coast who were studying in Britain. They included Bukari Yahaya and C.Y Mahama who had been awarded cocoa Marketing Board scholarships to study abroad; Issifu Ali and Bukari Nambe who had been helped by a Government Agent called Westland Adams. The others were Issifu Roland Alhassan, S.W.D.K Gandah and Hilla Limann himself who went there as private students, that is, on their own persuasion. In addition to these people there were two other students from the North who were also in the U.K studying Medicine, they were Andani Andan and Ludwig Henkel. In all, there were about nine students of northern extraction studying in Britain. More than half of these were private students or assisted financially by expatriates who had served in the north as colonial Officers or Administrators.<sup>62</sup> The enthusiasm of these expatriate Officers in helping students of northern extraction to advance educationally in the face of lack of local educational opportunities is commendable. Equally commendable was the private students like Limann who demonstrated that in spite of the late introduction of education in the North, they could catch up with their colleagues in the South.

What is worthy of note and of significance was that almost all these students who were then studying abroad were past pupils of the only Middle School in the North (save for St.Mary's School at Navrongo which was established by the White Fathers in 1936) and later on students of the Training College in Tamale.

Another interesting issue was that these students had to do menial job to earn money to pay their fees and support their families back home while at the same time studying hard to pass their examinations. Hilla Limann spent his first year in London at the Great Tutorial College and Westminster College in order to qualify to enter into the London School of Economics.<sup>63</sup>

While in Britain, Limann showed concern in the Sisaala constituency seat then occupied by Imoru Egala. It is reported that by 1956, not only were the youth alienated by Egala, but some of the Chiefs were also alienated by the Tumu Kuoro who was the president of the Tumu Traditional Council and a strong supporter of Egala. The Tumu Kuoro was alleged to have threatened to deskin the Zini Kuoru, Gwollu Kuoro, Wallemballe Kuoro and the Pulma Kuoro for not supporting Egala during the 1954 election.<sup>64</sup> The NPP nominated Mumuni Dimbie to oppose Egala in the 1956 election. While in Britain Hilla Limann was said to have written to the Gwollu Kuoro to support Mumuni Dimbie's candidature against Imoru Egala.<sup>65</sup> It must be pointed out that the NPP was supported by the chiefs of northern Ghana and almost all the northern elites of the pre-independence era joined the NPP. Many of them such as J. H. Alhassani, Mumuni Bawumia, L.R Abavana and Hilla Limann became NPP members by virtue of their princely heritage.

When the election was conducted on the 12<sup>th</sup> of July 1956, Mumuni Dimbie defeated Imoru Egala, Minister of Health, by a margin of 341 votes and was duly declared the Member of Parliament for the constituency.<sup>66</sup> In the Lawra-Nandom, Jirapa – Lambussie, and Wala-North and Wala-South constituencies, the NPP candidates in the persons of Abayifaa Karbo, S.D Dombo, Jato Kaleo and B.K Adama respectively retained their seats. This was a clear manifestation that the NPP was well grounded and more popular among the people, thus capturing all the five seats in the North -West District in 1956.<sup>67</sup>

Unfortunately, Mumuni Dimbie's hold on the Sisaala constituency proved short-lived. Shortly after he got to Parliament, a case of impropriety was brought against him. In the 1956 election, Mumuni Dimbie had defeated Imoro Egala, Minister of Health, in the Tumu constituency. Nkrumah, however, thought highly of Egala and immediately made him Chairman of the Cocoa Marketing Board, a sensitive position where Egala's Northern origin was very much held against him, even by CPP supporters. In May 1959, Dimbie was convicted on charges of having received stolen funds from the Tumu District Council, fined £ 150 and sentenced to one day imprisonment. Due to the prison sentence, his seat in Parliament was declared vacant. Imoro Egala was elected unopposed in a by-election on 21 July, 1959 and was reappointed Minister of Health. Dimbie returned to his teaching job in his home town of Walembelle in Tumu District. Northern opposition leaders regarded the whole affair as one of trumped-up charges designed to eliminate Mumuni Dimbie from the Tumu seat in order to bring back Imoro Egala.<sup>68</sup>

In an interview Mumuni Dimbie explained that during the election campaign, he borrowed money from the Sisaala District Council Treasury and made arrangements to have the necessary funds transferred to his account in Wa as soon as he got his pay. He gave three postdated cheques to the District Council Treasury. The Government Agent, described as CPP supporter, took the cheques and tried to cash them in Wa, but there were not yet sufficient funds in Dimbie's account to cover them. The Treasurer was tried and found guilty of having stolen the money and Dimbie of having received it.<sup>69</sup> The one-day prison sentence was all that was required for Dimbie to lose his seat in Parliament. The CPP was looking for a pretext to throw Dimbie out of Parliament and he provided them with that pretext. Another opposition MP, Idana Asigri of Kusasi-East also lost his seat under different circumstances. By the effective manipulation of local forces and traditionally-based disputes, the judicious use of threats of punishment and promises of rewards, the CPP was able to undermine and destroy its opponents in the North, one by one, at little cost.<sup>70</sup>

At any rate, the two cases amply demonstrated the nature and the complexities of the politics of the era. Mumuni Dimbie was later to stage a comeback in a more fashionable way after the National Liberation Council had cleared or pardoned him. He stood and decisively defeated Egala again in the 1969 parliamentary elections.

In 1957, the year Ghana became Independent, Hilla Limann got admission into the London School of Economics (LSE).<sup>71</sup> As a private student, he had to combine studies with working in order to earn income to pay his fees and support

his family in Ghana. During holidays, he applied for holiday jobs and one of such jobs took him to Pirbright Military Training Camp. The job which involved sweeping, moping preparing tea for the soldiers and washing dishes in the canteen, earned him £5 per week.<sup>72</sup>

These daunting challenges and problems of having to combine studies with work in the United Kingdom seemed to act as a spur to his academic effort and he achieved impressive examination successes. This was the result of unrelenting hard study. In 1960, he successfully obtained a Bsc (Economic) Honours degree from the London School of Economics. All this while, he was also studying French as a side attraction.<sup>73</sup> One would have thought that Hilla Limann would have ended his education at this stage considering the fact that most of his colleagues back at home were still certificate 'B' teachers.

In 1961, Hilla Limann left London for Paris where he enrolled at the Sorbonne University, Paris, to pursue a Diploma in French which he successfully obtained in 1962. Thereafter, he studied at the Faculty of Law and Economic Sciences in Sorbonne, Paris for his doctorate in Political Science and Constitutional Law which he obtained in 1964. Concurrently, he took an external B.A History examination in Mediaeval and Modern History and was awarded a B.A (Hon) by the University of London.<sup>74</sup> With his studies in London and Paris over, Hilla Limann had to to Ghana to continue his life.

The preceding account of Hilla Limann's life indicates that his academic achievements were as the result of hard work, discipline, dedication and determination. It was these admirable qualities that by and large led to his

achievement of higher academic laurels. By reason of the acute shortage of local educational opportunities and lack of family financial support, his academic feat must be viewed to be spectacular. He had also identified himself with the aspiration and the development needs of his people. Thus with these sterling qualities and qualification in the mid-1960s, Dr. Hilla Limann appeared to be well equipped intellectually to contribute to the development of Ghana. He returned to the country in 1965 and took up an appointment with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The next chapter examines his life within the contexts of his work with the Foreign Service and later with the Peoples' National Party or the PNP.



## NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. This was revealed to me on 5<sup>th</sup> January, 2008, during an interview with Kuoro Buktie IV, aged 68, brother of the late Dr. Limann and Paramount Chief of Gwollu, at his palace in Gwollu.
2. *Ibid.*
3. This information is obtained from Dr, Hilla Limann's own Curriculum Vitae, George Padmore Research Library, Accra.
4. This view is shared by Basili Wasae, Alhaji Alhassan Bin Salih and Dr Dobara Bainge, former classmates of Dr Limann, during separate interviews. According to them when Hilla Limann came to the Lawra Primary School, he was already a big boy and could not have been seven years old at that time as indicated by his records. They suggested 1930 as his possible date of birth.
5. Kuoro Buktie Limann, interview cited.
6. *Ibid.*
7. *Ibid.*
8. *Ibid.*
9. *Ibid.*
10. *Ibid.*
11. From interviews with Mumuni Dimbie, Wallembelle Kuoro, a former Member of Parliament for the Sisaala Constituency (1969), aged 78 on 4<sup>th</sup> January 2008 at his palace in Wallembelle.

12. Bening, R. B, *A History of Education in Northern Ghana*, Accra: Ghana University Press, 1990 p. 63.
13. *Ibid.*
14. Dr. Hilla Limann,s Curriculum Vitae, op.cit.
15. Gandah, S.W D. K (Kum), *The Silent Rebel*, Accra: Sub-Saharan Publishers, 2004, p.220.
16. From an interview with Dr. Dobara Baeinge (MD), a former classmate Hilla Limann in the Lawra Native Authority Confederacy Primary School, aged 75, on 20<sup>th</sup> January, 2008.
17. *Ibid.*
18. From an interview with Alhaji Alhassan Bin Salih, a former classmate and a retired Principal Secretary, aged 77, on 6<sup>th</sup> February, 2008, at his Adenta Residence, Accra
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22. Bawumia, Alhaji Mumuni, *op.cit.*, p.12
23. Ladouceur Paul Andre, *op.cit.*p.87.
24. Parliamentary Debates, 14 March, 1955, col.977
25. Bawumia, A.M, *op.cit.* p.70.

26. From Interview with members of Dr. Hilla Limann Family at Gwollu on February 5, 2008.
27. Bening, R.B, *op.cit.* p.125.
28. Bawumia, Alhaji Mumuni, *op.cit.* p.12.
29. Alhaji Alhassan Bin Salih *op.cit.*
30. Gandah, *op.cit.*pp. 205-206.
31. Alhaji Alhassan Bin Salih, *op.cit.*
32. Kuoro Buktie Limann IV, *op.cit.*
33. Gandah *op.cit.* pp.189-190.
34. *Ibid.*p.206.
35. *Ibid.*p.57. See footnote.
36. *Ibid.*p.195.
37. *Ibid.*pp.207-208.
38. *Hilla Limann: The Man at the Helm. op.cit.* p.3.
39. This was revealed to me on April 20, 2008 during an interview with Lariba Limann, daughter of the late Dr Hilla Limann, aged53, at her residence, East Legon, Accra.
40. Kuoro Buktie Limann, *op.cit.*
41. Ladouceur, *op.cit.* p.77. For a comprehensive list of the delegates to the Electoral College, see p.103.
42. Interview with Professor B.G Der, 70 years, Department of History, University of Cape Coast, at his residence, 25<sup>th</sup> January, 2011.

43. Information from S D Dombo as cited by Ladouceur, P. A  
*op.cit.*pp.113-114.
44. *Ibid.*p.116.
45. Gandah, *op.cit.* p.221.
46. *Ibid.* p.223.
47. Mumuni Dimbie, *op.cit.*
48. Ladouceur, *op.cit.* p.119.
49. Gandah, *op.cit.* p.223.
50. *Daily Graphic*, 23<sup>rd</sup> January, 1999.
51. Gandah, *op.cit.*p.224.
52. *Ibid.*
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56. Gandah, *op.cit.* p.226.
57. From an Interview with Dr. Issah Egala on April 17, 2008, aged 71 at his  
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58. Gandah, *op.cit.*p.232.
59. Kuoro Buktie Limann IV, *op.cit.*
60. Mumuni Dimbie, *op.cit.* For a detailed view of how Hilla Limann got  
the two hundred pounds from the Sisaala District Council, see p. 228 of  
Gandah's, *The Silent Rebel*.

61. Gandah, *op.cit.* p.240.
62. *Ibid.* p.268.
63. Hilla Limann Carriculum vitae, *op.cit.*
64. Gandah, *op.cit.*p.266.
65. Mumuni, Dimbie, *op.cit.*
65. Gandah, *op.cit.*p.266.
66. *Ibid.* p.241.
67. Ladouceur, *op.cit.*p.173.
68. Dimbie Mumuni, *op.cit.* Mumuni Dimbie himself narrated to me how he lost his seat to Imoru Egala in 1958. For more information see Ladouceur, Paul Andre, *Chiefs and Politicians, p.173.*
69. Ladouceur, *op.cit.* p.174.
70. Dr. Limann's Curriculum Vitae, *op.cit.*
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72. Dr. Limann's Curriculum Vitae, *op.cit.*
73. *Ibid.*

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **RETURN TO GHANA: THE FOREIGN SERVICE AND THE PEOPLE'S NATIONAL PARTY (1965 – 1979).**

After obtaining his Doctor of Philosophy Dr. Hilla Limann returned to Ghana in June, 1965.<sup>1</sup> The rigorous academic discipline he had undergone placed him in a better position to contribute to the development of the country. This chapter begins with the story of Hilla Limann's career in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. It focuses on the processes that he passed through until he was nominated as the leader of the People's National Party in 1979. It also explores the nature of the socio-economic and political environment between 1965 and 1979. The chapter also discusses the preparedness of Dr. Limann in assuming the highest office of the land, his social base as a politician, the People's National Party's (PNP) response to the social, political and economic conditions of the times as well as the elections of 1979 that brought Limann into power. The ideological orientation of the PNP also forms another major focus of this chapter. This chapter also tries to find answers to one fundamental issue in Ghanaian politics: to what extent was the PNP the successor of the CPP?

The year of Limann's return to Ghana was not the best of times. Ghana had been declared a one-party state. Political intolerance was very high. Kwame Nkrumah, who made a historic achievement by leading the country to

independence and decolonization, had passed the infamous Preventive Detention Act in 1958. Nkrumah used the law to silence political opposition in the country. There was a culture of complete silence since dissent was mostly considered tantamount to subversion of the Government.<sup>2</sup>

The economic and social condition of the country was not improving. Due mainly to its foreign policy, Ghana was receiving neither financial assistance nor direct foreign investment. Pan- Africanism had become not only the foreign policy at the time of its greatest and visionary advocate, Kwame Nkrumah, but it was also affecting domestic management of the Ghanaian economy. The national economy was deteriorating. As Nkrumah's political difficulties and problems grew from the early 1960s as a result of his frequent public attacks on the West, many important goods were short on the market. This fuelled a rocketing of prices, making life very difficult for millions of people. There was also a dramatic fall in the world price of cocoa, Ghana's main export.<sup>3</sup>

When Limann returned to Ghana his initial plan was to lecture in one of the universities but the plan could not materialise.<sup>4</sup> However, in November 1965 he was recruited into the Research Department which was the intelligence wing of the Foreign Service under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. It was known as the Ghana Foreign Intelligence Wing. The counterparts of the Research Department were the CIA of the United States of America, the MOZAD of Israel, MI6 of Britain and KGB of Russia.<sup>5</sup> Hilla Limann was recruited into the Foreign Service alongside Yaw Afari Adu, a native of Agona Nyarkrom in the Central Region and now a retired civil servant. Fortunately, his former classmate, Basili

Wasai, a Sisaala, was already in that service. As customary with the civil service and many other organizations, Dr Limann and his colleagues had to undergo training to enable them fit into the job. The training exposed him to the intricacies of the Research Department of the Foreign Service.<sup>6</sup>

One of the most difficult problems that confronted the Foreign Service on one hand and Dr. Limann on the other was the issue of placement after his training:

When Limann joined the Foreign Service, I remember very well there was a problem with his grading. In the Foreign Service we had the Administrative Grade and the Executive Grade. Non-graduate was graded as Executive officer and the graduates were graded as Administrative officers. And since Limann was a P.hD holder they did not know where to place him. Initially, they were going to place him as an Administrative officer that is grade 5. There was a principal officer who argued on his behalf. He recommended that Limann should be placed on a grade higher than his colleagues by virtue of his qualification. So he was placed at A4.<sup>7</sup>

No sooner had Hilla Limann and his colleagues completed their training than Ghana experienced its first military intervention in politics: the overthrow of Dr. Kwame Nkrumah and his Convention People's Party on 24<sup>th</sup> February, 1966 led by Col. E. K. Kotoka and Major A.A Afrifa. Organisations, individuals and Houses of chiefs praised the National Liberation Council for their heroic exploits.

<sup>8</sup> In some circles Nkrumah's fall was described as more spectacular than that of Satan.<sup>9</sup>

As customary of military regimes, the National Liberation Council (NLC) passed a number of decrees which were later to turn the course of events for politicians of the CPP in the future. Under NLC Decree No.3 which was



promulgated on March 1, 1966, the formation of political parties was forbidden.<sup>10</sup> In January 1968, Decree No.223 was passed banning some categories of persons from holding public office for ten years. It had one main objective: to stop the return of the CPP completely.<sup>11</sup> In other words, the political left was to be prohibited from making any further inroads into the political arena. The most important of all the moves initiated by the NLC was when it declared its intention to appoint a constitutional commission to draft a new constitution for Ghana, and also to hand over power to a civilian regime.<sup>12</sup>

The 1966 coup had an impact on the Research Department but it never deterred Limann and his colleagues from carrying out their duties. Yaw Afari Adu recounted that the 1966 coup was a very trying experience for those of them in the Research Department because their job was to ensure that the country was safe:

After the coup most of us were allowed to continue but the spirit had been disturbed. Naturally, there were influences here and there but we stayed calm. The greatest pain to our office was the removal from office of Mr. E. C Asiamah.<sup>13</sup>

The most spectacular event in which Limann was involved was the drawing up of the 1969 constitution. In 1967, the NLC set up a Constitutional Commission with Justice Edward Akuffo Addo as its chairman. Hilla Limann was appointed a member of this Commission after having served as a member of the Government delegation for the opening of borders between Ghana and Ivory Coast at Takyikrom in Brong Ahafo and between Ghana and Upper Volta at Paga in 1966.<sup>14</sup> It could be said without any reservation that with regards to his intellectual preparedness in Constitutional Law, economics and history, he was

equipped appropriately enough and was therefore subsequently appointed to participate in drawing up the Second Republican Constitution. The Constituent Assembly after sitting for several months produced in 1968 a document in which was advanced and enshrined all the salient features of a democratic constitution. It was particularly designed to ensure that the one party state dictatorship would never again be repeated in Ghana. The Constituent Assembly recommended general elections for the country, under universal adult suffrage.<sup>15</sup>

As an enterprising young man, Dr. Limann did not disdain the bright light nor the charms of attractive women for at this stage what else did he need apart from settling down with a woman. Indeed his search for a future and a vision that took him out of the country for ten years had deprived him the chance of settling with his first wife leading to a break in their marriage. The ethics of the Foreign Service also required that one had to marry before one was sent out on postings. Limann began to think seriously about getting a companion in life who would not only adorn his house but whose comforting care and presence would be a solace amid the intricacies of his work. Thus, in 1967, Limann came into contact with a young lady, Dora Fulera Yaro, a Bimoba, and a daughter of an ex-police Sergeant. She was trained as an agricultural officer and was stationed in Tamale. They met for the first time at Legon when Fulera came to attend the New Year School and that marked the beginning of their friendship. It was there Fulera struck Hilla Limann as a humble and serious minded woman. On her return to Tamale, Limann continued to correspond with her and soon professed his interest in her through friends and letters. Initially Fulera was against the idea of marriage,

for she had wanted to work for a few more years and if possible further her education before she could marry. However, upon relentless persuasion she agreed to marry him. In 1968 the two were married.<sup>16</sup> In Fulera, Dr. Limann found a wife, a mother and a dependable companion. Well known for her hard work and simplicity of life even after becoming First Lady in September 1979, she continued a `tie and die` business and was devoted to the care and welfare of her children.

Dr. Limann held the schedule of the European Desk in Ghana's Ministry of Foreign Affairs at the Head Office from 1965 to 1968. What made him a distinguished Foreign Service officer was his systematic assessment of what was expected to be done, his determination to do it and his concrete achievement in the job. Soon after his marriage in 1968, he was posted to Ghana's Mission in Lome, Togo, and there he held the post of Head of Chancery and was the official secretary and also *charge d, Affaires ad Interim* for some time at the embassy from 1968 to 1971. Between 1968 and 1970 he participated in the Cocoa Producer Alliance meeting held in Lome.<sup>17</sup> This was due largely to the fact that Limann was bilingual as he spoke French and English. It was while serving in Togo that Fulera gave birth to her first son, named Baba Limann.

Fulera recalls that whilst in Lome he (Limann) set an example to the staff of the Embassy by working very hard himself. Though he was very strict he won the hearts of all his co-workers because of his sympathy and concern for their needs irrespective of their ranks. His years of study had left a habit which he found difficult to live down. He used to be a bookworm which was translated to

mean a desk addict. Fulera described Limann as a loving and caring husband and a family man whose family was closely-knit until politics snatched him away. He was not a materialistic person. After work he became a teacher and a counselor to his children in the house.<sup>18</sup>

Hilla Limann's work with Ghana's Foreign Mission in Lome, Togo, brought him into contact with John Agyekum Kuffour, then a Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs under the Second Republic. On two occasions when J. A. Kuffour went to Togo for official discussions with President Eyadema, it was Dr. Limann who served as the interpreter since Kuffour did not speak French and President Eyadema did not speak English.<sup>19</sup> Interestingly, the two gentlemen were both later to ascend the highest office of the land in later years.

His work with the Foreign Service took him to Geneva on transfer posting from Togo. There, he assumed the office of Chancellor of the Ghana Permanent Mission in 1971. In his Geneva official capacity, Limann undertook several missions on behalf of the Government of Ghana. He was the Member/Secretary to the Ghana Delegation for the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and Non-Aligned States meeting, as well as International Labour Organization and World Health Organization conferences. He also attended the first international Conference on International Cocoa Agreement, Review of International Convention on Narcotic Drugs and the first Review Conference on the Treaty of Non-proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.<sup>20</sup> His schedule of duties was so heavy that he worked until far late into the night throughout his tour in Geneva. These job and learning experiences which he acquired were particularly relevant for

Ghana's Presidency in the Third Republic which had installed a democratic and representative form of Government.

It was while he was serving in Geneva that the Second Republican Government of Professor K. A Busia was truncated by the military led by Lt. Col. I. K Acheampng, on 13<sup>th</sup>, January, 1972. The government introduced a work and happiness type of culture. Among its most prominent programmes were the "Operation Feed Yourself", the introduction of Small Business Loan Scheme and the nationalisation of foreign businesses. The NRC regime enjoyed much popularity, at least from 1972 to 1974, mainly because of its bold nationalist stance on debt payment, the abrogation of dialogue with South Africa, and also increases in agricultural output among others. <sup>21</sup> The popularity, however, proved to be a nine day wonder.

In fact, by the middle of the 1970's, the NRC government appeared to have lost its bearing. In this period, 1975 to 1979, the Ghanaian economy registered a negative growth, huge balance of payment and budgetary deficits, and also an acute shortage of foreign exchange, imported consumer goods and essential agricultural and industrial inputs and raw materials for local production. The economic crisis spawned an extensive informal market economy, trade malpractices and many social evils, which came to be called *kalabule*. Inflation during this period averaged between 70 and 100 percent. In 1979, inflation reached 116 percent. <sup>22</sup>

There were spontaneous agitations for the over throw of the Acheampong government mostly spearheaded by civil associations consisting of lawyers,

doctors, nurses, and teachers. Acheampong's immediate reaction was to ban pro-democracy movements such as the People Movement for Freedom and Justice(PMFJ), the Third Force, and the Front for the Prevention of Dictatorship.<sup>23</sup> Dr.Limann was not left out in the struggle to ensure the end of military dictatorship and the return to constitutional rule. Limann, together with Professor P.V Ansah wrote an article at the height of the Acheampong /Akuffo military era and scathingly criticized the evils of military governments and recommended the restoration of multi-party democracy.<sup>24</sup>

By 1977, public agitations against the Acheampong regime had gained momentum when a new generation of university students joined the anti-government demonstrations. Acheampong's forthright reaction to the students' demonstration was to close the universities.<sup>25</sup> It was the cumulative effect of the activities of these individuals and pro-democracy forces that eventually led to the restoration of multi-party democratic rule to the country in 1979.

After serving in Geneva from 1971 to 1975, Dr Limann came back to Ghana at the end of June, 1975. At this point he had decided that he would not go on posting any longer. His aim was to contribute to the economic, political and social transformation of the country particularly the North. Back home in Ghana, he held the Schedule of Head of Desk of Europe, the Americas and South East Asia affairs. <sup>26</sup> Unlike many of the educated class in Ghana who have been divorced from their rural settings through demands of their occupation and hardly visit their homes, Dr. Limann had always visited his people as a Diplomat whenever he was granted part of his earned leave.<sup>27</sup>

The role he played in the struggle for unity and the socio-economic and political advancement of the North is very significant. During the General Akuffo SMC II military rule period, some of the educated people from Northern Ghana but resident in Accra – Tema administrative area and Cape Coast formed the Northern Study Group (NSG) in 1976. The first of this kind of regional organisation by northerners was the Northern Youth Association (NYA) which was founded as early as 1954, but it ceased to function when the Northern People's Party was established. In the 1960s, the Association (NYA) re-emerged. It has been observed that the NYA of the late 1960s represented the entry into politics of a second generation of northerners and the revival of Northern Regional spirit and consciousness similar to that which characterised the older generation of the early 1950s.<sup>28</sup>

The original impetus for the formation of the NYA came from a group of Northerners residing in Accra and active in NLC bodies or on their fringes. They included S. D. Dombo, Abayifaa Korbo, Dr. Hilla Limann and Imoru Salifu. They witnessed the rise of such Associations in other regions and their lobbying activities, and felt that the North must also have a regional association if its voice was to be heard in national affairs, particularly in the allocation of development expenditure. They also felt the need to involve younger Northerners in quasi-political activities and to re-forge their own links with the rural areas of the North. However, by the time the inaugural meeting was held in September 1967, a split had developed in the Northern ranks corresponding approximately between those in Accra and those in the North, or between the older former opposition

politicians and the Younger Northerners. Following the removal of restrictions on political parties in 1969, the NYA, plagued by political quarrels, disintegrated but was revived under the military regime of Acheampong as the Northern Study Group.<sup>29</sup>

In 1976, through the instrumentality of Alhaji Mahama Iddrisu, Dr Hilla Limann, Dr J. S Nabila, Dr Joe Kubayanda, Roland Issifu Alhassan, Justice Kaleo Bio and some influential northerners, the spirit of a Northern Union was vigorously revived. They formed the Northern Study Group (NSG). A three-member committee made up of Dr. Joe Kubayanda, Alhaji Mahama Iddrisu and Dr. Hilla Limann toured the two regions of the North, meeting Chiefs, Religious and Opinion Leaders to explain to them the reasons behind the formation of the study Group. The precursor of the NSG was therefore the Northern Youth Association. Just like its predecessor, the aims of the NSG were to seek the economic, educational, political and social welfare of the people of the North.<sup>30</sup>

The NSG held its first meeting in the then Dr. J. S. Nabila's University of Ghana rented residence at Kanda Estates but in line with respect for age, the venue was moved to the residence of Dr. Hilla Limann at Asylum Down. Among some of its other prominent members included Alhassan Bin Salih, Mr. Forka Professor B.G Der, Jacob Sungson, and Charles Jebuni. Alhaji Mahama Iddrisu who was then resident in Ho as manager of Ghana Commercial Bank was the Chairman of the NSG, while Dr. Joe Kubayanda was the Secretary. Other members were from the Universities, public and civil services, and the Ghana Armed forces. It also had the support of Chiefs, Opinion and Religious leaders.<sup>31</sup>



The NSG dealt with key issues that affected Northern Ghana in particular and Ghana as a whole. Problems in the area of education, land tenure, agriculture communications and health received serious attention by the Study Group often in the form of position papers for submission to the right authorities for necessary action. For instance, the NSG prepared and submitted memoranda to the Acheampong military government for the establishment of a university in Northern Ghana (an Agricultural University) and for the return of northern Ghana lands to the rightful owners.<sup>32</sup>

When the Acheampong government appointed a Commission to study the NSG demand for a university, the NSG was represented on the Commission by Dr. Hilla Limann and Dr. Assibi O. Abudu. The Commission toured the country, collated views from Chiefs, Opinion Leaders Civil Societies and Religious Leaders. Bishop Peter Porekuu Dery presented a paper which was acclaimed by the Commission. In its report the Commission recommended the establishment of a university for the North. The Acheampong government accepted the report and was studying it when it was overthrown. The NSG was very successful in persuading the Acheampong military government to construct the Bamboi Bridge which linked the north-western part of northern Ghana with the rest of the south. The Study Group also enjoyed some success in establishing itself as a representative voice of Northern opinion and also revived the spirit of northern regionalism that was started in the mid-1950s.<sup>33</sup>

When Dr. Limann was elected president of Ghana's Third Republic, the group was eventually supplanted by more informal discussion circles among the

Northern elite as well as by smaller scale interest groups as the ethnically defined youth associations of Northern Ghana.<sup>34</sup> Whatever the motive[s] for its formation, the activities of the NSG provided a powerful social base for Dr. Hilla Limann and other politicians of Northern Ghana after the return to party politics in 1979. Indeed, the NSG was to galvanise support for Dr. Limann and other politicians of the North in the 1979 elections.

In 1978, some significant political developments took place. The SMC2 passed the Political Parties Decree 1978 (SMCD 208), which forbade political parties to use any identifiable symbols, slogans or colours which resemble or nearly resembled those of any proscribed political party or those used in connection with the Union Government referendum. It also forbade the use of the name or any name that resemble the name of any proscribed political party. It also passed the Elections and Public Officers Disqualification Decree, 1978 (SMCD206), under which a total of 104 people were disqualified.<sup>35</sup>

General Frederick Akuffo also inaugurated a Constitutional Commission which was charged with the revised task of preparing a constitution for the establishment of an interim, transitional national government.<sup>36</sup> The Ghana Bar Association, the National Union Ghana Students (NUGS) and the University Teachers' Association called on Akuffo to dissolve the Constitutional Drafting Commission, claiming that, despite the revised mandate, the Commission was likely to be compelled to design a modified form of union government. They demanded that an entirely new commission be set up to draft a permanent

constitution that would reflect the mood of the nation for freedom of association and expression.<sup>37</sup>

In spite of these challenges, the Commission promulgated the constitution of the Third Republic. The constitution provided for a multi-party, pluralistic state which specifically forbade the re-emergence of a one-party state. It also provided that the internal organisation of a political party shall conform to the democratic principles and that its aims and purposes shall not contravene, or be inconsistent with any provision of the constitution.<sup>38</sup> General Frederick Akuffo in fulfillment of his promise made on November 30 1978, announced that the ban on party politics nationwide had been lifted on January 1, 1979.<sup>39</sup> Another step towards returning the country to a civilian rule was taken when the Electoral Commissioner Justice Kingley Nyinah, announced that presidential and parliamentary polls were to be held on 18 June, 1979.<sup>40</sup>

When political activity became legal again at the beginning of mid-February 1979 party politics came back to life after a seven year ban. Within a short time, 18 political parties were announced. However, out of that number, only four had a reasonable chance as principals – the Action Congress Party (ACP), the United National Convention (UNC), the Popular Front Party (PFP) and the Peoples National party (PNP). At the time of the polls, 18th June 1979, the number had scaled down considerably leaving only those four and two others Third Force Party (TFP) and the Social Democratic Front as the only six in serious contention.<sup>41</sup>

It is pertinent to take a critical look at the nature of political party tradition and Ghana's political culture by 1979, since the 1979 election witnessed a rebirth of political parties based on old party traditions. A party political tradition is a body of symbols, myths, ideas, ideologies, philosophies, and concrete political achievements associated with a national political hero and a political party in the history of the country.<sup>42</sup> Ghana's independence struggle produced two major political parties, the United Gold Coast Convention (UGCC) and the Convention Peoples' Party. The transition from a nationalist political activity almost entirely dominated by the intelligentsia or educated elites to one in which the masses of the people dictated the pace and momentum of national politics is what produced an enduring polarisation in the internal organisation of the national politics of the country. By 1956, it became clear that two major party traditions had been established, the Nkrumah Tradition and the Busia-Danquah Tradition.

Today the two main political traditions are recognised in Ghanaian politics. The Busia –Danquah Tradition is associated with such political parties as the UGCC, GCP, NLM, UP, Northern Peoples' Party, Progress Party, Popular Front Party and the New Patriotic Party (NPP). Among the well-known political ideals and principles associated with this tradition are sovereignty and liberty of the individual, multi-party democracy, rule of law, free market and private enterprise and initiative. The Nkrumah tradition on the other hand is associated with the CPP, NAL, and the PNP and has historically been identified with socialism, Pan-Africanism, anti-imperialism and active state involvement in the economy.<sup>43</sup>

A careful scrutiny of the parties of the Third Republic reveals that they retained the organisational structures of those of the First and Second Republic. Indeed the membership of these parties appears to be a carryover of membership from the erstwhile political parties because even though party designation had changed, the changes appeared to be in name.<sup>44</sup> The Peoples National Party for instance, was essentially a regrouping of the old CPP. In other words, the antecedents of the PNP may be traced to the CPP. Banned in 1966, the CPP nevertheless operated clandestinely as a social group under the leadership of Alhaji Imoru Egala, one time Minister during the Nkrumah regime. Egala is said to have literally kept a long political vigil in anticipation of the day on which the party would be resurrected and the dreams and ideas of Nkrumah be renewed for the nation and Africa.<sup>45</sup> In this connection Batsa explained in writing that:

It is impossible to stifle completely the political life of an entire nation, and throughout the years of military rule in Ghana those concerned with political activity kept in touch and kept talking... It was common in Accra that any social event of any size, a wedding or a funeral, for example, became the event for the gathering of political colleagues and an occasion for planning. We who considered ourselves as successors of Nkrumah, met regularly in this way, and so did the other political parties. And so when political activity became legal again at the beginning of 1979, political parties were already half formed and waiting.<sup>46</sup>

Indeed, the revival of the old CPP in the name of PNP clearly indicated that a party tradition is indissoluble, in that it enjoys a more or less perpetual continuity and cannot be legislated out of existence. If legislation declares a party tradition illegal the latter continues a vibrant existence in a condition of splendid semi-clandestinity or open defiance.<sup>47</sup> Indeed, by 1979, it had become clear that

not even the almost eight years of political famine could break the jinx of these two major traditions.

The People's National Party (PNP) was therefore put together by Alhaji Imoru Egala, the man who held the remnants of the CPP together after the 1966 coup d'état. Egala wielded enormous power, respect and authority in the CPP tradition because when Nkrumah was overthrown many of the leading old CPP politicians denounced him and the CPP, but Egala sacrificed and unified the remnants of the CPP under his guide throughout the turbulent years. His aim was to form a political party and lead it for the general elections of 1979. The Secretary-General of the PNP was Dr. Ivan Addai Mensa, then a lecturer in Chemistry at the University of Ghana. Among the most powerful personalities behind Alhaji Imoru Egala were Nana Okutwer Bekoe, a wealthy chief and National chairman, Kofi Batsa, Chairman of publicity Committee, Dr. Ekow Daniels, Kwaku Boating and Mrs. Stella Dontoh.<sup>48</sup> Other key founders were K.S.P Jantuah, Ayeh-Kumi, Kwesi Armah, Kwesi Ghapson, and A.R Boakye. These men represented the power pragmatists of the latter Nkrumah period. Having been disqualified from participating in the 1969 elections, they saw in the 1979 polls their first opportunity to reassert their carefully cultivated power.<sup>49</sup>

The Party also had some useful new faces. They included Lawyer Amofa of Koforidua, J.B Quashie –Idun, Francis Badjie, Dr. De Graft-Johnson and Joe Reindorf. It also had the support of some powerful chiefs. Other religious associations, businessmen and academics in secondary schools and Universities also gave their support to the party. The PNP adopted as its symbol the palm tree.

Its motto was “Unity and Service”. The main focus of the party was “to create a society where the welfare and aspirations of the ordinary man shall always remain supreme.”<sup>50</sup>

While the people who still believed in the ideology of Nkrumah had regrouped to form the PNP, the Busia-Danquah tradition, however, could not solve their internal differences. Two strong men of high intellectual and social standing, Victor Owusu and William Ofori Atta, contested for the party leadership. In spite of negotiations in Kumasi and Accra, they could not patch up their differences and that eventually led to a split. Victor Owusu formed the Popular Front Party (PFP), while William Ofori Atta, popularly called Paa Willie, formed the United National Convention (UNC).<sup>51</sup> Like the biblical saying that “a house that is divided against itself will never stand” the split was to have devastating consequences for the Busia-Danquah Tradition in the 1979 elections and beyond.

Akenten Apeah Menka has attributed the split to the uncompromising professional and personality rivalry between Victor Owusu and N.Y.B Adade which predated the formation of the Progress Party in 1979. He also identified the lack of expertise in that political tradition, as well as the arrogance and pride of members to subject their personal and sometimes petty and over ambitious wishes to the prescriptions of the main and central concern of the party. He debunked the ethnically assigned reason for the split as having no credibility.<sup>52</sup>

After the formation of the PNP, the most serious and nagging questions the leadership of the party had to answer were: who were the true successors to

Kwame Nkrumah, and what were the policies that represented the true response of Nkrumahism to the problems facing Ghana at the beginning of the 1980s. The party was more mindful of the fact that not every aspect of the CPP and for that matter Nkrumahism was good. Essentially the party came out with a slogan which sought “to continue the good works of Kwame Nkrumah”.<sup>53</sup>

The leadership of the party made it categorically clear that “the PNP is a new party and not just the old and banned CPP revisiting Ghana as an illegal immigrant”.<sup>54</sup> But for this fact, the PNP would not have qualified to the list for the parliamentary and presidential campaigns in April-July, 1979. Alhaji Imoru Egala, the founder and father of the party, in an address at an Accra warming up rally held on March 10<sup>th</sup>, 1979, particularly emphasised that “the mistakes of the past shall not be repeated” and that “the party had come into being to save the country from total collapse in the interest especially of the youth”.<sup>55</sup> Again, at a rally held in Dansoman, during which Dr Limann was first publicly introduced as the PNP presidential candidate, Egala again emphasised that the PNP “will not be yet another cover for money-grabbing or the arena for the infighting and vindictiveness which had destroyed the CPP long before the 1966 coup d’ etat”.<sup>56</sup>

In the difficult task of trying to show the Ghanaian people the extent to which the PNP and its leaders were Nkrumah’s successors and in what way they were not, the party adopted a policy picking candidates who were fresh and new to politics, and not the ‘old guards.’ Consequently not one of the 71MPs who were elected by PNP voters had been a Member of Parliament before. It conceded that the decision itself was not ideologically significant, but it expressed a



determination by the party to break with the past and to give the country a new hope.<sup>57</sup>

It is therefore worthy of note that while drawing inspiration from the positive attributes and ideas of Nkrumah, and whilst undertaking to further and complete his unfinished projects, the PNP made it clear that it was not committed and had no mandate to repeat or rehabilitate the errors of the First Republic and of the CPP, insisting that the image and practice of the PNP should reflect the better things of Nkrumah's legacy not the worst.<sup>58</sup>

Again, the PNP, while acknowledging that the CPP had made significant progress in the construction of roads, health facilities and other infrastructural projects before the coup, nevertheless conceded that, these laudable projects had also created intractable problems for the CPP. They were worsened by the imposition of the one-party system, which tended to generate or exacerbate already existing intra-party differences, squabbles and stresses.<sup>59</sup> In view of the situation the party found itself, the leadership agreed that Ghana must be saved and revived through a return to Nkrumah and the other founding fathers of country. They, however, stated that a return to Nkrumah did not and could not therefore mean a wholesale application of the methods, tactics and institutions that he used at different stages of his life, political evolution and actual developmental achievements, but the salvation of the country from total destruction.<sup>60</sup>

The leadership of the party argued that they must adopt policies that would suit the changing circumstances and problems of the time. Dr. Nkrumah himself

dealt with some of these problems in his books, including his autobiography *Ghana*,<sup>61</sup> *I Speak of Freedom*<sup>62</sup> and particularly, *Africa Must Unite*,<sup>63</sup> and *Consciencism*, in which he argued that after the attainment of independence a new orientation was required for the nationalist movement since the struggle for independence was far different from the problem of national reconstruction. According to Nkrumah, the appropriate institutions to adopt at any given situation to aid national development or reconstruction, should be arrived at through pragmatism.<sup>64</sup>

The PNP therefore conceded that any policy it had to pursue was supposed to be based on an objective analysis of society and of the situation in which the party found itself. After a careful reflection the party chose pragmatism in its approach to the task of national recovery and reconstruction. This was not misplaced since Nkrumah prescribed that method.

Basically, it could be assumed that in terms of ideology the leadership of the PNP was socialist at heart. It was, however, one with a difference in two senses: (1) it accepted the concept of mixed economy in direct appreciation of the country's economic situation that was at variance with the CPP's centrally planned and controlled system. (2) The leadership portrayed a lukewarm attitude towards ideology.

The subject of the PNP's ideological orientation featured during an interview President Limann granted the *Financial Times of London* on the 13<sup>th</sup> May, 1981. In that interview, he agreed that the PNP's manifesto picked up quite a lot from the development plans of the late President Nkrumah. He, however,

argued that the problem that confronted the country was how to live or survive and that to him overrides any question of ideology. “The people who talk about ideology don’t know what they are talking about. Marx said man must eat, drink and clothe before he can think. Ghana and her economic salvation are my ideology. That is our main objective.”<sup>65</sup> In a personal letter to Basili Wassai dated 8<sup>th</sup> March, 1979, Dr. Hilla Limann had further stated categorically that the PNP would not adopt socialism because the country could not recover with that.<sup>66</sup>

When asked whether the PNP considered itself a socialist party and where it stood on public ownership, Egala responded:

...Ghana is socialist; there is no doubt about that. What we lack is capital to work with... We still believe, what the party believes is not any –isms or anything. Our people are hungry- they want food, they want clothing, they want shelter. If they can get these things, then our –isms can come afterwards. We don’t want to stress on these things now.<sup>67</sup>

Limann did not have a political philosophy. His main concern was how to tackle problems of mass illiteracy, poverty, hunger and diseases in the immediate future and that his ideology at that moment was Ghana’s economic and national salvation. If Socialism was practicable in the First Republic, the circumstances in the late 1970s demanded a new political, social and economic orientation. It is worthy of mention that the need for pragmatism seemed to have taken precedence over ideological consideration. Limann and his latter-day converts of the Nkrumahist tradition who were mostly economic moderates believed that the political climate had changed and needed a different approach.

Hilla Limann and the leadership of the PNP further argued that once the party was founded to save Ghana from any further decline or even total collapse, the application of true Nkrumaism in the 1980s would not have the same priorities or policy instruments as the Nkrumahism of the 1950s or the 1960s. Nkrumahism was the pursuit of economic and social independence, freedom and justice based on objective analysis of the situation in which Nkrumah found himself. Faced with the ravaged and run-down Ghanaian economy of 1979, and faced with a frightened and cynical society, the Nkrumahist priorities was to take every step, as part of an interlocking, methodical strategy, to make the Ghanaian economy strong again.<sup>68</sup>

In view of these problems, the Manifesto Committee of the PNP, which included Drs. Ivan Addai Mensah and Hilla Limann, outlined a 24 point objective in its manifesto which constituted the major programmes and policies of the party.<sup>69</sup>

On the economy the PNP'S immediate policy objective was the elimination of some of the constraints to development. It also sought to reduce the high rate of inflation, and reduce the balance of payment deficit on the country's growth. It also pledged to embark upon a review of the financial and investment policy, to enable it allocate adequate funds to agriculture, industry, education and other services such as health, water, fuel and power, all-weather motorable trunk and feeder roads, and the rehabilitation of cocoa and timber industries.<sup>70</sup>

On its medium term strategy the PNP conceded that in order to achieve modernisation in the economy alongside growth, the country had to rely on its

own resources. Agriculture was identified as the bedrock of the party's economic policy with the manufacturing sector as the second priority in the economic development. On agriculture therefore, the PNP specifically hoped to eliminate the large food deficit by increasing production so as to bring prices down and raise the nutritional level of Ghanaians. It also hoped to embark on a comprehensive and well planned agricultural programme and rural development in order to raise rural income and also provide a grassroot based basic infrastructure for industrial growth.<sup>71</sup>

Recognising the changed circumstances of Ghana, the political policy of the PNP was carefully set out in Article 14 of the party Manifesto, 1979. The Party accepted to respect democratic rights and duties.<sup>72</sup>

The PNP stated that if it won power its short term measure would be geared towards providing immediate relief to the average Ghanaian, whose patience for the basic things of life was exhausted. The Party hoped to achieve this by immediately tackling the provision of food and other basic consumer items. It also hoped to eliminate hoarding, profiteering and smuggling.<sup>73</sup>

After putting the PNP structures and its manifesto in place, the most important hurdle the party had to clear was how to choose a credible and marketable candidate. The timing of the resumption of politics was very tight and the Central Committee of the Party had to begin the procedure of selecting a presidential candidate for the new party:

The elections were to be in March and there was to be a General Congress of the PNP in Kumasi in April, so we had two months; February and March to make our decision and to prepare our candidate to recommend to

the General Congress. Some of us thought the whole procedure, even given the time scale that was provided, was wrong, but there was little that could be done about it.<sup>74</sup>

Naturally, Alhaji Imoru Egala, the moving force behind the PNP was expected to be the party's Candidate but he was in fact disqualified for as a minister of industries under Kwame Nkrumah, he had been investigated by the Committee of Enquiry and there had been adverse findings against him. Some party members particularly the 'Old Guards' had to drag Egala to court challenging his eligibility to contest the party's Presidential Candidate with the hope that if Egala could not clear himself one of them would take over the leadership of the party.<sup>75</sup> By the court decision, Egala was disqualified. Egala had argued earlier that in view of the crucial role of the northern votes in the election, it was good to have a northerner as the Party's candidate. His appeal against the ban was still pending when the time came for nomination papers to be filed in April 1979. Thus, Egala's ambition was shattered.

After the disqualification of Egala, there were other candidates whose names came up for consideration. One such candidate was Mumuni Bawumia, who could not as it turned out, either be considered as a candidate, having held office as Minister of Local Government under Kwame Nkrumah, he was still being investigated by the Sowah Assets Committee and although there was no adverse findings against him and eventually there was none, his case was still *subjudice* and it was held that he could not stand. Another name that came up for consideration was Dr. John S. Nabila who later became Minister of Presidential Affairs. He was, however, under forty years of age and thus barred by

constitutional rules. Dr Andani Andan, a medical doctor at the Police Hospital and one of the few northerners who received his professional training abroad in the 1950's, was an early candidate but he declined.<sup>76</sup>

After the failure of the Central Committee to get a candidate, Alhaji Imoru Egala was given the chance to select a northern candidate. Even at this moment Hilla Limann's name did not readily come to Egala's mind. While brooding over a possible candidate for the position, Egala's attention was drawn by Dr. Ayeh-kumi to "his boy" - "what about that your boy who is working hard for us behind the scene" literally referring to Dr Hilla Limann.<sup>77</sup> The reference to Dr. Limann as Alhaji Egala's boy was not out of place. For one reason, Limann was Egala's pupil at the Lawra Native Confederacy Primary School; for another reason Limann had acted as Alhaji Egala's personal secretary in the drafting of the 1979 constitution.

It is interesting to note that Limann had originally intended to cast his fortunes with the Danquah-Busia camp but was incidentally drawn into the Nkrumah-leaning PNP by veteran politician Imoru Egala. When the ban on party politics was lifted in 1979, Dr Hilla Limann resigned as Foreign Service officer in order to enter politics as the Popular Front Party (PFP) parliamentary candidate for Tumu. But for the resignation he was about to be sent on posting to Ivory Coast. Prior to his resignation, he together with Mumuni Bawumia, Ibrahim Mahama, R.I Alhassan and Salifu Bawa Dy-Yakah were delegated to the North after a Northern Youth Association meeting to find out which political group would accept Northern leadership for the Presidential election. After holding

consultations with the PNP, SDF, and PFP the results favoured the PNP, even though Ibrahim Mahama disagreed.<sup>78</sup> Besides, the youth of his constituency had written to him to contest the Tumu seat. Thus, when Alhaji Imoru Egala founded the PNP, the hope for a northerner to lead the party became brighter. Limann's interest primarily was, however, in becoming a Member of Parliament and not a president. He was on his way to Tumu to file his nomination papers as a PFP parliamentary candidate when the bombshell dropped, that by a court order, Imoru Egala was disqualified as the Party's Presidential candidate. Dr Limann's journey was cut short when after getting to Kumasi, he was called back to Accra. The following account by Madam Fulera sums up Limann's feelings and his desire to enter politics:

In answer to my fears about the future of the country, Hilla always maintained that if the right people were at the helm of affairs, Ghana would be a prosperous nation. He asserted this with so much confidence that I was not surprised when he informed me of his desire to do politics. Knowing how Hilla was not one to be manipulated and how honest he was, I tried hard to discourage him as the general misconception is that politics is a dirty game... True to his words he returned home one night with resignation letter from the Civil Service and a burning desire to be full time politician. His desire was to contest as a Parliamentary candidate for Sisaala constituency. Little did I know that he would become the president of the nation shortly thereafter.<sup>79</sup>

Dr. Limann was called to the PNP Central Committee meeting. He was actually attending the Central Committee meeting by invitation and the Committee was called upon to consider him in his very presence. It was suggested and agreed that Dr. Limann should address the Committee on his policies. After an initial disagreement over his suitability, the Committee decided to vote. When



the votes came it was 17 votes to 1 in favour of Dr Limann. It was an old fashioned vote though, that is, by show of hands.<sup>80</sup>

There was yet serious lobbying within the party for other candidates against the one put forward by the Central Committee (i.e. Hilla Limann) in the weeks remaining before the party Congress in Kumasi, but none of them made much of an impression. One candidate put forward, for example, was Dr R P Baffour, the then distinguished head of the Atomic Energy Commission and sometime Vice-Chancellor of the University of Science and Technology, Kumasi. Consequently, the Congress was held in Kumasi with only one candidate and Limann was elected as the PNP's presidential candidate, overwhelmingly by 624 votes for him, 21 against him and 21 abstentions.<sup>81</sup>

It is worthy of note and of significance that even though it would be unreasonable to suppose that Limann was a mere puppet whose affairs were arranged for him by Egala, it is, however, true to say that it was the influence of Egala that got him the position. His credentials no doubt were impeccable. His career as a diplomat and his foreign travels had given him experience and an independent mind which the PNP exploited. It is true that Hilla Limann and Alhaji Imoru Egala were both Sisaalas but they hailed from different villages in the Sisaala District. The only relationship was that Egala's first wife came from the extended family of Limann. The evidence so far adduced indicated that Dr. Limann went through a rigorous selection process. The Congress could have rejected him if he did not meet the party's requirements. But he met the requirements and was picked after sober thought and reflection. The party was

looking for a person who was untainted by corruption and by the sorry reputation of previous regimes. In Limann the party hierarchy found such a man. He was modest and unassuming and could be portrayed as a people's man for he came from humble origins and was known to have achieved higher academic laurels on his own persuasion and ingenuity. If academic qualifications were needed for the job, then Limann had them all. It seems reasonable to conclude that by 1979 Dr. Limann was too distinguished a man, in terms of qualification, authority and personal reputation to fit harmoniously into the presidency.

There appear to be conflicting views about Hilla Limann's political lineage. Before he was made the Presidential Candidate, he was said to have been involved in the activities of the PNP. Professor J.S Nabila recounts " I remember very well the sleepless nights Dr. Limann had in order to make sure that Baba's speech was ready [the popular name we all had for Alhaji Imoru Egala ]for the launching of the PNP at the Kwame Nkrumah Circle in 1979".<sup>82</sup> According to Professor Ivan Addai Mensah, he and Limann were tasked to draft the manifesto because the leaders were too busy jockeying for positions to think of a party manifesto.<sup>83</sup>

The sequence of events as they unfolded indicated that prior to his nomination and subsequent election as the presidential candidate, Dr.Limann was involved in the activities of the party. However, the most plausible argument one can put up is that he did that behind the scenes and largely because of his relationship with Egala and not as a member of that tradition. It has been established that Limann was not a member of the Nkrumaihist family and for that

matter the PNP before he became the party's presidential candidate and that he had UP connections. In 1954, Dr. Hilla Limann contested the Sisaala Constituency seat alongside Alhaji Imoru Egala as independent candidates, even though after winning the election, Egala declared for the CPP. Hilla Limann is said to have contested the election on a matter of principle since he filed his nomination before Egala and blamed the Tumu Kuoro for pitching Egala against him instead of asking one to step down for the other.<sup>84</sup> Limann's sympathies were with the Northern Peoples' Party, a party with a strong northern interest which eventually merged with the NLM which produced the United Party. After his ten years sojourn in Europe he returned to do a job that did not allow him to do active politics. His active participation in politics again was in the 1979 elections where he eventually became the PNP's candidate. Incontrovertible evidence, however, suggests that he was involved in the activities of the PFP in the Sisaala constituency. It is instructive to note that Limann was present at a PFP meeting held in one Bawa 'Fitter's house (the then constituency chairman of the PFP) where it was agreed that he should contest the seat on that party's ticket. Evidence of his association with the Busia-Danquah tradition has been provided by some of his close associates.<sup>85</sup>

Just like how Jimmy Carter's bid for the American presidency raised some question marks in people faces when it was brought home to his people by the media, Dr Limann's entry into public political discussions also raised not a few eyebrows. They asked in amazement "Doctor Li-Who"? At the PNP nomination review committee hearing, the little known presidential candidate was sharply

taken through a barrage of questions of generally sceptical interviewers. He kept his calm and submitted himself to the “inquisition”.<sup>86</sup>

Since then, it became clear that the presumed controversial nomination was not merely of such a favourite protégé from the North. He had emerged and it was found out that he was not a novice in politics and social leadership. Like Nkrumah and Busia, he had received his initial primary and teacher training education in Ghana and his advanced academic training abroad in London and later at the Sorbonne. He had been involved in the local party politics of the Sisaala Constituency in the early 1950’s, but his main skills were as administrator, bureaucrat, and diplomat. He had taken part in the drawing up of the Second Republican Constitution in 1967. His skills were therefore much broader by virtue of his training and occupation.

Limann’s ties with the Northern Study Group and particularly with Imoru Egala, the man who held the remnants of old CPP together after the fall of Nkrumah, were responsible for his rise to power. The tall, handsome, generous and shrewd Egala was popular in the CPP circles because he was the only person going round the prisons visiting incarcerated CPP members and their families and using his house as a rallying point for their members. Indeed the mantle that Alhaji Emoru Egala was to wear went to Limann. It is therefore not out of place to say that Limann in some measure owed his appointment to the celebrated Egala, and of course to his own credentials.

From the evidence that has been adduced so far, one important issue which remained clear was the fact that Limann did not seem to have any

presidential ambition until events took a dramatic turn following the disqualification of Egala. And so when would-be aspirants were busy traversing the entire country and canvassing for support as well as building political structures even before the opening of nomination, not a word was heard from him. His interest was basically in becoming a parliamentarian. When he eventually got the nod from the PNP, many were those who wondered how he was going to compete with the likes of William Ofori Atta and Victor Owusu, who had built carefully cultivated and formidable political machinery. But little did Ghanaians know that, that was the beginning of a fairytale journey to the presidency by a reticent Foreign Service officer whose only experience in politics was a brief stint with the Sisaala District Council, and who was not used to the hire-wire cut-throat politics. So how did he become the President in spite of the fact that he started late and had no personal political machine?

One fact became immediately clear at the onset, and that was the fact that he had the backing of Alhaji Imoru Egala and other prominent members of the PNP. In fact this factor was the single most important factor that tuned him first, into the PNP flag bearer and subsequently the president of Ghana. Indeed Imoru Egala did not just have him nominated but campaigned vigorously for him.

Dr Limann had risen to vie for the highest position in the country through will power and hard work. The PNP therefore found a candidate who was a scholar and a Diplomat, not someone who was used to the often fierce battle of politics, and not someone who by instincts or by years of practice, could bring a crowd to its feet, chanting his name. But he was a man of self evident honesty,

and this was essential even though some people within the party were of the view that he could not move the people, but at least he could convince them that he was his own man and that his very bookishness gave him an understanding of the country's past that could help its future.<sup>87</sup>

After settling on their message and strategy, the PNP built up a small but efficient team to support Dr Hilla Limann in his campaign. They included Dr Alex Arthur, Dr Ivan Addai Mensah, Kwasi Oware and Dr Ayeh Kumi. The PNP's electoral machinery moved into top gear, well-oiled by the money of such wealthy patrons as Nana Oktutwer Bekoe III, Party Chairman, Kojo Botsio, Dr Ayeh Kumi, Kofi Batsa and others. Hilla Limann's team travelled continually and the support of a dedicated and intelligent, hardworking team was essential to keep the campaign moving in terms of both organisation and money. The founder of the party vowed to be the "chief propaganda secretary" and the national chairman also offered twenty-four hours a day of his life for the election campaign. The role of Dr. Ayeh-Kumi was very crucial to the campaign for as a central committee member, he was most active in producing campaign materials.<sup>88</sup>

During the electioneering campaign it was generally made known that Limann was a self-made man who had struggled to rise from humble beginning in a particular disadvantaged area. This held considerable appeal for the many young voters particularly northern voters. It was such people whose enthusiasm as PNP activists arguably swung the balance in favour of their party in most constituencies.<sup>89</sup> The choice of Dr. J.W de Graft Johnson, an Akan to partner Dr. Limann, balanced the north-south divide of the country.

The PNP campaign team travelled through the whole country with its slogan 'Eye Abe' (the palm tree) and attracted large crowds. The PNP was quick to revive CPP strongholds that had been formed since Nkrumah's days. The PNP policies and the mechanisms it devised to deal with the economy were seen to be constructive and politically viable.<sup>90</sup> This was a very good campaign message to all Ghanaians who were yearning for improvement in their economic well-being. Mass rallies with obligatory songs, campaign cars and leaflets, and television debates and the likes characterized the campaign.<sup>91</sup>

The euphoria and the excitement which greeted the politician as a result of years of frustration from political famine was interrupted briefly by yet another military intervention on June 4, 1979, after an earlier attempt made on May 15<sup>th</sup>, 1979 was aborted. The leader of the May 15<sup>th</sup> 1979 revolt was Flight Lieutenant Jerry John Rawlings. He advanced for his coup, the standard concerns used to justify earlier coups. They were bribery and corruption, immorality, economic mismanagement, high unemployment, high cost of living and the difficult financial circumstances of members of the armed forces.<sup>92</sup> The Junta formed the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC) with Flight Lieutenant Rawlings as the head and carried out what it called "house-cleaning". The coup announcement also assured Ghanaians that the general election would go on as scheduled.<sup>93</sup>

On 18<sup>th</sup> June, two weeks after the Rawlings intervention, the Ghanaian electorate went to the polls to select for the first time in ten years their representatives to parliament and to the top leadership position of president and

vice president. The elections were contested by six political parties- the PFP, PNP, UNC, TFP, SDP, and ACP. Five independent candidates also contested for the presidency. By all accounts the polling was conducted in a fair and under the circumstance, extremely meticulous manner. The Electoral Commission had ironed out some of the problems in voting procedure and vote counting arrangements that tarnished the Union Government referendum.<sup>94</sup>

When the results of the parliamentary vote were declared, the PNP secured 71 of the 140 contested seats. The PFP had 41 seats, the UNC had 13 seats, the ACP had 10, and SDP had 3 seats. In the presidential election, Hilla Limann, with the vice presidential candidate, Professor J.W.de Graft-Johnson, polled 35.51percent of the presidential vote. Victor Owusu and his running mate, Yakubu Tali, pulled 29.66 percent of the votes. As a result of the inability of any party to secure a fifty per cent plus one vote as required by the constitution, a round-off was held on 9th July, and Limann beat Owusu 61.98 to 38.02percent.<sup>95</sup>

Interviews conducted to ascertain the reasons for the PNP victory revealed that the party's success was rooted in three, interrelated factors. First, and most obviously, the PFP –UNC split tilted the balance in favour of the PNP since the combined votes of the PFP and UNC could have cancelled the PNP's lead. The internal party fragmentation within the UNC and PFP militated against the resurrection of the grand coalition of 1969. This was the most important factor that gave the PNP the electoral victory. A second reason for the PNP victory lay in the party's presentation of Limann in particular as an honest self-made man and other parliamentary candidates who were new faces to a society that was yearning



for a change in the national leadership. The PNP organization machinery was very powerful and effective.<sup>96</sup> Indeed, the combination of campaigning skills, methodical planning, the revamping of the CPP structures, astuteness in comprehending the social forces at work in the country, its emphasis on change, and the fragmentation of the opposition all worked to grant the PNP its electoral victory.<sup>97</sup>

Considering that Ghana had by 1979 traversed a rather tortuous experience in its twenty-five years of nationhood and had in the process dabbled in doctrinal and military forms of political administration, it was time that stock-taking was done of the not too happy experiences in which the respective governments had involved the people of Ghana. It must be pointed out unreservedly that the social, political and economic circumstances of the country had become increasingly more complex and intractable, requiring exceptional qualities of leadership background of experience and knowledge, if a national leader was to comprehend, in their range and complexity, the problems which were to come up for decision.

Dr. Hilla Limann was called upon to assume the office of president, with intellectual and much exposure to international politics and foreign governments throughout his post university career which served to buttress his knowledge of book history, politics and economics. His field of study and professional experience were particularly relevant for Ghana's presidency in the Third Republic which had installed a democratic and representative form of Government. It also suggested that he was eminently fitted to take a hard post-mortem view of Ghana's historical journey.

It is often said that leaders are thrown up by social events, especially, in times of extreme crisis and national danger when painstaking, level headed, calm confident and selfless leadership is most needed. How well did Dr. Hilla Limann execute this responsibility when he acquired power? The role he and his government played in the Third Republic will form the main focus of the next chapter.

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## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **HILLA LIMANN AS PRESIDENT OF THE THIRD REPUBLIC**

Hilla Limann was sworn in as President of the Third Republic of Ghana at Parliament House on September 24, 1979. The most significant aspect of the event was that after years of political uncertainty and turmoil, the country had returned to a democratically elected civilian government in a hyper politically conscious society. Added to this was the rise to power of Hilla Limann, whose political calibre and administrative quality were yet to be tested. At the inaugural ceremony, Ft.Lt. Rawlings formally handed over the reigns of government to the first civilian administration in more than seven years and charged it to continue to root out corruption and restore Ghana to the paramount place it once held in world affairs.<sup>1</sup>

President Limann used the ceremony to call upon all Ghanaians to sacrifice so that the country would progress. He talked of the end of a long period of blatant and shameless abuses and a yearning for a change for the better. He demonstrated that he was aware of the enormity and complexity of the tasks ahead when he observed that “Abysmal economic chaos, awesome challenges and monumental responsibilities confront us”.<sup>2</sup> He observed that Ghanaians had been reduced to intolerable levels of poverty and degradation; hence the imperative necessity to provide a new lease of hope and life. He went ahead and sounded a

note of optimism when he stated: “I believe that out of our present wreck we can build anew”.<sup>3</sup>

The chapter examines the major economic, political and social policies initiated to solve the mounting problems President Limann and his Cabinet inherited. Particular attention will be paid to his economic policies, socio-political issues, and most importantly foreign relations by virtue of his professional training and interest. It is the belief of this writer that a more balanced account of President’s Limann work would need to give some attention to his absorption in the problems of the judiciary and the mass media.

The first strand of history that will be examined in this chapter is the socio-economic and political situation in Ghana on the eve of the assumption of power of the Third Republic in order to place the regime in its proper historical context.

The Limann administration inherited a formidable array of economic problems. They included high unemployment, high cost of living, a rapidly depreciating currency and low national morale. The deteriorating state of the nation’s agriculture was also a major problem. There was a rapid slowing down of the economy as a result of the lowering in production of the country’s main exports – cocoa, gold, diamond and timber. By 1979, the economy was in complete shambles. The country was totally blockaded by the international community after it had ceased to be credit worthy in international financial circles. No country was prepared to supply goods and services to Ghana by September 1979. Reserve stock of every conceivable commodity, including

petrol, had been sold out at reduced price by the AFRC at gun point in an attempt to provide the masses with their basic needs.<sup>4</sup>

The situation that existed on the eve of the Third Republic was a perfect recipe for social unrest, industrial strife, and politico-economic instability. Indeed, on the eve of Limann's assumption of office, few people could correctly visualize what the immediate future for the young government and for all Ghanaians would be.<sup>5</sup> The situation that existed is best summed up by Batsa:

International credit had been suspended, and trade was at a stand still. Nothing was working, whether in commercial sector or in Government. The people were demoralized and brow-beaten by inflation and the fearsome economic and social problems that go with it. The civil service was demoralized by the bullying of the military and without motivation, direction or indeed equipment. When we took over the President's office after the election, there was nothing. All the type writers had been stolen, for example, and while I went to London to buy essential equipments with party funds, the President office borrowed a type writer from Ministry of Education.<sup>6</sup>

Another writer also painted the picture of the country in this way:

Ghana is in ruins. The economy is crippled. Social services are limping. Exchange is run down to a dangerous level. Inflation is uncontrollable. There is a booming black market in every commodity that is basic to life, including the Cedi. The era of the so-called mismanagement by Nkrumah now looks to Ghanaians much as the Promised Land looked to the Israelites when in bondage in Egypt. All that Ghana has left today is her Political sovereignty won by Nkrumah in 1957...<sup>7</sup>

In spite of the gloomy picture painted above, if the coming into office of any government has ever raised hopes and expectations, it was the Limann government. Naturally, the Limann government was expected to restore normalcy

and to virtually wipe away all problems and frustrations instantly. In brief, Ghanaians longed not only for a return to normal peaceful living conditions but they also yearned for instant solutions to complex and intractable problems which demanded careful thought, patience and time.<sup>8</sup>

In her analysis of the Ghanaian situation Naomi Chazan wrote that the challenges which the Limann regime faced in 1979 were three fold: first it had to reconstruct a state apparatus that had been deformed and assaulted during the preceding period of military rule. Second it had to attempt a rehabilitation of an economy shattered by years of misguidance and abuse. Third, it had to revive a confidence in government dissipated by years of exclusion, exploitation and impoverishment. President Limann and his government had to deal with an economy that was barely functioning, a population that was not prepared to cede resources to the state, and an international community that, when not totally neglectful of the Ghanaian predicament, was at best skeptical of the country's economic promise.<sup>9</sup> Such was the magnitude of the task which Limann and his government was confronted with. It is important, therefore, to delve into how President Limann perceived these problems and the type of solutions he offered for nation building.

Hilla Limann approached these enormous challenges with caution. He immediately avoided an ideological solution proclaiming that "Ghana and her economic salvation are my ideology".<sup>10</sup> President Limann demonstrated that he was well aware of the problems that confronted the nation. In his speech on 3 November, 1979, he underscored the magnitude of the problems before the nation

and the opportunity that was offered to chart a new way of life that would lead to peace, progress and prosperity.<sup>11</sup>

The first effort of President Limann towards finding solutions to the country's problems began with the constitution of the Third Republican cabinet. Under the constitution, ministers were to be appointed by the President, with the approval of parliament. The cabinet created by President Limann when he assumed office in September 1979 comprised sixteen ministers. Its composition was as follows:<sup>12</sup>

<u>MINISTRY</u>		<u>MINISTER</u>
Finance and Economic Planning	-	Dr. Amon Nikoi
Defense	-	Mr. S.K Riley-Poku
Interior	-	Dr. Ekow Daniels
Foreign Affairs	-	Dr. Isaac Chinabuah
Agriculture	-	Mr. Francis Badjie
Local Government, Rural Development and Cooperatives	-	K.S.P Jantuah
Health	-	Dr. Kwamena Ocran
Transport and Communication	-	Mr. Harry Sawyerr
Works and Housing	-	Colonel David Zanlerigu
Trade and Tourism	-	Mr. F.K Buah
Industry, Science and Technology	-	Mr. Vincent Bulla
Labour, Youth and Social Welfare	-	Dr. Emmanuel Y Ablo
Education, Culture and Sports	-	Mr. M P Ansah

Information and Presidential Affairs	-	Dr. John S. Nabila
Attorney General	-	Mr. Joe Reindorf
Land, Natural Resources, Fuel and Power	-	Prof. George Benneh

The ministerial list reflected that almost all the members of the cabinet had undergone advanced academic training. This assemblage was judged to be highly professional, technocratic and elitist.<sup>13</sup> It was a blend of old and experienced intellectuals and young technocrats. In the composition of the cabinet, it appeared President Limann also took into consideration regional balance as all the regions were represented in his cabinet. All the major ethnic groups were also included even though comparatively the number of Northerners, Westerners and Ga was expanded.

The political background of the cabinet members was also varied. People identified with the Nkrumah regime such as Kwame Sanaa-Poku Jantuah, a member of the first all Ghanaian cabinet and David Zanlerigu were brought together with their erstwhile opponents notably Harry Sawyerr with a crop of newcomers. In short the cabinet appeared to have contained some of the best brains of the men and women in his political party. The general expectation in the country was that a government made up of a blend of a new generation of intellectuals and old intelligentsia was more likely to be very tactful in handling the problems that confronted the country.

On the 30<sup>th</sup> November 1979, President Limann presented his state of the nation address to parliament in which he outlined the policy direction of his

government. The bulk of the address was devoted to domestic matters. Speaking on the occasion President Limann stated:

Mr. Speaker, as I have stated the problems that face us are many and intractable and we cannot solve them at once. Consequently our short-term programme shall be characterized by two key words 'REHABILITATIONA AND REDIRECTION'.<sup>14</sup>

After putting the various structures in place, the Limann administration set about the task of ruling Ghana. The immediate tasks that faced the new civilian administration were to foster a firm sense of political stability and to lay a strong foundation for a true democratic civilian rule. Secondly, it had to grapple with how to seek an improvement of the financial and economic situation and lay the foundation for the resuscitation of the economy. And, finally, to work steadily to regain the good will and support of Ghana's overseas friends and thereby re-establish internal lines of credit.<sup>15</sup>

Immediately upon his assumption of office, therefore, President Limann was compelled to seek ways to both revitalize state structures and control anti-establishment forces in order to lay a firm grasp on the state apparatus. It was recognized by the new administration and the Armed Forces High Command that to remove the threat of destabilization which AFRC members and associates posed to the civilian regime of Limann, a comprehensive programme of resettlement courses were arranged for all those who had taken active part in the AFRC regime. On completion of their courses they were to be given two options, either to continue with their service career, or to accept to be resettled. The programme had a limited effect but it nevertheless succeeded in buying time for



the government.<sup>16</sup> In November, 1979, the government dismissed the Chief of Defense Staff, Brigadier Nunoo-Mensah, and the Army Commander, Brigadier J.A Quainoo. It also mounted close surveillance on Captain Kojo Tsikata a Rawlings loyalist by the Military Intelligence for posing threat to the security of the state.<sup>17</sup>

From the beginning of the PNP administration, it was quite obvious that the government needed the support of one of the minority parties to enable it implement its policies. This was against the background that the PNP was having a slim majority in parliament of one, 71 members against 69 opposition members in parliament. This was inadequate for a comfortable government. Consequently, Kofi Batsa, Chairman of the PNP publicity committee, was empowered by the National Executives at its meeting in Legion Hall in Accra to undertake negotiations with Social Democratic Front and United National Convention. The negotiations culminated in the signing of an agreement between the UNC and PNP in October 1979.<sup>18</sup> Other members of the PNP negotiating team included Dr. De-Graft Johnson, the Vice- President, J.B. Quashie-Idun, Johnny Hansen, Dr. I.K. Chnabuah and Joe Reindorf. The UNC on the other hand was represented by Alhaji Mahama Iddirisu, the Deputy Leader of the party, R.R. Amponsah, Joe Hyde, Peter Ala Adjetey, Dr. P. Agama and Dr. Obed Asamoah.<sup>19</sup> The parties mutually declared that the basis for the agreement was “the overriding need for stable democratic civilian politics and the promotion of a healthy economic order and therefore they decided to form a political alliance for co-operation in all matters and at all levels of party organization”.<sup>20</sup> As parts of the arrangement the

PNP and UNC established a national liaison committee comprising seven PNP and five UNC members for the purpose of consultation with J.W. de Graft Johnson as the chairman and Obed Asamoah as the secretary.<sup>21</sup>

It was on the basis of this alliance that the Limann administration gave some non-PNP members portfolios in parliament, Council of State and some ministerial and ambassadorial positions. A notable example was Harry Sawyer, who was given the ministerial portfolio for transport. William Ofori Atta, popularly known as Paa Willie, was made the Chairman of the Council of State while Justice Jacob Hackenburg Griffith Randolph became the Speaker of Parliament.<sup>22</sup> This was a clear demonstration that in his bid to solve the problems of the country, he was prepared to work with all parties and individuals for the common good of the nation.

The PNP /UNC alliance was, however, shortlived. By the beginning of May 1980 it was quite obvious that it was on the verge of collapsing. The UNC members complained that their gains were small. They also complained about lack of or poor consultation with them by the PNP.<sup>23</sup> In May 1980 the UNC parliamentarians refused to go into lobby with the PNP after Parliament had adjourned sitting for the House to go to Oyarifa for the launching of the government two-year agrarian revolution. Finally on 26th September 1980, the UNC Congress announced that it was ending the alliance to keep its identity. The alliance had lasted for only one year. The PNP's only reaction came from its Secretary-General, Ivan Addai- Mensah, who spoke his belief in the government's ability to carry on without the UNC support.<sup>24</sup>

There have been several speculations that President Limann did not have any depth of authority that correspond to his role as president and therefore he was not in firm control of his government nor was he his own man and that he was not given the free hand to operate.<sup>25</sup> But to anyone who has tried to, on however slender evidence, to understand President Limann's thoughts and attitude, these seem to be odd conclusions and at variance with the facts on the ground. He has been described as a firm, disciplined, fair-minded and principled man who never countenanced under cover dealings. Information available indicates that he was in firm control of his government and could not be easily influenced or manipulated. Individuals within the party who thought they could dictate or interfere and redirect Limann's line of actions failed and therefore resorted to fighting him.<sup>26</sup> His problem was that he was armed with too many rigid principles and was too dogmatically convinced of what was right to be done, and once he made up his mind it was difficult to convince him to take action outside the confines of the constitution. He was so meticulous to the extent that every document that passed through his hands had to be seriously securitized.<sup>27</sup> In a deeper and more constructive sense, it appeared that Limann's background and training had a profound influence on his major work as a president.

### **Economic Policies**

The Limann administration had no new development plan. The government operated within the inherited economic framework; as a result it sought foreign investment to keep industrial production going. To attract foreign investors the regime paid Ghana's outstanding debts on schedule and exhibited a generous

investment code. The government recognized that the complete correction of the weak economic system it inherited would require extensive measures which would involve a carefully worked out timetable of far-reaching policy changes in the country. The rejuvenation of agriculture, the opening of international credit lines, the encouragement of foreign investments, the rehabilitation and revamping of the abandoned Nkrumah projects and factories were among the top priorities of the Limann administration.<sup>28</sup>

In a bid to solve the economic problems of the country, the government decided to adopt a comprehensive one year financial and economic programme as a medium-term adjustment policy. The objectives of the one year adjustments programme were to stimulate supplies, establish viable pricing relationships, increase incomes in the productive sectors, and reduce the budget deficit without upsetting the hard won international political stability. Steps were initiated towards the liberalization of exports.<sup>29</sup>

The government took steps to enhance the confidence of the international community in Ghana, remove the economic blockade that had been imposed on Ghana because of military rule, restore normal supplies of important products and reopen credit lines.<sup>30</sup> Consequently, efforts were made by the Limann administration to repay the country's short term debts. It claimed that within 18 months it was able to restore virtually all the country's traditional credit lines. It also made every effort to repay short term debts, and also demonstrated the government's preparedness to meet the country's debt obligations. Within a year, the Limann government had reduced the amount of arrears by \$165million and

imports were stream-lined and coordinated to prevent accumulation of repayment arrears by settling all import payments on due dates. Debt service on medium and long-term debts continued apace and was reduced to about 5% of export earnings by 1981/82 fiscal year. By September, 1980, the government had been able to obtain a total of \$812.59 million from various sources.<sup>31</sup>

In fact, the Limann regime stressed the need to increase foreign aid inflows, to find external private investment for industry, to reduce subsidies to state corporations, to contain wage demands, and to expand allocation to agriculture. More emphasis was laid on curbing government expenditure than on increasing support and, inevitably, more on augmenting production than on facilitating distribution.<sup>32</sup>

For efficient management and development of the country, Limann inaugurated a Projects Implementation Committee under the chairmanship of Nana Okutwer Bekoe III on 10th June, 1981. The economy was divided into sectors to be overseen by a Sector Committee charged with the development of policies and programmes and suggesting projects that took account of national objectives and help the government to reach them. Six sub-committees were established to cover the various sectors in which projects were discussed by the President during his visit to the United Kingdom, Yugoslavia, Rumania, and the Federal Republic of Germany. The sub-committees included: Agricultural and Lands, Mining and Energy, Forestry and Timber, Roads, Infrastructure and Legal and Finance.<sup>33</sup>

The policies the Limann government was putting in place to solve the country's economic problems suffered a jolt when for the first time in Ghana's history Parliament rejected the 1981/82 budget proposals put before it by the Government. The government lost by 54 votes to 51.<sup>34</sup> In the old Westminster-model days this would have meant the fall of the government or at least the resignation of the Finance Minister. The main objections raised by the opposition were to the huge deficit proposed by Professor George Benneh; to the inability of the government to tackle the loss of confidence in the cedi, manifested by the gap between the official and the unofficial exchange rate; the low level of cocoa producer price; the unacceptable high level of inflation and the intolerable hardships faced by the ordinary Ghanaian. A revised set of the budget proposals was finally approved by Parliament in August, 1981.<sup>35</sup>

In some circles, it was seen as a statement of no confidence in the efforts the Limann government was making to pull Ghana out of the economic mire.<sup>36</sup> Some people within the PNP circles argued that the government lost because some of MPs were absent on the floor of Parliament that day.<sup>37</sup> If this was the case then it clearly indicated that party discipline was at its lowest ebb as it was unable to depend on its 71 votes. The government took the issue for granted and was taught a lesson that consensus building was very important when the ruling government has a slim majority. It also demonstrated that parliament have a role to play and could influence government's policies.

In appreciating the work of President Limann, it is important that his effort in the realm of agriculture should not altogether be forgotten for the first and the

most important sphere of the Limann government's activity was agriculture. During its first six months in office, the leadership of the PNP affirmed its commitment to agriculture as the cornerstone of its economic policy. As President Limann stated "agriculture will be our first priority now and for the foreseeable future. It is unacceptable that a country which abounds in arable land should import food or else go hungry"<sup>38</sup>

In furtherance to this objective, a two year agricultural programme was launched in mid- May 1980 at Oyarifa, on the Aburi Road by President Limann. The programme was code named the "New Deal".<sup>39</sup> Reminiscent of the New Deal that was introduced in America after the Great Depression of the 1930s, the programme was an attempt by the Limann administration to arrest or reverse the past phenomenon of food shortages repeatedly experienced in Ghana, a country richly endowed with fertile soil. Organized under the general theme "Food for the People" it emphasized the need to increase food production and promised producer price incentives as well as the necessary support in equipment and expertise.<sup>40</sup>

The programme identified six main sectors in agriculture namely: crop development and production; livestock production and fisheries; farm input support and infrastructure; support services; extension planning; and monitoring and administration of agricultural programmes. In the area of cash crops the government underlined the need to create conditions for stable production over a decade, conceding that prospects for increased cocoa revenue in the near future were dim. He asked Ghanaians to support the programme for self sufficiency in

food production.<sup>41</sup> Unfortunately, the program was criticized on the grounds that it would not liquidate grain production deficit. Above all parliament was divided and outraged about the launching. The opposition boycotted the ceremony.<sup>42</sup>

Despite the criticism, the programme got its emphasis right in the sense that it recognized the fact that the Ghanaian economy was essentially agro-based. The Minister of Agriculture Dr.Kwaku Andah, characterized the project as the: beginning of the honest and sincere efforts of the government to bring the country out of the woods.<sup>43</sup> Indeed, for a country that depended excessively on food imports such as cereals, meat products, fats powdered milk and basic food staples which could be produced locally, it was essential that the Limann administration took serious measures to curb the trend particularly at the time the country was facing mounting food crisis.

Another vital sector of the economy the government tackled was investment. Immediately upon assumption of office, the Limann administration demonstrated its commitment towards revitalizing the country's economy through investment. To this end, a Task Force on Investment was set up by the government to do an authoritative analysis of what was wrong with the Ghanaian economy and to recommend measures to stimulate it and create a more favourable climate for investment. The Task Force which was made up of experts was under the chairmanship of E.F Anno. The other members were: Prof.E.A Boateng, of Environmental Protection Council, Prof. E.Bortei-Doku of University of Ghana, I.M.Ofori of Volta Regional Development Corporation, M.K. Mireku of Bank of Ghana, Mr. S. Odame-Larbi of Capital Investment Board, Yaw Osafo-Marfo of



Bank for Housing and Construction and Miss Ruth Dowuona-Okai of Capital Investment Board.<sup>44</sup> The Task Force, which commenced work in April 1980, made recommendation of far-reaching significance and served as a blue-print of the government's investments policies. Its concluding recommendation was particularly significant. It said:

Unless large amounts of external capital can be attracted into Ghana within a reasonable short time our current effort at economic recovery cannot succeed. Consequently everything possible should be done to create the right kind of climate and give Ghana the kind of image that will attract foreign investors and inspire international confidence generally in the country.<sup>45</sup>

By far one of the greatest economic policies that grew out of the above recommendation was the promulgation by the Limann administration of the Investment Code Act (473) of 1981, which was to encourage both foreign and domestic investments.<sup>46</sup> A group of experts covering shades of political, economic and social opinion in Ghana was set up and tasked with the drawing up an investment code. Some prominent members of the investment code committee included Appiah Minkah, B.A Mensah, Prof George Benneh (as Chairman) and Kofi Batsa. After diligent and careful work, a report of far-reaching nature was prepared which provided a basis for a bill entitled the Investment Code, 1981.<sup>47</sup>

Dr. Limann's hands at work behind the scenes could be seen as evidenced by the proposed code. After glancing through the original draft he found it unsatisfactory and committed it to another discussion at Peduase Lodge for the team to still propose improvements to the Bill.<sup>48</sup> On the 1<sup>st</sup> September, 1981, the government set up the Ghana Investment Centre to coordinate policies and to

design an institutional infrastructure to support investment and productivity. President Limann appointed Professor Modibo Ocran, an ardent Nkrumahist, a lawyer and an expert on transnational corporations, as its first Chief Executive with the Vice-President as the chairman.<sup>49</sup>

The significance of the Ghana Investment Centre lay in the fact that it embodied methods which should be used when it came to dealing with application, granting of approvals, issuing of manufacturing licenses for new industries, and expansion of existing one, the granting of immigration quotas, and fiscal incentives. The Code specified the areas in which the state, Ghanaians and foreigners could participate and where joint activities could be undertaken. It also assured foreign investors protection and fair return on their investments. It provided among other things a complete exemption from payment of custom duties on machinery and equipment and guaranteed personal remittance. The Investment Code also sought clarity for setting up manufacturing industries. There were also special benefits of varying terms for agriculture, mining, tourism, and manufacturing and for exports. The Code also sought foreign participation in agriculture such as livestock, cereals and tree crop production.<sup>50</sup>

As a country whose economy was barely functioning, the launching of the Investments Code was a necessary step to create a new confidence and to attract foreign capital into the economy. Indeed it could be seen as an attempt by the Limann administration to create an enabling socio-economic and political environment for investment and development. Launching the Code President Limann stated that Ghana had been starved of any meaningful and productive

foreign investment long before the Third Republic came into existence and saw the new Code as an opportunity to replace the numerous old regulations governing or rather hampering investment in Ghana.<sup>51</sup> More than any other single policy or document, therefore, the Investment Code was a visible evidence of thoughtful laying down of a framework with which the economy could be put right and back on the rails for self sustaining growth.

Another area which the PNP government had emphasized throughout the electioneering campaign and in its manifesto was the mining and mineral export sector. Intent on attracting foreign exchange, the Limann administration first designed a major campaign for reviving the gold industry and then put out an appeal for financial backing. The gold potentials of the country were fully determined within the first year of the administration. This finally culminated in the organization of a highly successful Gold Endowment International Seminar on Ghana's mineral potentials on the 6<sup>th</sup> January, 1981, at the Kwame Nkrumah Conference Centre in Accra.<sup>52</sup> It attracted some 50 participants from over 20 countries. Opening the conference, president Limann stated that his administration has decided to declare gold mining a high growth sector of the economy and will therefore make every effort to sustain the steady recovery, development and growth of the mining industry which will increasingly attract overseas investors and thus enable his government to diversify cocoa based mono-crop economy.<sup>53</sup>

The administration's call in this direction was a laudable idea since gold production in the country had dwindled to a very low level by the close of 1979.

In terms of percentages which are, perhaps, more precise, Ghana produced about 35% of the World's gold output at one time, but could hardly produce 2percent by 1979.<sup>54</sup>The administration followed through with a request to the World Bank for experts to help programme mining operations in the country. The immediate dividends were announced by the Vice-President that 40 foreigners had applied to dig for gold.<sup>55</sup>

In view of the numerous problems that confronted the Limann government, it was forced to seek external sources of funds to underwrite its economic programmes. It had no alternative than to seek immediate economic salvation from the IMF which insisted on agreement with the rules by which the international economic order is run. Indeed the government was aware of the fact that no meaningful long term solution to the economic problems of the country could be found without some form of accommodation or agreement with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) on a structural Adjustment for Ghana.<sup>56</sup> The IMF sent a mission to Ghana to discuss the economic situation of the country and to find ways of assisting the government. The IMF set out elaborate conditions for a loan to be granted. Besides stabilization measures and increases in prices paid to cocoa growers, the Fund demanded devaluation of the cedi to bring it more in line with its real value. It also demanded a drastic reduction of government expenditure including Civil Service in particular and the multiple exchange rate system with a schedule for closing the gap between the official and black market exchange rates.<sup>57</sup>

Some carping critics of the regime, including members of the PNP youth wing and the radical left, claimed that the government was trying to sell the country to international capitalism.<sup>58</sup> As a reflective person and a consensus builder, a meeting was organized at the instance of President Limann with the IMF official together with diplomats from Western European countries at Peduase Lodge. After that meeting two separate delegations were sent to Washington. The first delegation included the Governor of the Bank of Ghana, Dr. Alex Ashiagbor and the Finance Minister, Professor George Benneh, and the second delegation was made up of the Finance Minister and Dr John S. Nabila. In principle the government was not against devaluation. Its position was that considering the paucity of essential commodities in the markets, there was the need to have these essential goods before implementing the devaluation.<sup>69</sup> To this end the IMF agreed and arranged for a 100 million dollar loan from the Standard Bank before the devaluation could be announced.<sup>60</sup> The government was also acutely aware of the considerable economic and social hardships which such an agreement was surely going to visit on the ordinary people of Ghana if it was not very carefully negotiated. It therefore called for a review of the conditions.<sup>61</sup>

The Limann administration therefore approached the task very carefully, and critically examined each stage of the negotiations with thoroughness aimed solely at safeguarding and protecting the interest of the country and its people. Professor George Benneh, whose memory of the economic policies of the regime is vivid, is convinced that the government studied carefully each stage of the negotiations with the IMF:

We made it clear to the IMF that although we needed their assistance; we were also very much concerned about the social cost which we were most anxious to minimize. We also pointed out to them that our economic problems had built up over the years and it was not reasonable or realistic to expect them to be solved within a short time. It was as a result of the need to hammer out these and other details and get the IMF to appreciate our predicament that led to the protracted nature of the negotiations.<sup>62</sup>

According to him the government wanted to ensure that there were certain basic essential commodities in the markets before devaluing the cedi to forestall inflationary pressure as a result of scarcity. After a series of very protracted negotiations and hard bargaining, an agreement was reached with the IMF with far more generous and lenient conditionalities than Ghana later had to endure. For instance when discussions started on devaluation between the PNP government and the IMF, the rate the IMF proposed was \$1.00 to ¢27.00. As a result of tough bargaining, it was eventually agreed to peg it at about \$1.00 to about ¢12.00.<sup>63</sup> The government's call on the IMF to revise the conditions yielded some results when finally it agreed not to insist on massive devaluation. It must be noted, however, that the Limann administration never had the opportunity to implement the devaluation before it was overthrown. The irony was that the military government which overthrew the Limann government had to implement the package with far more difficult conditions.

Some commentators claim that the PNP government was not prepared to devalue the cedi because President Limann is quoted to have said "Ghana has seen four devaluations and each was followed by social explosions including executions"<sup>64</sup>

It is true that devaluation has the potential of causing social unrest. For instance, Busia in a desperate attempt to save the economic situation of his time, decided to devalue the Cedi by 44 per cent in relation to the US dollar. This drastic prescription affected most of the Ghanaian population especially urban low income families and cocoa farmers. The move together with the socio-economic situation compounded Busia's problem as a political leader. It caused a drastic fall in his popularity. Even around that time the economic situation was not precarious. After General Acheampong was removed from office on July 5, 1978, the SMC2 obtained credit from Britain and private banks after making certain promises to the IMF. The late General Akuffo was unable to put through a 59 per cent devaluation in August, 1978, but by November of the same year he had to declare a state of emergency in the face of workers unrest. The expected second devaluation never took place.

Whatever were the reasons that made the government to hesitate in the devaluation, one issue remained clear: President Limann and his cabinet demonstrated that they were well aware of the consequences of a hurriedly organized devaluation package in a country with a suspect stability and a troubled economy. In any case, President Limann and his cabinet were guided by the lessons of history. Besides it would have been difficult for him to implement a policy which has proven to be unpopular since the regime did not have the military force to underwrite such a policy. The President believed that the IMF conditions would have worsened the already sorry plight of Ghanaians. In short President Limann saw a glorious opportunity for avoiding the mistakes which had

been made in Ghana by previous governments. At the end of the day, the IMF negotiations exposed the fact that African economies are tied to the apron strings of donor nations as well as the compulsion of the IMF dominated world economic order. It also demonstrated that monetarism hurts the common man particularly in the African scenario.

What was needed, of course, was not simply devaluation but a package that would ensure future stability and credibility for the currency. Outside the sphere of government, reactions to the IMF debate was mixed. Whereas some economists argued that devaluation was necessary for Ghana's economic recovery, other people argued that it could not solve the problem of the weakening value of the cedi, but would rather exacerbate it. They pointed out that since 1978 when the cedi was devalued to C2.75 to \$1, domestic prices rose by over 200 per cent.<sup>65</sup>

Despite the efforts the Limann administration was making in introducing major and permanent changes in the unenviable economic situation it inherited, critics of the regime claimed that the government was slow to act on economic problems.<sup>66</sup> Professor George Benneh has, however, argued that the policies and programmes the regime initiated meant that it made a determined effort to grapple with them. He stressed that the government's failure to solve the formidable economic problem cannot be blamed entirely on it because it was not given sufficient time to deal with the enormous problems:

Our policies and programmes had the right priority targets. But the problem was that we were not given enough time. If the government had been allowed to serve its mandated four-year term, then most of our



policies and programmes would have come to maturation.<sup>67</sup>

Indeed much as the government needed time to achieve its objective, it also needed unity and understanding within the rank and file of the party and the government for it to have been able to focus on its development agenda. It is not clear whether the failings of the regime could be attributed to Limann's own ineptitude.

### **Ghana's Foreign Relations under Dr. Limann**

As a country whose image was sinking deeply in the international community, one of the critical areas that the Limann administration was expected to tackle vigorously was foreign relations. Indeed as a career diplomat President Limann's expertise was expected to be brought to bear as far as fostering bilateral and multilateral relationships were concerned. The foundations of President Limann's foreign policy were in the PNP's manifesto.<sup>68</sup> The main focus of the policy was to promote cordial relations with all countries irrespective of the political ideology or ecumenical system.

Great efforts were made towards the realization of these objectives. In his first Sessional Address of Parliament, President Limann clearly defined the foreign policy of his administration. The thrust of his policy was to "restore Ghana's image and influence in the councils of the world"<sup>69</sup> The objective of his stand was to promote the national interests within the context of wider international interests. One of the first steps adopted in pursuit of this objective, was to embark on a policy of "fence-mending", which was by embarking on a

good will tour of the neighbouring countries to promote fraternal relations and brotherliness.

After a sensitive appraisal of the diplomatic requirements of the country, President Limann saw the need to strike strong diplomatic ties with Nigeria. The indication for a stronger co-operation with Nigeria seemed to be clearly discernable in the sense that both in oil and trade, Nigeria commanded a hearing of the conclave of world geo-politics. Ghana's national interests dictated the need for close alliance with Nigeria. Upon assumption of office, the first place President Limann visited was Nigeria, where he held talks with President Shehu Shagari. During that visit, Limann reiterated that the focal point of Ghana's foreign policy was Africa.<sup>70</sup> The visit strengthened bilateral ties with the two countries and the country immediately benefited through the supply of crude oil.

In his visit to Guinea at the invitation of the Guinea Democratic Party on 8th March, 1980, President Limann recalled the fraternal relation between President Sekou Toure and Dr. Kwame Nkrumah. Addressing the people, he said it was time to launch a final assault on all the vestiges of colonialism, imperialism, and neo-colonialism in Africa. According to him it was in furtherance of this objective that his government warmly congratulated the ZANU-PF, led by Robert Mugabe, on their achievement of independence.<sup>71</sup> The need for the rest of African countries particularly Namibia and Azania to be free from colonial domination became a constant theme during President Limann's visits to Upper Volta, Senegal, Benin, Nigeria and Mali. He saw his visit to Mali as an opportunity to recapture the vision and ideals which inspired the bold and

unique adventure in political union of the Ghana- Guinea-Mali Union.<sup>72</sup> This was indeed significant since the Union was the first concrete expression of Africans desire for freedom in unity and diversity.

President Limann extended his visits to Britain, the Federal Republic of Germany, Yugoslavia and Rumania to seek investment resources for Ghana. The result of those visits were that, not only was understanding for Ghana's economic problems clarified, but more important bilateral co-operation and other benefits were secured for Ghana, including substantial increase in the British Export Credit of £40m. Ghana's relationship with some of these countries yielded some positive results. For instance, in the Federal Republic of Germany an agreement for a loan of forty million Deutsche Marks (DM40m) was signed. Perhaps the most important achievement in foreign affairs was the visit of Pope John Paul I.<sup>73</sup>

President Limann also made deliberate efforts to put the economic aspect of diplomacy on a higher pedestal. This was evident in the personal efforts he made in the midst of his multifarious duties of state to attend the meeting of the Cocoa Producers Alliance in Yamoussoukro, in the Ivory Coast, the First OAU Economic Summit in Lagos, Nigeria, the ECOWAS Summit in Lome, Togo, and the Assembly of Heads of States of the OAU in Freetown, Sierra Leone. This was against a background of over a decade of absence of the nation leaders at such important international meetings<sup>74</sup>. In the course of the second year in office, in November, 1980, the government was compelled in the interest of peace and security to redefine Ghana's relations with the Socialist People's Libyan Arab Jamahiriya.<sup>75</sup>

Until the Limann era, Ghana's policy of economic co-operation was vertical in the sense that it followed the traditional North-South pattern. However, the Limann government made efforts to encourage a horizontal approach, by maintaining economic exchange with other Third World countries with the financial resources and the necessary experience. It was in this connection that the Vice-President, Dr. J. W. S. de Graft Johnson led a delegation, first, to the headquarters of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries ( OPEC) in Vienna, followed by a visit to the Gulf States and Saudi Arabia. As a result, the interests of those countries in the development programmes of Ghana became heightened. For instance, Saudi Arabia and Kuwait were able to lend their financial support to the Kpong Hydro-electric Dam and there were indications of further assistance for the Bui Dam as well.<sup>76</sup>

The period also saw the growing co-operative endeavors between Ghana and India. Tata buses were made available to Ghana through the generous offer of a credit loan of \$ 6.5m, by the International Development Bank of India. The Bank also advanced the sum of \$ 8.5m to the Bank for Housing and Construction for the provision of advanced training facilities, and also another amount of \$ 8.5m, to the Ministry of Agriculture for small-scale and cottage industries.<sup>77</sup>

The pre-occupation of the Limann government with the economy did not prevent the regime from addressing itself to certain wider issues affecting foreign affairs. President Limann had the occasion on the 18<sup>th</sup> Summit of the OAU in Nairobi to speak against the virtual wrecking of the pre-implementation talks on Namibia by the South African Government<sup>78</sup>. He also criticized the softening or

the shifting of position by the members of the Contact Group towards South Africa, when they should unambiguously have re-affirmed their previous stand and help to ensure the success of the United Nations Plan for Namibian independence. For this reason he called upon OAU member states to shake off their complacency and renew their efforts towards Namibia's independence. It appeared President Limann was expressing the mood of the conference and it was therefore not surprising that the Assembly of Heads of States adopted a resolution in the same vein, which expressed the "profound dismay" regarding the demonstration of unwillingness by certain members of the Contact Group to carry the necessary pressure on the racist Pretoria regime to force it to comply with the Security Council Resolutions 435 (1978) and 435(a).<sup>79</sup>

Ghana's commitment to the principles of self-determination and territorial integrity of other countries whenever these were threatened, led her to associate herself with ten other African countries which met in Lome in January, 1981, at a meeting which called for the withdrawal of foreign troops from Chad and their replacement by an inter-African command. The meeting advocated the organization of free and fair elections in Chad. President Limann also showed concern for the faith of the people for the Saharawi people when his Government confirmed its recognition of the Polisario soon after coming into office.<sup>80</sup>

A careful study of President Limann's foreign policy revealed that it was the strands of Pan-Africanism which at Ghana's independence was woven into a pattern by Nkrumah and the CPP to form the main thrust of Ghana's foreign policy at independence that Limann modified. With the exception of the idea of

attaining economic independence for Ghana and the concept of the African Personality which Nkrumah espoused, the rest of the cardinal points of the Limann Foreign Policy were a carryover of Nkrumah's foreign policy. However, it must be noted that although the Limann administration was politically leftist or socialist in policies and approach to governance of Ghana, it nevertheless remained moderate and right of centre till its overthrow on 31<sup>st</sup> December, 1981.

Perhaps the major changes in terms of the foreign policy of a government that professed to be Nkrumahist stemmed from the fact that the problems of the times compelled the government to chart a new course. Indeed Limann was an economic moderate who espoused pan-Africanist ideals and supported democratic values. The pro-Western and pragmatic approach which the Limann government adopted in its foreign policy in order to solve the country's accumulated problems was regarded by certain elements of the party as a tacit acceptance of Western capitalist philosophy. In any case and at any rate, for the PNP government to have succeeded it needed to draw on the resources of world capitalism; that is by borrowing from the Western Banks and this was to bind the country to that system. One political fact which African politicians have tended to downgrade is that throughout the developed world, all countries and governments tend to have permanent interests rather than permanent friends.

### **Infrastructure**

In the area of infrastructure, the objective of the PNP government was to open up the country in terms of the construction of more motorable roads which would connect the urban to the rural areas for transportation of food and other

exportable commodities from the hinterland or rural areas. When President Limann took over office, many economic areas of the country were constantly cut off due to lack of good roads and broken down bridges. The Limann government made some success in the area of roads and bridge building. The regime completed and commissioned the Bamboi Bridge constructed by Cementation Ltd., which linked the south with the north along the western boundary road. The Red Volta Bridge was also completed and the regime awarded on contract, and cut the sod for the commencement of work on the Ankobra Bridge and the Jomoro Bridge by Cementation Ltd. Contracts were also awarded for the Oti, Nabogo, Kpasenkpe, Mushio, Yagaba, Fumbisi and Daboya Bridges to Cementation Ltd. Funds were mobilized from African Development Bank for the construction of Axim – Mpataba – Elubo portion of the Accra – Abidjan International road. The contract was awarded to Allgemeine Bau Union (ABU) of West Germany.<sup>81</sup>

The Yamoransa to Takoradi road also received the attention of the PNP administration. By the middle of 1981, construction and asphaltting had reached Daboase junction. Construction towards Takoradi was also proceeding very smoothly and the project was scheduled to be finished by the end of 1982. Contracts were also awarded to TAYSEC for the Navrongo – Nakong – Tumu road, but these were later abandoned by the PNDC government that overthrew President Limann. Negotiations were started with Cementation for the construction of Tamale-Bolgatanga- Bawku road and contracts were awarded for the construction of Hohoe-Dodi Papaase-Bimbilla road, to link the south of the

Volta Region to the North. Asphaltting of the Nsawam-Accra road was nearing completion when the coup took place.<sup>82</sup>

The government, however, failed to open up the hinterland, most notably the cocoa growing areas, where cocoa beans were locked up as a result of unmotorable roads.

In his Sessional Address to parliament on 30<sup>th</sup> November 1979, President Limann charged the Ministry of Health with the implementation of an eight-point objective aimed at addressing the health needs of the people: To implement the Primary Health Care programme, one District in each of the country's nine regions was selected for specific attention. These Districts included Lawra, Bole, Atebubu, Asante Akim, Kwahu, Anlo, Dangbe, Gomoa Efutu-Ewutu and Wassaw Fiase-Mpohor.<sup>83</sup> Teams from each of the nine Districts, including some District Chief Executives, were trained on the concept and practice of Primary Health Care. They were given assignments to prepare a district profile, identify physical and human resources and identify villages and people who could be trained to offer services in the villages.<sup>84</sup>

UNICEF-donated Renault saloon cars with spares parts were allocated to each of the nine Districts to help with logistics. UNICEF also donated drugs and equipments which were sent to the Health Posts, Health Centres and Maternal and Child Health Care programme. A contract was signed with assistance from WHO for the Primary Health Care programme, with emphasis on the use of local materials and personnel trained in simple medical and health techniques.<sup>85</sup>



As part of government's health policy an agreement was reached between the Ministry of Health, UNICEF, USAID, EEC and the Centre for Disease control, Atlanta, Georgia to control yellow fever and to interrupt the rapid increase in yaws in Ghana. The total cost of the project was US\$ 2.28 million. Ghana's contribution was the equivalent of US\$ 743,000.00. Mass immunization against the six childhood killer diseases of tuberculosis, measles, diphtheria, pertussis, tetanus, and poliomyelitis was also intensified with the participation of UNICEF and WHO.<sup>86</sup>

The government also obtained a US\$ 12 million loan from the German Democratic Republic to improve healthcare delivery. Other measures were taken to ensure regular supply of drugs to the hospitals. A three-year running contract with reputable and reliable suppliers of essential drugs was instituted. To ensure effective implementation and monitoring of these programmes, the government set up a project implementation committee with the President himself as chairman.<sup>87</sup> Despite these attempts to arrest the appalling health situation in the country the situation was, however, exacerbated by food shortage and exodus of health personnel to other African countries.

In the area of rural development, the PNP government believed that the surest way to obtain true and lasting development in the rural area was to involve the chiefs and local communities and harness the available resources in the area to productive ventures, in order to bring about a redistribution of incomes and amenities. In pursuance of this objective, the PNP government attached great importance to grassroots' participatory democracy in Local Government and to

the scheme of rural banks elaborated in its election manifesto. With only 5 Rural Banks in operation the whole of the country, by the fall of the government from power, the number had increased to 21 Rural Banks.<sup>88</sup> Other programmes tackled included a comprehensive rural electrification programme and provision of potable water for rural communities through the provision of bore holes and wells.<sup>89</sup>

In the area of transportation measures were taken to alleviate the considerable hardships workers faced with regards to public transport. As a result of successful negotiations with the Indian government, an order for 1,000 Tata buses was made, and the arrival of the first 200 buses in 1981 made an immediate and significant impact on intra and inter-urban transportation. The completion and commissioning of the expansion works on Neoplan Assembly plant resulting in increased production, also made a significant impact on inter-city transport. Shortages in spare parts, however, disrupted the entire transportation network.<sup>90</sup>

The energy policy of the Limann Government was focused on two fronts, namely, development of the country's renewable energy potential through harnessing of the vast hydro-electric resources, and the exploration of potential oil-bearing geological formation for crude oil deposits.<sup>91</sup> The PNP successfully secured funds from the Gulf States and completed the Kpong Hydro-electric Project which was started by Acheampong and it started commercial production. The idea of building the Bui Dam which was initiated by the CPP administration was revived by the PNP administration. Various efforts were also made to secure

financial support to commence work on the Bui Dam and the creation of a new Bui Township as a growth pole.<sup>92</sup>

### **Socio- Political Issues**

On 14 November, 1980, Limann carried out a major cabinet reshuffle. This time, the information Ministry was separated from Presidential Affairs. Professor George Benneh, who initially was the Minister for Fuel and Power, was moved to the Finance and Economic Planning. In short the reshuffle witnessed a creation of new ministries and the re-alignment of some of them. In all four additional ministries were created bringing the total number to twenty. The ministerial portfolio thus looked as follows.<sup>93</sup>

MINISTRY		MINISTER
Attorney General	-	Mr. Joe Reindorf
Presidential Affairs	-	Dr. J.S. Nabila
Foreign Affairs	-	Dr. Isaac Chinabuah
Information and Tourism	-	Mr. Opoku Afriyie
Finance and Economic Planning	-	Prof. George Benneh
Interior	-	Prof Ekow Daniels
Food and Agriculture	-	Dr. Kwaku Andah
Works and Housing	-	Col. David Zanlerigu
Trade and Industry	-	Mr. Vincent Bula
Defense	-	Mr. Riley Poku
Transport and Communication	-	Mr. Harry Sawyerr
Education	-	Mr. F.K Buah

Local government and Co-operatives	-	Mr. K. P. S. Jantuah
Sports and Culture	-	Mr. Thomas Abilla
Youth and Rural Development	-	Dr E. K Andah
Labour and Social Welfare	-	Miss Adisa Munkaila
Industries, Science and Technology	-	Mr. M. P. Ansah
Fuel and Power	-	Mr. Wulff Tagoe
Lands and Natural Resources	-	Mr. S. E Yaboah-Akyeampong
Health	-	Dr. Kwamena Ocran

In February 1980, the Limann government was drawn into a legal entanglement following an announcement from the Office of the President concerning Editorial appointments for the state owned Daily Graphic and the Ghanaian Times. The appointments were Mr. I.K. Nkrumah; a retired editor of the Daily Graphic was to become the supervision Editor of that same paper. It confirmed Miss Elizabeth Ohene as Editor, and brought in Mr. Ekow Essuman from the Ghanaian Times to be Miss Ohene's Deputy.<sup>94</sup> Both Mr. Nkrumah and Mr. Essuman were allegedly pro-PNP, the governing party. This move was to have sandwiched Miss Ohene who was considered an independent-minded daring woman who was garbed as opposition supporter. It brought swift criticism. An attempt by a section of the papers editorial staff for the government to rescind the appointment failed leading to a court-suit.

Some of the affected people including some members of the National Media cried foul but the Limann administration said it had acted correctly within the tenets of the constitution, Article 154 (1) 157 (1) . Section 20 of the

Transitional Provisions stated *inter alia* that “until parliament enacts an Act of parliament in accordance with Article 159 of the constitution for the establishment or operation of a public corporation in existence before the coming into office of this constitution shall continue its operation’s under the enactment which it was established”.<sup>95</sup> In a press conference in Accra on 21st February 1980, the Vice President, Dr. Joe de Graft-Johnson, rebutted the suspicion and denied any wrong-doing. He argued that the government’s decision was supported by law, that is, section 20 of the constitution and said there was no political motif behind the appointments.<sup>96</sup> Dr. John Nabila, the Minister of Information and Presidential Affairs, spoke for a truce between the Press and the Government.<sup>97</sup>

In spite of the intervention the case went to the Supreme Court and dragged on for a year. The government, on the 5th March, 1981, lost the case to the Graphic led by Miss Ohene, after back-stage efforts by the Press Commission to settle the case out of Court collapsed.<sup>98</sup> The Supreme Court upheld that under the provisions of Articles 192, 193 and 194 of the constitution, the competent authority to appoint the Board of Directors or Governing Council of the Government owned press was the press commission. It acknowledged that the authority to appoint editors and other staff of the Government owned press, namely the Daily Graphic, the Ghanaian Times, and the Mirror, is vested in the Board of Directors or Governing Council of the aforesaid newspapers and not in any other person or authority.<sup>99</sup>

Again, President Limann’s government came into collision with the Ghana Journalists Association following an order that four senior Journalists from the

GNA, GBC-TV and Daily Graphic should be dismissed for displaying serious lapses in reporting post cabinet reshuffle development. The affected Ministers in the reshuffle included Dr. W.C. Ekow Daniels, former Interior Minister who was offered Education, and Joe Reindolf, former Attorney-General and Minister of Justice, who refused to go to Local government; They considered the transfers as demotions.<sup>100</sup> President Limann believed the report was meant to ridicule him personally and the People's National Party (PNP). The journalists in question were Kwao Lotsu, Chief Editor, K.B. Wood, Acting News Editor, both of the GNA, Iddrisu Seini, news editor of the Graphic, and Cecil Crabbe, Senior Editor of GBC. Several others, some above the rank of chief Editor, were to be queried and reprimanded.<sup>101</sup> Popular suspicion was that one of those involved, Iddrisu Seini, angered the President during his visit to Britain when he reported that 75 party bosses had accompanied the President; the PNP propaganda machinery had a hard time refuting this. Others viewed the President's action as an attempt to secure a hold over the media through promotions and transfers.<sup>102</sup>

There has been a certain pattern set for the Press in Ghana by President Nkrumah after he succeeded in eliminating press opposition to himself and his government and brought the media under government control. In spite of the controls, certain elements within the press with liberal democratic journalism have always lingered inside the state owned media. The press showed no reluctance to take on President Limann who had quite often encouraged and called for a bolder press, as a condition for the success of the government.

Perhaps President Limann also saw the press as a threat and therefore sought to control it.

One most important area of grave concern to the Limann administration as soon as it assumed the reign of office was the distributive trade. Upon assumption of office the most severe problem came to the fore in the area of food distribution. As a result of paucity of basic commodities in the country, the National Commodities Distribution Committee was set up with Lucy Blay, the Deputy Minister of Trade as the chairman.<sup>103</sup> The Committee was tasked to ensure an equitable distribution of 15 named essential commodities: cooking oil, milk, sugar, rice, maize, flour, baby foods, fish, beef, Milo, locally-produced textiles, matches, cutlasses, kerosene, and soap. The Committee's criteria for allocations included numerical strength and particular requirements of various identifiable groups. Some of the identifiable groups to which allocations were made included the TUC, the Civil Servants Association, the Ghana National Association of Teachers, Ministry of Education, the Universities, the Police, Ministries of Defense and Health, and Food Distribution Corporation. Despite the government efforts to co-opt Regional Development Co operations, trade unions, employers and even schools to assist with the massive job of dispensing essential food stuffs shortages remained widespread and acute.<sup>104</sup>

What compounded the problem was that the PNP had declared in their electioneering campaign promises that they would initiate policies to retrieve the purchasing power of the public which was fast deteriorating and to reduce inflation and flood the markets with consumer goods. The generality of the

populace therefore felt that within the twinkle of an eye goods should be flowing in the markets.<sup>105</sup> The government could, however, not do much to stop the ever rising prices in the short term. Public outcries against the paucity of food supplies, queues for basic commodities, the soaring prices of essential goods and the general lack of self relief from truly miserable conditions, reached a crescendo. This resulted in the exodus of professionals in search of better conditions of service.<sup>106</sup> Workers generally were disenchanted with the Limann government and had translated their disenchantment into strikes. In June 1980, a watershed was reached when striking workers from the Ghana Industrial Holding Corporation (GIHOC) demonstrated in Accra led by Joachim Amarte Kwei. This resulted in the dismissal of much of the workforce, and the pursuit of an unsuccessful campaign for reinstatement through the courts.<sup>107</sup>

In the face of the mounting economic crisis, President Limann appealed to the country's working population to exercise restraint to enable the government to improve upon the purchasing power of the cedi through productivity and the provision of more goods and services. Appeals by the government to the populace to abstain from dishonest practices was ignored in view of the growing discrepancies in living standards and the inability of the government to curb its own excesses. Workers were particularly surprised at the increases in the salaries of the Executive, Parliamentarians and certain public officers.<sup>108</sup> By the time the Limann regime celebrated its second anniversary, state- society relation was in serious despair.



Meanwhile certain new developments were taking place in the political arena. In early 1981, the Popular Front Party (PFP) was dissolved, and together with the Third Force Party and a breakaway faction of the United National Convention (UNC) regrouped and formed a new party under the name All Peoples Party (APP), with the symbol of “water pouring out of a pot”. Victor Owusu and Alhaji Mahama Iddrisu were the Leader and Deputy Leader respectively.<sup>109</sup> The move was to offer a more viable opposition to the PNP government and to provide an effective alternative to the powers of the Limann government. The move had some historical antecedents. In 1957, six political parties came together to form the United Party in order to offer a more viable opposition to Nkrumah. Again, during the Second Republic under Busia, the NAL, UNP, and APRP merged into the Justice Party with E.R.T Madjitey as its leader. It demonstrated the extent to which the opposition parties went to offer a strong opposition to the ruling government. It also demonstrated that the parties were moving towards a two party system to perhaps wrestle power from the PNP in the 1983 elections.

### **“The Apaloo Affair”**

On 23 September, 1980, the Court of Appeal ruled that by virtue of certain provisions of the constitution of the Third Republic, Justice F.K Apaloo who held the office of Chief Justice just before the coming into force of the Constitution remained the Chief Justice under the Constitution: and therefore, the automatic President of the Supreme Court that was yet to be fully constituted. His nomination by President Limann and his subsequent screening and rejection by

Parliament were unconstitutional.<sup>110</sup> This legal battle, which later became known as the “Apaloo Case” cannot be fully appreciated unless some background on the origin and the course of the affair is given.

Justice Apaloo was appointed Chief Justice in June, 1977, and was in office when the 1979 Constitution came into force on 24<sup>th</sup> September, 1979. On that day he first swore in the Speaker, and later on in the day, he swore in the President and the Vice-President, in his capacity as Chief Justice. On 3<sup>rd</sup> October, 1979, he swore the Judicial Oath of Allegiance as Chief Justice. However, on 30<sup>th</sup> June, 1980, the President informed the Chief Justice in a letter of his intention to nominate him for the office of Chief Justice of Ghana and that would require parliamentary approval. The government’s view was that under the constitution the incumbent Chief Justice was a member of both the High Court and the Court of Appeal; and was also required by the Constitution to be both a member and the President of the Supreme Court. It argued that before the Constitution came into force, there was no Supreme Court and that the incumbent Chief Justice could not therefore have been a member or President of the Supreme Court.<sup>111</sup>

When Justice Apaloo appeared before the Appointments Committee of Parliament, the Committee was divided in its views: 8 members who were PNP could not recommend Justice Apaloo’s nomination while 7 minority Party members favoured his nomination. The House after a debate on the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> August, decided by a secret ballot of 70 to 0 to reject the nomination of Justice Apaloo. The Minority Parties boycotted the vote. Approaches were next made to the Judicial Council to advise the President on the nomination of someone else to

replace Justice Apaloo. But the Council declined on the grounds that the matter had become *subjudice*.<sup>112</sup>

Some concerned Ghanaians went ahead and sought legal clarification of the issues involved in the Courts of law. Recourse to the courts was first broached by three P.F.P MPs: Messers K Addae Mensah, Thomas Broni and Kwadwo Mpiani. On 5<sup>th</sup> August, 1980, they filed an originating summons, but owing to procedural defects this process was not pursued, and this was superseded by an action initiated by Dr. Amoako Tuffour, a lecturer at the University of Science and Technology who instituted a legal action against the State for the determination of the constitutional status of chief justice, Justice F.K. Apaloo. Members of the panel who sat on the case included Justice E.M.P. Sowah (presiding) Justice P.D. Anin, Justice V.C.R.A.C. Crabbe and Justice G.M. Francios.<sup>113</sup>

Dr. Kwame Amoako Tuffour sought a declaration that upon coming into force of the Third Republican Constitution, Justice Apaloo was deemed to have been appointed Chief Justice and as such was the president and member of the Supreme Court. In the view of Dr. Tuffour, the purported nomination by President Hilla Limann of Justice Apaloo for approval by Parliament on his appointment as Chief Justice and member of the Supreme Court and his purported vetting and rejection by Parliament, were “acts effected in contravention of the Constitution and were therefore null and void” The suit also sought a declaration that Justice Apaloo was the Chief Justice and for that matter president of the Supreme Court.<sup>114</sup> The plaintiff, Dr. Kwame Amoako Tuffour, was represented by Nana

Akuffo Addo, Mr. Edmund Osei Tutu Prempeh, Tsatsu Tsikata, Amoako Glover and Mrs. Joyce Randolph.<sup>115</sup>

The full bench of the Appeal Court of Ghana after hearing from both the plaintiff and the defendant declared that Justice F.K. Apaloo was the Chief Justice of Ghana, his recent vetting and subsequent rejection by Parliament notwithstanding. The Court declared:<sup>116</sup>

- (a) That on the coming into force of the constitution the person who was the Chief Justice immediately before such commencement became the Chief Justice of Ghana;
- (b) That the Chief Justice, under our system is *sui generis* and is appointed as such;
- (c) That consequently, his nomination for consideration, and that consideration by the Judicial Council, as well as his submission by the incumbent Chief Justice of himself for approval by parliament, were each unlawful under the Constitution,
- (d) That the submission of the incumbent Chief Justice of himself for approval did not, as would have been the case of non-constitutional right deprive him of the rights of office conferred on the holder of office of Chief Justice by the provision of clauses (8) and (9) of article 127 of the constitution, and the protection thereby afforded him by the provision of article 128 of the Constitution relating to removal from office

The leader of the UNC parliamentary group Dr. G. K. Agama described the judgment as a “triumph of the principle of democracy ... and innocence over

expediency and opportunism”<sup>117</sup> Unlike some of his predecessors President Limann did not express disquiet about the case. He gracefully accepted the court ruling. As he later on commented “we did not cry ‘No Court! No Court!’ but upheld the rule of law”.<sup>118</sup>

Commenting on the case, the editorial of the *Legon Observer* observed that the Apaloo Case was an important test case in the country’s attempt to fashion for us a government of laws and not of men. The ruling established the supremacy and integrity of the Constitution. It also endorsed the rule and responsibility of the judiciary as the exclusive and final authority on the interpretation and enforcement of the constitution. Finally, the decision augured well for the Third Republic in so far as the judges faced with a matter in which high degree of interest was shown by the executive and various political parties did not shirk their responsibility to state what they conceived to be the right constitutional position, irrespective of the political consequences.<sup>119</sup>

The decision was seen as marking a new beginning by the judiciary to use any future opportunity such as was offered by the Apaloo Case to entrench notions of constitutional rule in the country.

The “Apaloo Affair” ended on the eve of the first anniversary of the return to civilian government. It brought to memory the relationship between the Executive and the Judiciary under different post-independent governments particularly with regards to the handling of Chief Justices in Ghana right from Justice Arku Korsah of the First Republic. The Limann government should have been guided by history not to repeat such an act. The incident showed a gross

display of lack of judgment on the part of the Limann administration and particularly for President Limann who held a Ph.D in political science and constitutional law.

In spite of the challenges, President Limann in evaluating the performance of his government in later years believed that his government achieved some goals despite the conditions of the time:

We achieved much from nothingness within a very short time: we undid the economic blockade, restored fuel supplies, restocked the shops and warehouses, created a large fund of good will towards Ghana and also reasserted Ghana's role internationally. The Bui Dam project had twice been on tender and was about to go on tender the third time when disaster and confusion struck. It would have been built by 1984 with the help of the EEC and other funding agencies.

...<sup>120</sup>

The foregoing account of Limann's stewardship as President of the Third Republic demonstrates the major policy decisions and the problems the Limann administration encountered in trying to solve the intractable problems it inherited. The regime laid a foundation through its short and long term policies for the rebuilding of the shattered economy it inherited. Some of the legal problems it encountered and the party's inability to speak with one voice set the stage for fragmentations within the party leading to its demise on December 31, 1981. The next chapter examines the process of the demise of the Limann civilian rule.

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26. This was revealed to me during separate interviews with Professor Ivan Addai Mensah, Professor Nabila, Professor George Benneh and Basilli Wasai. All of them maintained that Limann was a hard nut to crack and that those who fail to influence him resorted to fighting him.
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## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **THE FALL OF DR HILLA LIMANN**

In the early hours of 31st December 1981, soldiers of the Race regiment, supported by Air Force Personnel, led by Ft Lt Jerry John Rawlings overthrew the government of the Third Republic. Parliament was dissolved and all political activities proscribed. Several of the PNP politicians were arrested at an end-of-year party while others were out of the capital in their rural constituencies for the New Year festivities. The deposed President was later arrested on the 4th January, 1982, by policemen at a checkpoint at Effiduasi, near Koforidua.<sup>1</sup> Just like the Busia government before it, the Limann government was in power for 27 months out of its four year mandated period when it was overthrown. The “coup or revolution”, as its architects called it, brought an end not only to another attempt at democratic rule, but, more significantly, to efforts to rehabilitate and to redirect the shattered economy of Ghana. Besides, the peace and stability which were essential if international confidence was to be restored and the modest efforts made by Limann towards improving the socio-economic and political conditions in a period of extreme difficulties all vanished.

When President Limann was ousted from power in 1981, criticisms of his administration were profuse and loud. The new military regime accused the Limann government of having turned the hospitals and clinics into graveyards and

having pursued neoliberal policies that led to the imposition of a neocolonial economy.<sup>2</sup> It also blamed the PNP for using the judiciary to undermine the constitution and the gains of the AFRC, and for making parliament into a self-interest club for politicians. It also charged that the PNP did not win the 1979 elections genuinely and maintained that, the PNP's Investment Code had "...opened the country to rape" by multinational companies.<sup>3</sup> The coup leader described the regime as "the most disgraceful government in the history of Ghana".<sup>4</sup> One writer commented that "there can ever have been a few regimes in Africa and elsewhere, about which it is difficult to find something interesting to say as the PNP regime of Dr. Hilla Limann".<sup>5</sup> He was blamed for almost everything that went wrong. Comments about his handling of economic issues were particularly devastating. The story of Dr. Hilla Limann therefore became a story with an unhappy ending and a source for historians to investigate why Ghana's third attempt at democracy foundered.

The process of the demise of the Limann regime and the reasons for the failure of yet another effort to establish civilian hegemony therefore require close attention. This is against the background that many theories, speculations, rumours and "what went wrong" explanation has been given for the overthrow of the regime. The most ridiculous one being that he colluded with others to remove himself from office. The aim of this chapter is to examine the reasons for the unhappy ending of the Limann civilian rule or specifically why Ghana's attempt at democracy under the Third republic foundered. The chapter also examines the motives and justification for the coup.

First of all, in order to fully understand and appreciate the reasons for the failure of the Limann regime and the event of December 31, 1981, it is important to analyze the prevailing situation in the Nkrumahist front as well as the internal problems in the PNP itself before the coup. It must be noted without any reservation that the party contained three main elements or strands since its formation and was held in check by an uneasy alliance. The first was the new technocrat generation led by Limann. Then, there was the rich “old guards” who were actually the rump of the right wing of Nkrumah’s CPP and its leftist remnant disciples called the ideologues. The Limann group had no strong power base within the party. The old guards held the funds. The ideologues were the social doctrinarians.<sup>6</sup> In fact; these internal strains and differences had existed among the various groups in the party since its formation. They all wanted to get control of the party. The party could not therefore speak with one voice. The Old Guards, led by Party Chairman Nana Okutwer Bekoe and Kofi Batsa, consisted of old CPP politicians like Imoru Egala, Krobo Edusei, K.S.P Jantuah, Kwesi Armah and Ayeh Kumi who still found it convenient to invoke Nkrumah’s name when it suited their interest. They had the genuine feeling that they had suffered for the party and should have a say or control of the presidency and the party apparatus. In contrast, the Limann group, made up of young parliamentarians, called for a more pragmatic, technocratic and socialist democratic orientation.<sup>7</sup>

According to Nana Okutwer Bekoe the party had become riddled with several factions and interest groups. These included the Ofori, Ekow-Daniels, Kojo Botsio and Kwesi Armah faction all vying for power in 1979. The power



struggle had become so fierce and violent and continued till the day of the coup.<sup>8</sup> The old guards did not see why Limann should surround himself with young men like Ivan Addai Mensah, John S Nabila and Riley-Poku and rely so much on them. Others also blamed Limann for accepting to work with some of the old guards who later on began questioning his Nkrumahist credential when they could not manipulate him.<sup>9</sup> The result was that intrigues, suspicion, blackmail took centre stage in the party as the various interest groups assumed entrenched positions.

The erosion of the little cohesion the PNP had begun at its first congress held in Kumasi in June, 1980. At that congress the party was unable to agree on the composition of its central committee. Consequently, the various factions emerged from the Kumasi encounter more divided than before. The conciliatory effort of Limann, unidentified with any of the groups at the congress averted a total rift.<sup>10</sup> Tension erupted again when corruption charges were brought against several party leaders. Particularly corrosive was the implication of the party chairman, Bekoe and Krobo Edusei in a bribery scandal involving the receipt of one million pounds from South African sources for investment favours.<sup>11</sup> There were also charges of corruption in connection with importation of goods, the distribution of tractors, the award of contracts for the printing of Ghanaian Cedi and the distribution of foreign exchange in the country. The system of distribution of commodities appeared to have been unfair as party bosses in the regions and the national capital were in-charge of distribution of certain items. The general

perception was that the party was concerned with how to accumulate money to win the 1983 election instead of governing the country.<sup>12</sup>

Significantly, the allegation of bribery and corruption against the Third Republic has not yet been proven or substantiated. This is because with the notable exception of some party bosses, none of the Ministers of the regime who were arrested have been found guilty of any impropriety. Indeed, when the Limann regime was violently overthrown on 31 December, 1981, he and his Ministers and some party functionaries were arrested and detained and their assets frozen. After exhaustive vetting and commissions of enquiries no wrong doing was made against him.

One major issue which generated much public debate and much heated controversy right from the day the PNP assumed office was the relations which were supposed to exist or be absent between the Limann Government and the ideas, ideals and practical achievement of the late Kwame Nkrumah. Attacks were made within and outside the PNP circles that the Peoples National Party led by Limann, used the late Osagyefo's name to win the elections but after assuming office pursued policies which were a complete betrayal of the teachings of the leader from whose name the PNP had derived its electoral victory.<sup>13</sup> These attacks were mostly spearheaded by the left-wing intellectuals of the Youth Wing who felt betrayed by the party which had used the name of Nkrumah to win the elections. Out of this disillusionment emerged the Kwame Nkrumah Revolutionary Guards which launched scathing attacks on President Limann and the PNP. The group which was led by Johnny Hansen advocated a return to

Kwame Nkrumah's brand of 'scientific socialism'.<sup>14</sup> They held a gathering on 27th September, 1980, ostensibly to celebrate the posthumous birthday of Osagyefo, their idol and leader. They used that platform to issue a press statement entitled "Betrayal of Dr. Kwame Nkrumah" in which the PNP was accused of the following lapses or even crimes: <sup>15</sup>

1. That the party failed to create a revolutionary political party based on the principle of "democratic centralism".
2. That though Limann and the PNP used Osagyefo's name to win political power all policies they have pursued were diametrically opposed to the ideas and philosophies of the Osagyefo;
3. That the pragmatic or empirical approach adopted by the PNP administration for solving the country's accumulated economic, social and political problems was an indication of the party's tacit acceptance of the Western Capitalist philosophy;
4. That the PNP failed to undertake a rapid institutional transformation of the Ghanaian society with a view to adopting a people's democracy in Ghana.

The group then went on to call on "the revolutionary jumpers within the PNP" to work hard to achieve "Nkrumahist domination" with the aim and objective of carrying out a new type of "national democratic movement in Ghana".<sup>16</sup>

What their criticism implied was that the PNP leadership seemed to be determined to sacrifice Nkrumah on the altar of neo-colonialism and that therefore the PNP leadership had come to bury him and not to praise him. The

main contention was that even though the PNP claimed to have its roots in the CPP, it was pursuing policies which were completely divorced from the ideas and ideals of the Osagyefo, Dr. Kwame Nkrumah. The conflict in the party was therefore one of the colours of ideology. Indeed, while they were all of the socialist stock, the old guards from maturity, experience and some taste of some affluence, had watered down the deep Nkrumahist red to light red color as against the red hot firebrand of the younger generation emerging out of the Nkrumahist stock.

As these problems unfolded and the internal situation of the party worsened, the group went further to threaten that unless Limann behaved as a carbon copy of Kwame Nkrumah, his civilian predecessor, they would pull the carpet from under his feet:

If he will not listen the CPP will be well advised to withdraw its support and take to the country and organize the CPP and leave Okutwer, Batsa and de Graft Johnson and their bed fellows to govern with their skeleton PNP as they dream of Arab-Petro dollar cash for development as if it is easily picked from minarets.<sup>17</sup>

It must be observed that in as much as the KNRG and other conservative elements in the party had an axe to grind with President Limann and the leadership of the PNP, their points appeared to have bordered on ideological inflexibility and could not carry weight due to the changing circumstances and situations. It appeared the whole affair was a clear case of giving a dog a bad name and hanging it. At any rate, this did not augur well for a country with a troubled economy and a suspect stability. Rather importantly, they served to rock

the fragile national consensus politics that emerged immediately after the hand-over.

Another major problem which tended to weaken the stability of the Limann Administration was the disunity resulting in bickering and serious intrigues among some disgruntled members of the ruling party who were struggling for the spoils of office. It is true to say that the destruction of every movement always starts from within. Just at the time when the Limann government most needed to regain its credibility, the PNP bosses behind the scenes began to pull their party apart in internecine quarrels over control of party policies in the build up to the next elections. For instance, in November, 1981, a member of the PNP National Executive Committee, Samuel Addae – Amoako, filed a writ in the High Court to restrain the party hierarchy, Nana Okutwer Bekoe III, the Chairman, the General Secretary, Dr Ivan Addae–Mensah, and Publicity Chairman Kofi Batsa, from rail-roading through party policy in advance at the party' annual congress.<sup>18</sup> The case dragged on for some time but was later settled out of court. However, the three defendants were ordered to account to the Treasurer within twenty one days for all monies they had received on behalf of the party. It has been argued that this out of court settlement was perhaps forced by fear of the exposure in open court of evidence of alleged corruption by the three men, who were, coincidentally, the mainstays of whatever political support the President enjoyed within his party.<sup>19</sup>

After the settlement of the Addai-Amoako court case, Ayeh-Kumi was confident of his success, as one of the settlement conditions was that the three

defendants had to present detailed financial accounts of money received in the PNP's name to the new acting chairman, Ofori, who was also the national Treasurer. He was definitely in the Ayeh-Kumi's camp. Nana Okutwer Bekoe, former Chairman of the PNP was already casting around for support for his re-election as National Chairman at the national congress, and then first had to submit the financial returns to Ofori. In view of the conditions which could not be met by the affected people immediately, Ayeh-Kumi had been successful in peeling away the support Limann had, leaving him vulnerable to other influences, and he had also succeeded in defeating Nana Bekoe, who had, according to Ayeh-Kumi, usurped his rightful position of National Chairman. "I have not been recognized by my party; after all, I sold both my houses in Holland to pay for the elections".<sup>20</sup>

The court case therefore appeared to be a cynically organized method of weakening the support base of Limann, and Addae-Amoako was used as a tool. Perhaps, it was also a method of removing, in a legitimate way, those who were seen by Ayeh-Kumi and his group of old guards, Kwesi Armah, Abavana, Mumuni Bawumia, and Kojo Botsio as belonging to the opposing faction in the PNP. The main issue at stake was the control of the government through control of the President. Indeed, it is reported that Limann himself did not have authority in the party corresponding to his national position; he relied on Imoru Egala and others to provide the party muscle he lacked himself.<sup>21</sup> The Ayeh-Kumi group therefore knew that by removing his support already weakened by the death of Alhaji Imoru Egala they would have the party and the presidency to themselves.

The influence of Alhaji Imoru Egala in the Nkrumahist front cannot be overemphasized. In fact, through persuasion, personal charm and kindness, Egala was able to keep together Nkrumah's followers throughout the military rule of 1972-1979 and organized the party for victory in the 1979 elections. His death in April 1980 deprived the party and the Nkrumahist tradition as a whole of a unifying force. The intrigues and the internal wrangling of the party therefore peaked following the death of this great man. Egala's death perhaps contributed significantly to the woes and problems of Limann.

Though the case was settled out of court, the underlying causes of discontent were not removed, nor so far as one knows, was any attempt made to remove them. The problems within the party were a complete destabilizing distraction for Limann in his attempt to solve national problems. With the accusations and counter accusations as well as the rancour and acrimony in the party, the seeds of instability were being sown. The confusion which resulted and the government's own apparent lack of success in meeting the expectation of people still suffering from acute shortages of basic commodities gave the military the pretext for intervention in politics.

Besides, selfish motives and the inability to subordinate personal interest to national interest, contributed to the demise of the Limann regime. Naturally, after a heavy investment in an election campaign, there were people waiting to reap their rewards. There were rumours about the business activities of some influential members of the PNP such as the then Treasurer of the party, Ofori, Nana Okutwer Bekoe and Ayeh-Kumi which cast doubts on the credibility of the

party. Such elements within the party felt that after a long time in the political wilderness it was time for them to reap certain benefits. This corrupt section of the party thought they could put Limann there in order to manipulate him. But Limann was firm and resolute. They therefore felt sidelined. Unfortunately when Egala died they saw it as an opportunity to fight him. Limann was very rigid, principled and very confident of himself and was not prepared to allow any body to dictate to him or yield to such pressures, hence his problems. The internal squabbles coupled with the rigid and stubborn nature of Limann who was not prepared to subordinate personal interest to national interest, contributed significantly to his fall from power.<sup>22</sup>

The problem which the PNP faced was that the financing of the party was left in the hands of people such as Ofori, the party Treasurer, Ayeh--Kumi and Nana Okutwer Bekoe, which eventually made them so powerful in the party. It has been observed that it was this category of people, the old guards, who owned the party. It was they who put up the money. Nana Okutwer Bekoe for instance, controlled a sizeable portion of the party through his wealth. The party therefore came under the leadership of a collection of successful businessmen who saw the chance to grasp political power; financed it from their pockets, and were rewarded with political victory.<sup>23</sup> Each of these people wanted the way the party should be run. The other executives also had their way the party should be run. And the Limann clique wanted the right thing to be done.<sup>24</sup> A member of the Limann cabinet summed up the reasons for the internal wranglings in these terms:



The PNP was a large party and the party in power and it was expected that there were those who felt left out. Besides as a president who did not believe in undercover or backdoor deals he made enemies.<sup>25</sup>

Another disabling factor was that in spite of the fact that Limann was the incumbent president there were agitations to the effect that he was not a true blue CPP man and should not therefore be allowed to contest the 1983 elections. Their contention was that Limann had betrayed the Nkrumahists course. It was clear that even after he became President, certain elements in the party still did not accept him as a true member of the CPP. The Old Guards viewed him as a latter-day convert of the Nkrumahist tradition who was drawn in to the party by Imoru Egala.<sup>26</sup> This feeling was summed up during an interview with two leading members of the PNP. One said “Limann was not initially a prominent member of the CPP/ PNP. It was Egala who drew him to the centre of the PNP. Indeed it was the maneuverings of Egala that got Limann through”.<sup>27</sup>

Right from the word go therefore, Limann had one disadvantage in the sense that he was not accepted as a prominent member of the CPP tradition and that eventually made his rule very difficult. It has been argued that Limann was not a member of the CPP and that when Alhaji Egala was the CEO of the CMB and was awarding scholarships, he did not give him.<sup>28</sup>

Another leading member of the Limann cabinet had this to say:

Limann himself was not a member of the CPP. We the real CPP he feared us, he did not trust us. His cabinet therefore was not the real CPP. But he argued this was PNP and not CPP. When he appeared before us he admitted that he was not real CPP man and was not a socialist. His people around him were not CPP, for

example Dr de Graft Johnson, Riley-Poku and Dr Nabila. Before the coup, the CPP itself was not happy with Limann. He was not a socialist and he was not a CPP and could not therefore work with elements of the CPP<sup>29</sup>

These pieces of incontrovertible evidence show that he was not a member of the Nkrumahist tradition. What is clear is that as a mass party and a dynamic institution, the PNP, an offshoot of Nkrumah's CPP, had by the late 1970s come to embrace leftists, centrists, pragmatists, and rightists who hitherto were not prominent members of the CPP. It was a very important fact which the old guards failed to appreciate. This particular factor in itself was one of the reasons that propelled the PNP to victory in the 1979 polls.

What is important from this writer's view is that Limann was not a political fanatic but a pragmatic one. In fact when Limann once said that his ideology was Ghana, it revealed the seriousness of his non-party purpose. Whether one agrees with him or not one should appreciate Limann's sincerity and the seriousness of his non-partisan objective. The sad thing was that Limann was misunderstood and was never forgiven by those who felt that he had betrayed the Nkrumahist cause. Some writers wondered whether he was really the head of the party he led. But if there were failings, they arose because he tried to bring honesty, dedication and the pursuit of national interest into politics.

The problems of the party peaked in the last quarter of 1981 when there were threats of impeaching the President.<sup>30</sup> Limann, however, saw the move as the ways of democracy particularly multi-party democracy, "Our party was democratic. My administration was open, tolerant and responsive to criticisms.

We even accommodated dissidents within its ranks and this was exploited by subversionist within and outside the party”.<sup>31</sup> Even at a point there were growing concerns that Limann was moving away from the Egala camp and was becoming more inclined to Nana Okutwer Bekoe.

Signs beneath the surface indicated that Gbedemah, Botsio and some others wanted to get control of the party. Their view was that they had formed the CPP with Kwame Nkrumah and saw Imoru Egala as a threat who was trying to overshadow them. They therefore succeeded in getting out Egala by resurrecting the ten year ban issue. Indeed, but for the ten year ban placed on some prominent CPP members from holding public office, Alhaji Imoro Egala would have most likely been the Presidential candidate of the PNP. In spite of these difficulties, Egala still managed to get Limann through. Once Limann was not an original or prominent member of the CPP, he did not have real control over the Party apparatus and could be effective only with the agreement of the influential personalities behind him. A writer in *West Africa* believed that Limann operated under Egala till he died and was struggling between Nkrumah’s ideology and his own ideologies in life.<sup>32</sup>

The evidence so far adduced from the internal situation of the PNP indicated that there was doubtless an unending series of conflicts in the party such as illustrated above and these problems precipitated the fall of the regime. In effect the PNP faced a myriad of problems from within its own ranks. It appeared members of the PNP were not prepared to put aside their inordinate ambitions and work for the unity and growth of the party. The lack of co-operation between the

party and the government was bad enough to have given Rawlings and his associates the pretext to overthrow the government but what was worse was the fact that certain elements within the PNP supported the coup.

In an interview with *West Africa* during his detention at Akosombo Limann conceded that his government had been working quite well, but had been marred by divisiveness. He intimated that “there were individual conflicts mostly dragging business people—who were fighting for their business interests”.<sup>33</sup> According to him the divisiveness appeared right from the day the PNP assumed the reins of government. Limann, however, asserted that he was in control of the party and the country, and was not a mere substitute for Egala. He further revealed that for more than two weeks the government did nothing but continued meetings:

I was really very angry about it. But then they had dragged in the courts in such a way that if I did nothing I would be accused of floating the courts .... business people, they had their own objectives. Again I warned them this was not going to do them any good if they subordinated the national interest to private personal interest”.<sup>34</sup>

Indeed, as a mass party, the PNP could not be completely free from petty squabbles and ideological differences, but the leadership of the party allowed these to create animosity and hatred among party members. The circumstances under which the PNP found itself when it was in power seemed to be similar to the situation which confronted the CPP towards the end of its rule. In order to create the necessary political movement for independence, the membership of the CPP was opened to everybody; the result was that all sorts of characters found their way into the party. Some later on became terrible liabilities as well as

destabilizing forces in the party. For instance, John K. Tettegah, a Trade Unionist, after having had problems with the Nkrumah, Busia, and the Acheampong governments respectively, found himself in the Central Committee of the PNP. Posing as champion of the people, Tettegah is said to have made no concrete proposal which would help the people, but rather dwelled on slanders and exaggerated instances of corruption, not to stamp those out but to furnish help to the military to topple the Limann government.<sup>35</sup>

From the beginning, Limann had demonstrated that the PNP was not an ideological party, and showed it at best as essentially a nationalist group consisting of conflicting interest: leftist, centralist and conservative elements. Limann, however, failed to hold the line between the factions of both ends of his party membership and to tread the path of consensus and politics which united rather than divided the people he led.

The real problem was that the leadership of the party was unable to restrain the forces that operated in the party. It could not also enforce unity, nor at any time persuade all the top brass of the party to act concertedly; nor could it prevent the intrigues and rivalries from flaring into confrontations. The Limann regime therefore presented a spectacle of a party at war with itself. This undoubtedly accelerated the regimes' disintegration and subsequently, its fall. The leadership of the party only made a belated attempt to solve the impasse. On 30th December 1981, Addae-Amoako revealed to a small group of newsmen that he had been made the PNP acting national organizer, assigned to pull the party out of the morass of corruption, greed and dictatorship into which it had been dragged by "a

few who think they own the party” and to help the PNP to win the next election.<sup>36</sup> But by then it appeared to be too little and far too late. Within twenty-four hours the military had intervened.

Chazan is of the view that the Limann government’s failure to solve the economic crisis, and the political corruption that it engendered, contributed significantly to its over throw.<sup>37</sup> Donald Ray, however, wondered how much of the economic crisis could be actually attributed to the Limann government. In his view several factors which contributed to the crisis appeared to have been not of Limann’s making. The crisis was signaled for this period by a number of factors; negative economic growth, balance of payment deficits for most years and an average of nearly 3 per cent decline in the per capita Gross Domestic Product. Inflation averaged at 46-6 per cent per year, cocoa farmers revenues decreased from an index of 100 in 1963 to 78 in 1972 and 49 in 1979.<sup>38</sup> Mike Ocquaye supported this view by intimating that in order to fairly assess the performance of the Limann government, there was the need for one to take into account global occurrences in the early 1980s particularly in Africa. According to him the economic crisis of the period could be attributed to escalating prices in oil and economic mismanagement and national decadence bestowed by preceding military regimes. He cited National consumer price index figures to buttress his point.<sup>39</sup>

It was based on this analysis that Ray concluded that several factors which contributed to the crisis appeared to have been not Limann’s making. The economic crisis of the country had been increasing for quite some time. Limann

therefore was unlucky to have inherited a chaos of policy created by previous regimes, most notably that of General Acheampong. Both the external and internal economic situation had been deteriorating due largely to a combination of administrative mismanagement and the declining price of cocoa, the country's major export earner.<sup>40</sup> Industrial production was said to have been recording negative growth rates as foreign exchange to import raw materials was lacking. Unfortunately for the government, too many of the country's industries depended largely on imported inputs. In 1974, it was estimated that on the average 62 per cent of Ghana's industrial raw materials requirement was imported, and even in the agro-based industry the proportion of plant capacity that was satisfied from local sources was low.<sup>41</sup> This resulted in a critical shortage of certain locally produced goods and drugs. Boarding schools had to be closed down ostensibly for lack of food.<sup>42</sup>

Ray blamed the Limann regime for promising to greatly increase the supply of consumer goods when the foreign exchange reserves were inadequate. He also took Limann to task for allowing members of parliament to grant themselves salaries grossly disproportionate to what the average Ghanaian earned, which created an economic grievance against the government.<sup>43</sup>

Limann's failure to face the issue of devaluation and price controls is cited as one of the reasons for his fall from power. The official cedi was over valued at US \$1.00 to 2.75, when the real but illegal prices were US \$ 1.00 to 25 in 1980 and 42 at the end of Limann's regime.<sup>44</sup> What made the situation difficult was that the economic policies of the Limann government were considered by certain

segments of the society as a total sell-out of the economy to the exploitative capitalist concerns of the West. The government was also accused of the application of neo-colonial formula in resolving the socio-economic problems of Ghana.<sup>47</sup> The government therefore compelled to hesitate in taking certain decisions. Limann's PNP was, like Nkrumah's CPP to which it claimed heritage, was split between right and left wings. However, the dominant orientation was to the right, which was what the government economic policies reflected. The government was able to analyze the overwhelming problems of the nation and came to the conclusion that the solution to these problems rested heavily on how to attract foreign capital by establishing the new investment code.

However, some ardent adherents of socialism cried foul that the new code opened the economy to foreign profit making. The government also entered into negotiation with the IMF in order to obtain large amounts of foreign capital necessary to rehabilitate the economic infrastructure. The IMF reputedly offered loans of US130 million for the first year together with US900-950 million over the next three years. In return, the Limann government was expected to devalue the Cedi by 50 to 80 per cent, increase the government's payment to cocoa farmers by 300 percent in order to stimulate the production of foreign-exchange generating cocoa; increase interest rates; remove controls on the importation and pricing of goods and cut government expenditure by various means, including dismissing 30,000 people from the civil service.<sup>45</sup>

The IMF proposals would have aroused political opposition from many sectors of the population who saw their jobs or their interests threatened.<sup>46</sup> The



proposal to devalue the cedi was especially explosive since the previous civilian regime of Busia had been overthrown when it attempted to devalue the cedi. Certainly Limann had good reason to fear the fate of his government on this score.

The economic problems of the time and the way the Limann government responded to them have always been cited for the overthrow of the government<sup>47</sup>. The economic deterioration continued throughout Limann's final year in power. Food reserves were low: three months for rice and only ten days for corn. Most factories were operating at 20% capacity because of lack of foreign exchange to buy replacement parts and raw materials. Tried as the government did it could not halt the economic problems of the time. Gross Domestic Investment was constantly on the decline from 1960-70. From 1970 to 1980 the average decrease in gross domestic investment nearly doubled (6.2 percent). During the period 1970 to 1980 the GDP fell by 0.1 per cent per year and industrial and agricultural production fell by 1.2 percent per year. The consumer price index rose from 100 in 1979 to 903 at the end of 1979, and to 1,335.4 in 1980.<sup>48</sup>

It must be observed that although Ghana was riding high on its reserves in 1957, they were the fruits of a one-crop colonial economy subjected to the capricious whims of international markets. Dramatic declines in the cocoa prices played a part in the fall of both Nkrumah and Busia. Efforts to diversify the economy have never changed this basic factor of Ghana's economy, and it is only the steady decline in cocoa production that has slowly taken the decision away from policy makers. The most powerful permanent theme running through the

period of the Limann administration was that a weak economy encourages the forces ready to overthrow democracy and undermine the power of the state.

The Limann administration also suffered waves of attacks by certain radical elements in the society. These attacks had been sustained by socialist agitators and a resurgence of Marxist-Leninist splinter groups, which were more concerned with monitoring the activities of the Limann administration. The regime's position, was therefore rendered more parlous by the activities of these groups. Prominent among these groups were the June Fourth Movement, the People's Revolutionary League of Ghana, the New Democratic Movement, Kwame Nkrumah Revolutionary Guards and the Movement on National Affairs. .

The Kwame Nkrumah Revolutionary Guards for instance was founded on 21<sup>st</sup> September, 1980; the anniversary of Kwame Nkrumah's birthday by former CPP members who were dissatisfied with the direction the Limann government was taking. During the CPP era, Kwame Nkrumah gradually developed an ideological mixture which included nationalism, pan-Africanism and scientific socialism that was known as Nkrumahism. After his overthrow, he more clearly accepted and used Marxism- Leninism in his political analysis of Africa. However from its inception the CPP contained both capitalist and proto-socialist elements. By 1979 both these elements had momentarily regrouped around the newly-created PNP of Limann in readiness for transition to civilian rule. One set of left-wing Nkrumahists led by Johnny Hansen, after finding in 1979 that the electoral regulation shackled their People's Revolutionary Party (PRP), decided to join the PNP in the hope of pushing the party to the left to implement its proposed

policies.<sup>49</sup> The group was, however, disappointed by the refusal of Limann and the PNP financial barons to do so.

Consequently, these left-wing elements in the party came together in 1980 as a 'ginger group' to attempt once more to guide the PNP into Nkrumahist socialism. Frustrated by the refusal of the Limann government to move to the left, the KNRG under its Secretary General, H.S.T Provençal became very critical of the Limann government. No wonder the KNRG welcomed and supported the December 31st Revolution. One of their leading members, Johnny Hansen, congratulated Rawlings for overthrowing Limann and was made Secretary for the Interior in 1982-83 but later fell out with them over the issue of IMF.<sup>50</sup> Other prominent members of the group who joined the PNDC were F.A Jantuah and C.S Takyi. This was an indication that the association perhaps was in league with the coup makers of 31 December 1981. The heavy presences of CPP youth in the Rawlings administration lend credence to the suspicion that the CPP elements might have supported the events of December, 1981.

By far the June Fourth Movement was the biggest threat to the Limann government. The June Fourth Movement was born in the aftermath of the June 4th uprising. The leaders of the June Fourth Movement included Rawlings as chairman, and Kwasi Adu as president. Other prominent members of the Movement included Nicholas Atampugre, Nyeya Yen, S. Gariba, Zaya Yeebo, Sergeant Daniel Alolga Akata-Pore, and Rudolf Amenga. The group was largely made up of men who were either university graduates or university student leaders and activists who had played supportive roles in the June 4 up-rising. The

June 4 Movement stated that it was a mass national democratic movement committed to the realization of true democracy and the fulfillment of aspirations of the mass of Ghanaian peoples. It was anti- imperialist, anti-colonialist and pro-working class in orientation,<sup>51</sup>

. Before the outbreak of the revolution, the JFM made its intention clear that it wished to become a Bolshevik style party that would lead to a successful revolution for the realization of the aspirations and protection of the interest of the working people.<sup>52</sup> The JFM conducted political education by means of public and private meetings. It made public campaign and became openly critical of the Limann government due largely to its difference with the regime. This was done in its own newspaper, the *Workers Banner*. One of its major foci was the perceived attempt by the Limann government to help undermine the sentences of the AFRC.<sup>53</sup>

The JFM clandestinely organized Ghanaian workers and students to demonstrate against the Limann government as a means of promoting their demands. Perhaps the most significant strike and demonstration led by the JFM was the one which resulted in the temporary occupation of parliament. Addressing a press conference in Accra to mark the second anniversary of the June 4 revolution, Flt-Lt. Rawlings stated that the AFRC could not achieve “the wholly new society” it cherished within the three and half months that it was in power.<sup>54</sup> No wonder the final political action of the JFM during President Limann’s period was to take part in seizing power from Limann’s hands on 31<sup>st</sup> December, 1981.

Another splinter group that was openly critical and was opposed to the Limann government was the People's Revolutionary League of Ghana. It was formed by members of the People's Revolutionary Party (PRP) who rejected the PRP's absorption by Limann's PNP.<sup>55</sup> Like the JFM, the League was Marxist in orientation, policy and ideology. It placed emphasis on attempts to organize students, young people and workers against imperialism and in aid of national democracy. It organized public rallies, discussions, voluntary work and the distribution of leaflets.<sup>56</sup> It was based on the confrontational attitude of these groups that a correspondent of the *Legon Observer* felt impelled to warn of the danger of allowing the emergence of various radical movements some of which were advocating the overthrow of the constitutionally elected government of Limann.<sup>57</sup>

Besides, workers and individual trade unionists were also rapidly mobilized to oppose the Limann administration. The effect of the general economic dislocation on the poor and the working population was severe. By 1980, this was getting to dangerous proportion among the working population and this resulted in labour unrests. Labour disturbances which became rampant during this period peaked in a TUC back work stoppage in the middle of 1981.<sup>58</sup> For instance in 1979, there were 65 labour disputes out of which 43 ended up in strikes. But in 1980 all the 66 labour disputes could not be handled amicably.<sup>59</sup> In the mist of these difficulties, Members of Parliament salaries went up to 4,050 while minimum daily wage stood at 4.00.<sup>60</sup>

Other sources of discontent during the Limann era were concentrated among organized distributors, some of the producers, transport workers and mobilized farmers. What was significant about this development was the fact that these foci of agitation mirrored the constellation of forces that had been instrumental in bringing about the SMC's downfall and had solidly backed Rawlings housecleaning operation. This therefore appeared to be a carry-over of the problems as well as the anti-establishment propensities that existed even before the September, 1979 transition to civilian rule.<sup>61</sup> The problem the Limann administration faced was that civilian rule was presented as a kind of a new dawn after seven dark years of military rule, even in spite of the economic problems that the regime inherited. This undoubtedly raised the expectations of the people which could not, however, be met. During this period, the dissatisfaction of the ordinary people grew. What was apparent was that the government had a herculean task resulting from the combination of years of economic mismanagement and the high expectation of a dislocated society. However, the President and the PNP entered the new decade with problems internal to the party and internal to Ghana. All the various groups identified above were mobilized against the Limann administration with some openly spearheading anti-government and anti-establishment sentiments.

There was a rumour in Ghana at the time that the coup plotters approached Limann and told him that because of the worry being given him by the old guards of the CPP, they were going to overthrow his government, clear the so-called old guards and bring him back as President. What gave credence to this suspicion was

the insistence of Rawlings on 31<sup>st</sup> December, 1981, that nobody should harm the person of Limann. That was in sharp contrast to previous coups when coup leaders made uncomplimentary remarks about those they had kicked out of power. There was also the suspicion or perception of some Ghanaians that Limann was in secret touch with Rawlings and was giving him information of security issues brought to him by the military intelligence. However, incontrovertible evidence from Limann and other sources indicated that this assertion can hardly be true. It appeared some close confidants of the President particularly the northerners in the military pretended that they were supporting their brother (Limann) but rather tapped information for the coup plotters.<sup>62</sup>

Halidu Giwa was reported to have said that they assisted Rawlings to carry out the 31 December 1981 coup because Rawlings told them that Limann asked him to carry out the coup because the old CPP members were disturbing him.<sup>63</sup> It has, however, been argued that Limann was too politically matured to have acceded that type of arrangement.<sup>64</sup> Rawlings clandestinely used the northern elements in the military to achieve his ambition. Beyond that Limann himself refuted the allegation as totally untrue and unfounded:

What reason could I have had to seek my political demise by colluding with quixotic adventurers in such a dastardly enterprise? I would only like to draw the attention of our good country-men and women to the fact that we would not have had military intervention in this country if the Armed Forces had not failed to perform the regular duty, namely that of defending the basic law and constitutional integrity of the nation and not cowered before the overweening ambition and romantic adventurism of small cliques with their ranks.<sup>65</sup>

He intimated that the coup makers confessed in January 1982 that they planned their action long before 24 September, 1979, the day the Third Republic was inaugurated.<sup>66</sup> Besides, Rawlings after he had handed over power stated categorically that the regime was on probation in the eyes of the people of Ghana and would not hesitate to stage a comeback if things did not move in the right direction.<sup>67</sup> Viewed from this direction, they did not need any excuse or pretext for the coup d'état of 31<sup>st</sup> December, 1981. In this regard, it would be reasonable to conclude that the 31<sup>st</sup> December coup was an unfinished business of the June 4, 1979 event that was deliberately left to be attended to later.

The late 1970s and the beginning of the 1980s witnessed a political transformation which was underway in the university campuses of Ghana. Radical ideas took hold on the various campuses of the country's universities. This development was not limited to Ghana. Student movements emerged globally and demanded certain reforms in society. The mutiny of the June 4, 1979, acted as a political catalyst upon ideas which had hitherto been confined to campus debate. Students spearheaded anti-government sentiments. NUGS in particular was very critical of the Limann regime and had earlier on backed the house cleaning exercise. For instance, in May 1981, NUGS came out with a statement complaining about the serious deterioration in the state of the nation and called on the Limann government to wake up from its slumber and take drastic measures to remedy the situation.<sup>68</sup> The radicalism adopted by the students on the campuses spilled over to the gathering torrent of protest politics in the country. NUGS organized a series of demonstrations and strikes on the campuses during which



several students were hurt and one was killed. As a result, the universities were shut down in the spring of 1980. The students were joined in these sentiments by a portion of the intelligentsia which had also become radicalized in the late 1970s. Again, at its 16<sup>th</sup> Annual Congress held in Kumasi, NUGS warned that all those who were clandestinely working to subvert the sovereign rights of the people, and were trying to erode or negate the gains made for the people during the tenure of the AFRC would be fiercely resisted.<sup>69</sup>

One other significant development that compounded President Limann's problems was that before the Peoples' National Party assumed the reins of government, a progressive front had been forged which included elements within the Labour Movement and outside it. They assumed the role of the defenders of the interests of the workers and other members of the lower class. Their avowed goal was to prevent a return to the pre-1979 era when the military governments and their political representatives took the masses for granted. The progressive workers and the organized groups became openly critical of, and hostile to the government and those holding political office. The growing consciousness on the part of workers and their unions was a direct result of the reawakening calls of the June 4 Movement and other radical organizations.<sup>70</sup>

Part of the problem of Limann and the Third Republic which he represented came from the attitude of the Ghanaian politician. The notion in politics that the winner must enjoy certain benefits once his party is in power appeared to have taken root in Ghanaian politics since the First Republic. This development undoubtedly created further problems for the regime. This

observation may seem extreme, but it reflects a worrisome trend in Ghanaian politics. Limann himself was a man of integrity, but he was not altogether successful in his efforts to overcome this problem in his party.

Colonel (Rtd) Mohadeen Yahaya, a close associate of Limann is of the view that the government failed because there were security lapses. He argued that D.A.T Marbel and John S Nabila who were in-charge of Special Branch and national security and Information and Presidential Affairs respectively did not have knowledge in security matters.<sup>71</sup> Nabila, however, wondered:

Why did they not say that Busia had security lapses? The real problem was that we had a young man who staged the June Fourth and was considered a redeemer.... This young man was always there with his anti-establishment rhetoric. No matter how you tried the situation still remained difficult.<sup>72</sup>

It has been claimed that there were both verbal and written reports to Limann about people planning to overthrow the government which they claim he did not take seriously. Basili Wasai is however, of the view that it was wrong for people to direct security information to the President since he had Ministers of Interior, Defense and Directors of Military and Foreign Intelligence. He argued the laws of the country were supposed to deal with those issues adding that those who were directing the information to Limann were getting the presidency compromised.<sup>73</sup>

The efforts the Limann government was making in solving the country's accumulated economic problem went hand in hand with political instability. There were so many coup attempts between 1979 and 1981 by the soldiers, who inspired by Rawlings to seize power and establish what they perceived as a

government of the ordinary people. Kofi Batsa says in his book that there were at least 19 serious coup attempts which were all quietly nipped in the bud.<sup>74</sup> Some of these included the "Tantoungi plot"<sup>75</sup> and the "Buller Affair".<sup>76</sup>

The personality of Rawlings and his activities played a significant part in precipitating the overthrow of Limann. Rawlings became the main character who capitalized on his popularity gained from the June 4 uprising to undermine the administration of Limann thus making him uncomfortable until he finally lost his balance. Rawlings was behind the scenes poking and inciting the public against the PNP government. For instance, at a symposium on the second anniversary of the June 4 uprising, Rawlings exhorted the ordinary people to wake up to their political responsibility and stated that the situation that existed in the country was a potential revolutionary one<sup>77</sup>. Rawlings held a series of press conferences and lambasted the PNP government and its leadership. During commemoration of the first anniversary of the June 4 uprising, Rawlings warned: 'We will not look on while the people continue to suffer'. Again, in a press conference to mark the second anniversary of the revolution he warned: 'those who make a peaceful revolution impossible make a violent revolution inevitable'.<sup>78</sup> For any critical observer of the Ghanaian society, the coup did not come as a surprise: Limann later said that hardly an evening passed when he did not think soldiers would seize power. He said his intelligence services were always telling him about coup plots. His attention was, however, focused on a prominent opposition member whom the intelligence services were suspecting of planning a coup. It was based

on these problems and the prevailing security situation of the time that Limann said that his first year in office was characterized by a siege mentality.<sup>79</sup>

The problems that the post-June 4 Armed Forces posed to the Limann administration were enormous, diverse and complex. Discipline and morality had broken down in the army. The Limann government inherited a heavy legacy from the AFRC: the forceful measure of bringing out goods and selling them to the public without ensuring that there were more in the pipeline, the numerous sentences imposed on people, some of whom ended up in prison.<sup>80</sup> There was mistrust in the army as a result of the treatment the senior officers received from the hands of the junior ranks. Besides, politically ambitious soldiers who had tasted political power during the AFRC rule felt a sharp sense of loss of authority and were itching to exercise political power again.<sup>81</sup> Some members of the AFRC had the belief that the house-cleaning exercise did not run its full course and decided to hold a watching brief on the activities of the Limann administration. They therefore formed a conspiratorial group to subvert the Limann administration.<sup>82</sup>

It has been observed that the heavy handed manner in which the Limann regime attempted to restore order within the military contributed significantly to the 1981 coup.<sup>83</sup> However, the government position was that the actions were taken to restore order in the military.<sup>84</sup> It appears the government handling of the matter was a re-visitation of the manner in which Nkrumah retired Major General Otoo and Ankrah from the Army which resulted in the 24 February coup.

Awoonor in his work *The Ghana Revolution* blamed the coup on the harassment meted out to Rawlings and Tsikata by the security during the Third Republic.<sup>85</sup> A security aid to Limann, however, observed that the Military Intelligence got wind that Rawlings, Kojo Tsikata and Kwesi Botchwey were having secret meetings to subvert the government. He argued that no one places surveillance on someone who does not pose security threat adding the Military Intelligence had good reasons to do what they were doing.. He, however, admitted that the surveillance was was too open.<sup>86</sup>

William A.Yeboah in a recent article in the *Daily Graphic*, made some significant observations which corroborated some evidence adduced so far. According to him the event of 31<sup>st</sup> December, 1981, was occasioned by the internal wrangling in the CPP front at the time. He cited the strife between the youth wing and the old guards and the in-fighting between the father-founder and the party chairman and the subsequent sudden death of the father-founder as the major events that culminated in the event of 1981.<sup>87</sup>

In view of the evidence adduced above, it is clear that the PNP, an offshoot of Nkrumah's CPP, suffered internal as well as external problems. There was confusion in the party right from the beginning because of the perception that the President was not ideologically a member of the CPP. Besides, there was a dichotomy between the old guards and the new guards which brought about disunity. Before the coup therefore, certain important elements had been completely alienated from the party and the government. The regime, therefore, never escaped tension. Neither Limann nor the leadership of the party, for all their

brilliance, succeeded in solving its fundamental problem, essentially that of bridging the gap between the party and the government, between the old guard and the new generation of politicians in the party. With the internal squabbles serving as a catalyst, the revolutionaries found it easy to topple the Limann regime.

The story of the PNP under Limann therefore became a tale of unmitigated disaster. The party's internal sickness erupted into the open. Limann found himself racked with confusion at the very moment when he was called upon to solve national problems. Only uncommon wisdom could possibly have saved the PNP in this desperate predicament, if indeed anything could have. But instead of exhibiting wisdom, the leadership of the PNP manifested a complete inability to assess the realities of the situation. The party had at this time broken up into a number of unimportant rival groups and was in no position to help anyone. Consequently, since the PNP was structurally fractured from all angles, things began to fall apart. The other disabling factor was the Rawlings change-of-heart before or soon after the handing over. He declared that the Limann government was on probation of no fixed period except that he reserved the power to determine the probation at will. Rawlings determined the termination of the probation and took power again in a coup d'etat.

It needs to be observed that Limann was a victim of circumstances as far as his political career was concerned. First, his own Peoples' National Party (PNP) ganged up against him to make his rule a difficult one. Second, Jerry John Rawlings added to the problem of Limann by being a security risk to his

government and continued to undermine the administration of Limann, thus making him uncomfortable until he lost his balance.

In view of the problems that confronted the Limann regime, can it be concluded that the coup was justified?

The coup d' etat of 1981 was absolutely unnecessary because Dr. Limann had been elected by the nation; therefore no group of soldiers had the mandate to destroy the democratic process. He did not arrest or detain anyone arbitrarily; he did not kill or hurt anybody. He did not devalue the currency. He did not divide the nation by tribalism; he did not appoint persons to positions based on ethnicity, never confiscated industries nor did he hide behind agencies to take over people businesses. He was never a communist.<sup>88</sup>

Indeed if the government was failing to solve the accumulated problems of Ghana, then the people would have soon had an opportunity in the 1983 election to have rejected Limann and chosen an alternative. If there were provable instances of corruption and malfeasance, then there were processes of impeachment and trial available. The military seizure of power was a rejection of the verdict of democracy and an indictment of the military of their unconstitutional and morally unjustified act of taking power from the elected representatives of the Ghanaian people.

Besides, the very policies of devaluation and economic liberalism, described by his critics and architects of the coup as IMF conditionalities and for which he was overthrown, were the same policies which were introduced a few years later by his accusers. By early 1983, it dawned on the PNDC regime that if Ghana was to survive, there was the need to reverse or improve policy and secure foreign loans. Consequently, in 1985, the PNDC promulgated a new investment

code to entice foreign investors into the country.<sup>89</sup> Again, in September, 1995 another Investment Code was promulgated. In order to ‘sell’ the country to investors, Rawlings and his economic advisors visited the U.S.A, Britain, West Germany and Japan to meet government leaders and business communities. Ghana was advertised in the *Financial Times*, *The Economist*, and *West Africa* as investment heaven.<sup>90</sup> By and large this Code and the advertisements were similar to those initiated by the Limann government, which the PNDC overthrew and accused of permitting the neocolonisation of the economy. Rawlings’ claim that the revolution was meant to cutoff the stronghold which foreign companies exerted on Ghana was thus defeated.

The irony of the situation was that the regime finally renounced its anti-imperialist and anti-capitalist ideology and accepted the intervention of the IMF/World Bank structural adjustment programmes.<sup>91</sup> In 1983, Rawlings made a u-turn when he called for an end to what he termed as ‘empty theories’ expounded by local Marxist who had hijacked the national discourse and made enemies of everyone who offered an alternative. He blamed the Marxists for many of the mistakes of his regime and noted that “they failed to offer any solution, let alone realistic ones that confronted the country in 1982 ... ”<sup>92</sup> The Secretary of Finance and Economic Planning, Kwesi Bochwey, who was an advocate of Marxist solutions, accepted that the IMF and World Bank prescriptions were good for Ghana.<sup>93</sup> It is interesting to note that some of the policies initiated by Limann were later to be announced with a sense of discovery and implemented with pioneer pride after he was overthrown.



The foregoing account demonstrates the nature and the complexities of the problems the PNP faced that by and large led to its overthrow. The difficulties which plagued the Limann regime emanated from both internal and external forces within the Ghanaian political scene at the time. Beyond that, the economic problems of the era and the expectation of the people was a formidable challenge to the regime.

## NOTES AND REFERENCES

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3. *West Africa*, 15 February 1982 p. 482.
4. Rawlings cited by Shillington, K, *Ghana and the Rawlings Factor*, London: Macmillan Press Ltd, 1992, p.81.
5. For more information on this view read Chazzan, Naomi, *An Anatomy of Ghanaian politics: Managing Political Recession*, Colorado: Westview press, pp.306-327.
6. Conduah, N.E, *Ghana: The Third Republic*, Elimina: Nesfico Publication, 1991, p. 127.
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9. This was revealed to me during an interview with colonel (rtd) Mohadeen Yahaya, 67 years, on the 29 April 2008, at his office in Castle Annex.
10. For a detailed view of the Kumasi Congress of the PNP, see *Limann speaks; the Way Ahead*, and *West Africa* 16 June 1982, p. 3282.
11. *West Africa* 3358, 14 December 1981, p.3016. The story can also be found in Ocquaye, Mike, *Politics in Ghana 1982-1992*, Accra: Tornado publications, 2004, p. 336.
12. Odoi-Sykes cited in Shillington, K. *op.cit* p.74. S.AOdoi-Sykes accused leading members of the PNP and their unelected members of being more

concerned about the next election than solving the country's problems. He also accused them of amassing wealth.

13. See *President Limam and Nkrumahism* in *Articles Culled from West Africa*, December 1980-February 1981.
14. *Ibid.*
15. *Ibid.*
16. *Ibid.*
17. *Ibid.*
18. Shillington, K, *op.cit*, p. 78. Details of the Addai-Amoako case can also be found in *West Africa*, 10 May, 1982 pp. 1251-1252.
19. *West Africa*, 10 May, 1982 p.1252.
20. *Ibid.*
21. *Ibid.*
22. Interview with Professor Ivan Addai Mensah, General Secretary of the PNP on the 28 March 2008 at his office in Legon, Accra.
23. Awoonor, K, *The Ghana Revolution*, Accra: Oasis publication, 1984, p. 121.
24. Interview with Kwaku Bawine, a former Foreign Service officer at his residence in Wa on the 23 March 2008.
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26. Colonel Rtd Mohadeen Yahaya, interview cited.

27. Interview with K.S.P Jantuah on 6 June 2008 at his residence in Labone, Accra. He talked about the disunity in the party and the lack of trust between Limann and the old guards.
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34. *Ibid.*
35. Ninsin, K.A, *Political Struggles in Ghana 1967-1981*, Accra: Tornado Publishers, 1983, p.94.
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44. *Ibid.* p. 22.

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46. *Ibid.* p.124.
47. *West Africa*, 19 April, 1982.*op.cit.* p.1046.
48. Ocquay, Mike, cited in Ray, D, *op.cit*, p.21.
49. Ray, Donald, *op.cit* p.55.
50. Professor B.G Der, *op.cit*.
51. Ray, Donald, *op.cit.* Pp.40-46.
52. *Ibid.* p.44.
53. *Ibid.* p.45.
54. *Daily Graphic*, June 5, 1981.
55. Ray, Donald, *op.cit*, p.47.
56. *Ibid.* p.48.
57. *Legon observer*, Volume XII. 2, April 1980, p. 34.
58. *West Africa* 3324, 13th April 1981, p. 836.
59. *Ibid.*
60. *Daily Graphic*, 26 October, 1981.
61. Chazzan, N, *op. cit* p. 315
62. Madam Fulera Limann told me during an interview with her on the 3rd March 2008 at her residence Nungua that she rather suspected certain northern elements in the security services who were close to Limann to be giving out the information to the coup plotters.
63. Colonel (Rtd) Mohadeen Yahaya, *op.cit.* Mohadeen Yahaya revealed to me that he personally met Halidu Gyiwa who told him how they were

tricked in to believing that Limann supported the coup which they later realized was untrue.

64. Professor Ivan Addai-Mensah, Professor John S Nabila, Basile Wasai, a close confidant and AlhajiAlhassan Bin Salih were all unanimous in their arguments during separate interviews that Limann was too political minded, too matured and too principled to be a privy to such arrangements. They rather blamed it on some northerners in the military.
65. See 'Reaction of Dr. Hilla Limann, President of the Third Republic of Ghana to certain allegations made against the PNP administration at a press conference in Paris by Flt.-Lt J.J Rawlings Chairman of the PNDC, on July 4, 1991' in *Limann Speaks Vol.Two*, PNC Publicity Committee, August, 1992, p.2.
66. *Ibid.*p.8
67. See 'Politicians are on probation' in *West Africa*, 4 February
68. *West Africa* 3327, 4 May, 1981, p.1002.
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71. Colonel Rtd Mohadeen Yahaya, *op.cit.*
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82. *Ibid.*p.61
83. Awoonor, K, in his work, *The Ghana Revolution*, is of the view that the harassment of Captain Kojo Tsikata and Flt.Lt.Rawlings was one of the reasons that occasioned the 1981 revolution.
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91. *Ibid.*p.236.

92. *Ibid.*
93. *West Africa*, 28th January, 1985.



## CHAPTER SIX

### THE RETURN TO ACTIVE POLITICS-

#### *Once a Politician, always a Politician.*

After the 31st December coup the deposed President, Limann was arrested by policemen on the 4th January, 1982 at a checkpoint and put on detention at Akosombo, which was to last for 21 months. He was released on September 20, 1983.<sup>1</sup> One of his good friends, Alhaji Alhassan Bin Salih, a public servant and a distinguished member of the Danquah –Busia-Dombo tradition, stood surety for his release. Following his release from “protective custody” Limann led a very quiet life and used the opportunity to make up for the lost time he did not have for his family when he was the president. He devoted his time to the teaching of his children. Little was heard of him. He had voluntarily decided to observe what he described as “constructive silence”.<sup>2</sup> The political mood of the period following his release was rough and tough. It was extremely difficult for people to speak against the government. Political activities were proscribed. This went on for some time and culminated in what was to be described as the “culture of silence” in Ghana’s political history. The Provisional National Defense Council (PNDC) regime made various attempts to suppress dissent. Any group perceived by elements of the PNDC as a potential threat to it was suppressed.<sup>3</sup> Due largely to the culture of silence and the fact that Limann was put under house arrest he

could not speak and that was why he spent his post-president years in relative obscurity.

Beyond that, the PNDC government passed the Newspaper Licensing Law 1985(PNDCL211) which gave legal backing to and systematized the arbitrariness inherent in the PNDC regime. The law demanded that anyone wishing to publish a newspaper or magazine should obtain a license from the Secretary of Information. It also empowered the Secretary to revoke the license of a newspaper publisher or suspend the publication of a newspaper for an indefinite period.<sup>4</sup> To all intent and purposes, the law was an effort to muzzle an already restricted media. As a result of this and other tactics adopted by the regime, the whole society relapsed into a “culture of silence”. Some independent newspapers voluntarily ceased publication in anticipation of the new regime’s hostility towards the press. Some of such newspapers like *The Palaver* were confiscated while others such as *The Echo* were forced to close down by an organized group of militant PNDC supporters who found the critical and uncompromising stance of those papers intolerable.<sup>5</sup>

Writing under the heading “The Press and the Transition to Multi-Party Democracy in Ghana”, Kwame Karikari observed that the government undertook other high handed measures against the press: the arrest and detention without trial of the Publishers and editors of the Free Press; the arrest and imprisonment of reporters, and forced exiled of a number of editors of both state-owned and the independent press; the unexplained and unprovoked dismissal of others in the state media, and the dismissal of others for their views.<sup>6</sup> Due largely to the tactics

the PNDC adopted between 1981 and mid-1985, political opposition to the PNDC remained fragmented, personalized and ineffective since dissent was considered tantamount to subversion.

However, by 1989, critics of the regime recovered their confidence and began to cement alliances that cut across the divisions of the past. The emergence of opposition to the PNDC stemmed from the fact that the regime had antagonized established interest groups over certain issues. For instance, it provoked the churches with the introduction of PNDC Law 221. It also had problems with the TUC due largely to its mishandling of organized labour. And it fell out with NUGS. There was also mounting international pressure on the regime. By 1989 therefore, the PNDC regime had antagonized various segments of the Ghanaian society leading to the rebirth of opposition and the emergence of pro-democracy forces in the country.<sup>7</sup>

As a result of these developments, the PNDC was compelled to concede some limited political reforms which culminated in the District Level Elections of 1988/89.<sup>8</sup> By far the most important development that gave the pro-democracy movement its biggest boost was the formation of the Movement for Freedom and Justice (MFJ). Inaugurated on 1st August 1990, the MFJ was an umbrella organization grouping leaders of various political persuasions. The strength of the MFJ lay in the fact that its leadership cut across the major political groupings which had been banned by the PNDC government since 31 December 1981 and were traditional political enemies. Among them were A. Adu Boahen, Chairman, Jonny Hansen, 1st Vice Chairman, Ray Kakraba-Quarshie, 2nd Vice Chairman,

Obeng Manu, National Secretary, Kwesi Pratt, Jnr., Deputy National Secretary, John Ndebugre, National Organizer, and Dan Lartey, National Treasurer.<sup>9</sup>

The MFJ was basically a platform to resist the dictatorship of the PNDC, canvass for the restoration of the fundamental rights of Ghanaians and the lifting of the ban of political activities. It had a very radical outlook and as such the executives were arrested under government instructions immediately after its inauguration in Accra but were later released. In the call for a return to constitutional rule the MFJ was joined in its public utterances by a wide range of professional bodies including the Churches, the TUC and the Bar Association, all of which called for an immediate lifting of the ban on political parties, the ending of detention without trial, restoration of the *Habeas Corpus* Act and the abolition of the laws requiring the registration of newspapers and of the churches, regarded as a restriction on the basic human freedom of speech and of religion.<sup>10</sup>

By 1990, it appeared the culture of silence, which had paralyzed political dissent in Ghana, was on the verge of collapsing. In 1987, an eminent scholar, Professor Albert Adu Boahen, delivered the annual J.B Danquah Memorial Lectures under the title “The Ghanaian Sphinx: A contemporary history of Ghana 1972-1987”, in which he scathingly criticized the dictatorship of the PNDC regime. The Professor had used the story of Sphinx, the man eating monsters in Sophocles’ *Oedipus Tyranus*, as a metaphor for his country’s military dictatorship.<sup>11</sup> Many believed the culture of silence was broken with the lectures.

Adu Boahen’s speech was significant in that it was almost the first broadside against the PNDC to be widely reported inside the country. The lectures

were also viewed as the point from which it is possible to trace the resurgence of an articulated opposition. By 1990, the PNDC found that it was up against an opposition with an agenda of its own.<sup>12</sup>

Adu Boahen's lectures were followed later by Limann's press conference on July 4, 1991. On that occasion, Limann explained that he had decided to break the long silence and speak out in order to set a number of historical records straight before fiction was accepted as fact with the passage of time. He said there was serious distortion of historical facts about his administration of which incontrovertible evidence from official sources was available to him. His statement was in reaction to Flt.Lt.Rawlings who was purported to have told his audience at a Press Conference in Paris that ex-President Limann and Dr. Issah Egala had told him (Rawlings) about a fraudulent method used by the Peoples' National Party to win the 1979 elections. He said he was prepared to resist all attempts to falsify the history of this country.<sup>13</sup> Limann's press statement also contributed to restoring the long lost freedom of expression to especially privately-owned newspapers, which either published it in full or serialized it in a number of issues with thought-provoking editorial comments.

One important development of the period was that the country witnessed the formation of political clubs clandestinely in anticipation of the day party politics would come back to life. These clubs served as the primary instruments of political revivalism. Hence, political parties started under the guise of social clubs. A typical example was the Danquah- Busia club which was formed on 23 February, 1991, which later metamorphosized into the New Patriotic Party. The

powerful personalities behind the formation of this Club included, Attakorah Gyimah, a veteran journalist, Dr John Bilson, Rev. Dr Samuel Asante Antwi, then District Chair of the Methodist Church in Kumasi, Victor Owusu, Felicia Kufuor and other patrons that included Dr Dsane Salby. The objective of the club was to promote the political philosophy of Danquah and Busia, but in the main, it was to act as a pressure group against the Rawlings dictatorship. It also canvassed for the restoration of multi-party democracy.<sup>14</sup>

The Kwame Nkrumah tradition also started with a collection of clubs. The earliest of them dating back to the 1980s, was the Kwame Nkrumah Welfare Society [KNWS] which contained a number of familiar faces from the old CPP, most notably, Kojo Botsio and Kwasi Armah . In August, 1991, part of the society broke away to form Our Heritage on the grounds that it was dominated by the old guards whose antics had brought the CPP to an untimely end. Other prominent clubs that emerged from the Nkrumahist family were Our Heritage Club, National Co-ordinating Committee of Nkrumahists, and Nkrumah Youngsters Club. It was these clubs that eventually transformed themselves in to political parties to contest the 1992 elections.<sup>15</sup>

This did not, however, happen without problems because in the transition to the party stage these splinters Nkrumahist clubs could not overcome their state of fragmentation. The tendency stemmed largely from the objective conditions which they found themselves at the beginning of the 1990s. Indeed, since the founding father of the tradition passed away and later on with the demise of Alhaji Imoru Egala, no outstanding personality had emerged to unify their

followers. Secondly, the ideologies of anti-colonialism, Pan- Africanism and socialism which gave them a unique identity and strength in the early years of independence had by the 1990s lost their hold on the masses of Nkrumah's followers.<sup>16</sup> The Nkrumah Tradition therefore faced serious challenges during the transformation from the club stage to the party level.

What exacerbated the situation for the Nkrumah Tradition was that the young militants who could have been its first organizers had been attracted by the Rawlings Revolution to join ranks with Rawlings crowds as members of the defense committees, civil defense organization, June Fourth Movement and 31st December Movement. It has been observed that the Nkrumahists had difficulty in regrouping primarily because the PNDC had infiltrated their ranks through Kojo Tsikata and John Tettegah in order to carve a following for Rawlings.<sup>17</sup>

Within the Nkrumah tradition therefore the transformation from club to party stage manifested itself not so much internal changes as in further fragmentation and realignment. The first and most important change was that the National Co-ordinating Committee of Nkrumahists [NCCN] led by Rev.Kwaku Boateng and John Tettegah, instead of uniting the various factions, teamed up with Rolland Atta Kesson's, Kwame Nkrumah Youngsters Club(KNYC) to form the National Convention Party[NCP]. Another significant development within the Nkrumahist tradition was Limann's formation of his political party, the Peoples National Convention. Limann's decision to re-enter politics did not come out of the blue. Somewhere in 1988, Limann together with two of his friends, Basili Wasai and Yaw Afari Adu, both of whom were former Foreign Service officers,

decided to embark on a nationwide tour re-uniting with friends and political allies in anticipation of the day the country would return to multi-party constitutionalism for a possible continuation of his unfinished business. His membership of Our Heritage Club was the second step towards re-entering politics.<sup>18</sup>

There was also the emergence of a Rawlings tradition which was a deliberate attempt to construct a new coalition of social forces using young militants from the Nkrumah Tradition in combination with young aspiring middle class business men and women.<sup>19</sup>The group came out with a new political party known as the National Democratic Congress (NDC). Like the other parties, the NDC was a coalition of a number of pro-Rawlings organizations and political groupings which included Friends of the Progressive Decade, Rawlings Fan Club, Development Union, Development Front, New Nation Club, and the Front Club.<sup>20</sup>

During the preparation towards multi-party constitutional democracy, the Nkrumahist front realized that the fragmentation within its ranks did not augur well for its progress. As such, a series of contacts and meetings culminated in the setting up of a triumvirate at Kumasi on 6th May 1992 which consisted of two of the most durable CPP politicians (Botsio and Gbedemah) and Limann.<sup>21</sup> The avowed aim of the triumvirate was to find a common ground between the various factions and to present one formidable front to fight the 1992 elections. The process was initiated by some Kwame Nkrumah elders of Ashanti, through five chiefs, namely Nana Addo Dankwa, Nana Kwabena Nketsia, Nana Kodua Amponsem, Togbe Adabla and Togbe Koblaga. After the first meeting of the



group in Kumasi, Nana Addo Dankwa was mandated to contact the leadership of the various factions on the issue of unity within the Nkrumahist family.<sup>22</sup>

Several meetings were held on the unity talks in Accra. In one of the meetings Limann was recognized as the leader of the CPP/PNP family. Two joint chairmen, Nana Akowuah, National Chairman of the Kwame Nkrumah Welfare Society and Jones Mensa, were elected by consensus to conduct under Limann the affairs of the planning committee until substantive leaders or officers were elected at a congress.<sup>23</sup> It was these series of meetings that led to the setting up of the triumvirate. The triumvirate could not, however, achieve its objective. As Limann observed:

This laudable idea was later turned into interminable delaying tactics calculated to muzzle popular opinion and create a situation in which some people would be left free to organize political parties and campaign while the majority are bullied, overruled, shouted down or simply ignored by one man busily rebuilding his own image of 1948-1949.<sup>24</sup>

The work of the triumvirate was cut out when Botsio and Gbedemah, who seemed to represent a section of the old guard, announced the formation of yet another party, the National Independence Party (NIP) and then claiming seriously for itself as the putative successor of the CPP. It left the front more fragmented and divided than before. At the end of May, when the NIP was to be launched, Limann announced the formation of his own party, the Peoples' National Convention (PNC).<sup>25</sup> At this point, it became clear that the Nkrumahist quest for unity had outrun its course.

In a press conference to appraise the press and Ghanaians the events leading to the formation of the PNC, the ex-president traced the failure of the meetings and consultations to a series of problems within the Nkrumahist family at fostering closer unity, and at presenting one formidable front to fight the 1992 elections as well as subtle moves to frustrate him and his supporters. Limann hinted that some personalities like K.A Gbedemah and Kojo Botsio did not want to compromise and exhibited dictatorial tendencies. He observed:

...but at several meetings held in Accra since then, I have had to raise on several occasions, strong objection at sudden unilateral, arbitrary, dictatorial or undemocratic reversal of decisions reached after bitterly argued and lengthy discussions. These objections were systematically ignored and the triumvirate rapidly degenerated into a platform for the rehabilitation and glorification of one man who had nevertheless categorically stated that he was not prepared to spend even a pesewa on the formation and operation of a political party, in view of his 1969 experience. Thus only a few of us had to meet all cost and yet be shouted down or disdainfully ignored during meetings.<sup>26</sup>

Limann also cited humiliation he had gone through at Gbedemah's house as part of the reason for striking out independently.

"It is sad and most regrettable to place on record numerous rather unfortunate incidents of lack of candor, trust, abuse of confidentiality, impartiality, contemptuous treatment of others and calculated attempts at the humiliation of some of us almost as trespassers in the private domain of Mr. K.A Gbedemah".<sup>27</sup>

In the face of these developments, Limann was prevailed upon by numerous of his supporters to form a party that would keep the Nkrumah and Egala legacy intact. He justified his formation of the PNC and went ahead to

draw some historical antecedents. He recalled that in 1979 nineteen political parties were formed from the CPP group. Botsio and Provencal formed the Ghana United Movement, Bernasko formed Action Congress Party and Alhaji Imoru Egala came up with the Peoples' National Party. Other parties were formed by Johnny Hansen, K.B Asante, P.K.K Quaidoo, Osei Poku, Alhaji Ibrahim Mahama and Blay Miezah. Limann therefore argued that all Ghanaians have the right to join or freely form political parties of their own choice.<sup>28</sup> The leadership of the PNC adopted the coconut tree on a white circular background as its symbol.

It has been argued that Limann's real source of conflict lay in his unyielding presidential ambitions because in the aftermath of the spilt, he reiterated his prior claim to leadership and alluded to the machinations of the CPP old guard "after all I led the winning party in 1979. Now no one wants to hear that I had ever led a party. People want to go back to 1948\49 and use my name to rebuild their images".<sup>29</sup>

Indeed, since the PNC was his own creation, Limann was guaranteed to receive the presidential nomination since, Gbedemah and Botsio were not prepared to concede the leadership of the Nkrumahish family to Limann. Both sides therefore took an entrenched position. The issue was that after the December 31 1981 event, most of the PNP big shorts were against Limann. Some even blamed him for the coup. The level of mistrust among them was so great that it militated against unity.

It may very well be that Limann wanted to avoid the machination of the old guards who caused the demise of the PNP. But, in spite of the efforts towards

unification, by the November 1992 elections, the Nkrumah tradition had produced four registered political parties. The National Convention Party (PCP) which was a product of the NCCN and KNYC, the Peoples' National Convention (PNC), with Limann as leader, a break away from Our Heritage Club; the People's Heritage Party (PHP) which came out of our Heritage Club and the National Independence Party (NIP) constituted by the remnants of the Kwame Nkrumah Welfare Society after the founding father, Kojo Botsio and some old CPP stalwarts who started it had left.<sup>30</sup>

It is my candid observation that the failure of the Nkrumahists to achieve unity and forge ahead in the political arena was all about leadership and sheer opportunism. The uncompromising stance of Botsio and Gbedemah as well as their supporters, the desire of Limann to have a second bite of the presidency and the clandestine method of the Rawlings tradition to infiltrate their ranks largely accounted for the fragmentation.

In the preparation towards the return to constitutional rule, the PNDC organized a referendum for Ghanaian to decide whether they were ready for a democratic civilian dispensation or not. In a well attended Press Conference held on 6th April, 1992, Limann became the first political leader in the country to publicly call upon his teeming supporters and the entire citizenry of Ghana to register a massive 'Yes'-vote in favour of the draft Constitution at the referendum to be held on 28th April, 1992. In his view the consequence of a "No" vote would be far-reaching. He interpreted a "Yes" votes to mean a promulgation of the constitution. He also took the opportunity to raise a jurisprudential issue to the

effect that should the people of Ghana, in whom resides sovereignty and from whom Government derives all its power and authority, endorse the draft Constitution, then that self-same act of endorsement could only be interpreted as a promulgation of the Constitution.<sup>31</sup>

It was during this period that Limann demonstrated his fore knowledge of things yet to happen. The PNDC government had scheduled the 1992 presidential elections to come off a month before the parliamentary elections. He argued that the holding of the presidential elections before the parliamentary elections was obviously a sure waste of time and public funds, and a veritable recipe for the emergence of one party rule resulting from a possible bandwagon effect.<sup>32</sup> This was exactly what took place. The opposition parties, after claiming that there were serious irregularities during the presidential elections, boycotted the parliamentary election.

At a congress held at the Baiden Powell Memorial Hall in Accra on 28 August, 1992, Limann was elected the leader and presidential candidate of the People's National Convention. He pulled 964 votes out of the 1075 votes cast at the PNC delegates' congress. Justice Kofi Jones Mensah, a legal practitioner, the only contestant to the Party's presidential candidate obtained 106 votes. Five votes were rejected.<sup>33</sup>

During the preparation towards the 1992 electioneering process, Hilla Limann together with K.A Gbedemah, B.J Da Rocha, Professor A. Adu Boahene, Kojo Botsio, Dr.Kwame Sarfo Adu, Alhaji Mommed Farl and Bawa Dy-Yakah took the interim National Electoral Commission to court over Political Party Law

1992(PNDC L281), contending that restriction on the choice of name, emblem and slogan constituted a violation of their freedom of association. They also formed an Alliance of Democratic Forces (ADF) which included seven of the registered political parties opposed to the PNDC. This group of politicians constituted the nucleus of the ADF.<sup>34</sup>

Five candidates contested the 1992 Presidential Election. They were Hilla Limann of the PNC, with Isaac Chinebuah as his running mate, Professor Albert Adu Boahen of the New Patriotic Party (NPP), with Roland Issifu Alhassan as his running mate, Kwabena Darko with Naa Afarley Sackeyfio for the National Independence Party (NIP), Flt. Lt.J.J Rawlings for the National Democratic Congress (NDC) and Lt.Gen E.A Erskine with Alhaji Ibrahim Mahama for the People's Heritage Party.<sup>35</sup> The presidential elections were held on November 3, 1992. On 10th November 1992, the Interim National Electoral Commission (INEC) officially declared Rawlings as winner with 2,327,500 votes, representing 58.3 percent of the total national vote, Professor Adu Boahen of the NPP came second with 1,213,078 votes, representing 30.4 percent of the vote, Hilla Limann of the PNC came third with 266,728 votes representing 6.7 percent of the vote, Kwabena Darko of the NIP was fourth with 113,615 votes representing 2.8 percent of the vote, and General Erskine of the PHP last with 68,059, representing 1.7 percent of the vote.<sup>36</sup> The 1992 elections were judged by foreign observers to be generally free and fair. But there was the claim from the main opposition party the New Patriotic Party(NPP), that the NDC had rigged the election and frustrated the

activities of the opposition Parties. The NPP denounced the outcome of the Presidential election and boycotted the Parliamentary elections.<sup>37</sup>

After the 1992 elections, Limann did not relent in his efforts to unify the Nkrumahist front. He carried the quest for unity to the birth place of Nkrumah, Nkroful, where his attempt to launch a new Nkrumahist regrouping which was to be called the People's National Convention Party was fiercely resisted by supporters of the People's Convention Party(PCP). On that occasion, Limann was accompanied by ex-political stalwarts like Nana Okutwer Bekoe, Messers Kojo Bostio, K.S.P Jantuah, S. Provencal, Sarpong Kumankumah, and Johnny Hansen, who were hailed by their supporters but booed and jeered at by the PCP faction.<sup>38</sup>

Limann was installed as the Paramount Chief of the Gwollu Traditional Area in the Sisaala District of the Upper West Region on 10th March, 1990 to succeed his late brother.<sup>39</sup> During the 1996 Parliamentary and Presidential elections, he stepped down as the PNC candidate and the Party Congress elected Edward N. Mahama as the PNC Presidential Candidate. Limann, however, continued to be Chairman and leader of the PNC and still championed the cause of national reconciliation and the unification of the Nkrumahist family until his death.

Hilla Limann died on 23rd January 1998 at the age of 65 years. His death brought memories of a man whose democratic and popular mandate was truncated by the 31st December coup. He presided over not just a government which came to power at the most critical moment of the country's political history, but an era inaugurated on the back of perhaps one of the freest and fairest elections ever held

in the nation's political history. That his government was callously cut down politically, well before he could settle into his strides remain a serious issue that cannot be easily erased by time. He died at a time when perhaps the most conscientious attempt at achieving Nkrumahist unity was on the brink of success. Indeed, the sustained effort to bring together the PNC, PCP and the NCP perhaps could not have started let alone assumed the reassuring momentum at the time without the commitment and guidance of Limann. Right from the Third Republic up to the time Limann died, the Nkrumahists have had disagreement over ideology, strategy and tactics. But the notion that the tradition has irretrievably lost its identity and sense of value as a key political force in the country is a key challenge to the adherents of that tradition.

The sorrow of his death was tempered by the knowledge that history would acquit him as a statesman of the finest democratic pedigree who was never given a chance. He will be remembered as man who came into power at the crucial period of food shortages, fear and insecurity, fuel shortages, and indiscipline and the break-down of the chains of command in the military. Commenting on Limann's presidency, Yao Graham views the Limann period as an important one in Ghana's history as a nation picking up from economic crisis.<sup>40</sup> Limann died as an accused person who was on a 50,000 cedis PNDC bail since 1983. His friend, Alhassan Bin Salih, stood as a surety for his release. He was to lose his job as a permanent secretary. Another of his closest confidants, Basile Wasai, was prematurely retired from the Foreign Service.<sup>41</sup>



At his death, Ghanaians of various persuasions paid tributes to him. Vincent Bulla, Minister for Fuel and Power under Limann described him as the last honest Ghanaian.<sup>42</sup> Other personalities talked about him as a leader who led in self-denial probity and hard work. Alhaji Mahama Iddrisu, a former Defense Minister, described him as “a very upright and honest man”.<sup>43</sup> It is indeed unnecessary to quote from them at all, for it was enough to say that they were tributes to a good statesman. Perhaps but for the 31st December event, Ghana’s democratic experiment would have gained maturation by the beginning of the 1990s. Throughout his life Limann exhibited one trait: nationalism and patriotism. His last years were lived in abject poverty for one who once occupied the highest office. In fact he suffered ignominious existence. It is alledged that at the time of his death, Limann’s accounts were still frozen and his diplomatic passport remained seized. Perhaps it was against this background that his family initially rejected the government decision to organize a state funeral but rather opted for a ‘people’s funeral’. One certain legacy which Limann brought was the lasting impression he left on friends and foe in Ghanaian politics was his complete and unswerving devotion to duty. Those who did not like his policies and those who for any other reason disliked him were united in paying him this tribute: as a leader who led in self-denial, probity and hard work. Limann’s limitations, however, lay in popular appeal:

The President is sometime accused of lacking charisma; he has a low, somewhat gruff voice and on occasions fails to project himself to an audience. In a more intimate environment, however, his personality comes across strongly; he is a man both

humorous (there is much laughter in any conversation with him) and deeply serious...<sup>44</sup>

He was simple, forceful and direct and not a showman. He used to spice his conversation with spontaneous references and quotations from the world treasury of scholarship and learning so much so that a *London Times* interviewer described him as a polymath after a brief session with him. He could unsettle foreign journalist by asking them uncomfortable questions such as about the number of times Henry IV of France was exhumed and reburied; about Bloody Mary; about Judge Jeffrey or about Lord Haldane who said in the 1890's that "we are all socialist now" when he was the leader of the British Conservative Party at the time.<sup>45</sup>

His disdain for corruption was so strong like "the Osagyefo" instead of a Dawn Broadcast he wrote personal letters to all his Ministers on the Code of Conduct as Ministers of State. He directed all to shun ostentatious life style and to lead very clean lives. It was unfortunate that appeal by well meaning Ghanaians to the government to resettle him during his life time did not materialized.<sup>46</sup> He left a pattern of the kind of leaders required for this country. Beyond his dear country he left a legacy for the rest of humanity- a living prove that material possession are not the best security. His happy moment was when he had taken whisky. What he stood, lived and died for provide the most excellent example. One can say that he worked hard to rebuild the foundation of modern Ghana. It is perhaps the greatest of all tributes to him that the present PNC politicians and other important personalities in Ghana still hold his memory in high respect.

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## CONCLUSIONS

The study examined the life of Hilla Limann in the framework of historical biographical analysis from the time of his birth in 1934 to his death in January, 1998. It explored the social, economic and political conditions of his early life in the 1940s and early 1950s and how these conditions shaped his life. The thesis has revealed that Limann rose from a typically humble beginning and achieved high academic laurels due to his outstanding intellectual prowess coupled with hard work and sheer determination. He self financed his trip to Britain for further studies in 1956. He was notably successful in his educational adventure, obtaining a PhD in Political Science and Constitutional Law from the University of Sorbonne, Paris in 1964. It established that Limann was not a novice in social and political leadership. Hilla Limann's gradual strides into the national limelight began with his election to serve in the Sisaala District in 1952 which he later on chaired. He stood as an independent candidate in the 1954 Parliamentary elections and lost to Imoru Egala.

The thesis has further revealed that Limann played various high profile roles at home and abroad in the Research Department of Ghana's Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the 1960s and 1970s. An important point that came out from this research was that Limann's rise to the highest office of the country was more of an accident than by design. He was not initially a member of the Nkrumahist tradition. A hitherto rather reticent figure due largely to his professional upbringing, Limann was relatively unknown in high profile Ghanaian politics as a result, his election surprised many. Save for the disqualification of Alhaji Imoru

Egala and other leading members of the Peoples' National Party, Limann was about to contest the Parliamentary seat of the Sisaala constituency on the ticket of the Popular Front Party (PFP). Thus in spite of his impressive academic credentials as well as his practical experience in local governance and high profile diplomatic experience, Limann in this context could better be described as an accidental leader. His rise to head the Peoples' National Party was by and large the result of the maneuverings of Alhaj Imoru Egala, after various attempts to get somebody to contest had failed.

Limann's ability to galvanize support for his party was due largely to the fact that he was not associated with the corruption of the previous regimes of post independence Ghana. Besides, he was known as somebody who came from humble background like Nkrumah before him, and a self made man. However, the most decisive factor that gave the PNP victory in the 1979 polls was the split in the Busia- Danquah tradition.

It has been revealed that Limann assumed the mantle of leadership during one of the most critical periods of Ghana's political history. His contribution to political developments in Ghana can be discerned from his ability to uphold the constitution, the economic and social policies he initiated to rehabilitate and redirect the shattered economy and the foreign policy he adopted to redeem Ghana's image abroad. Hilla Limann was able to lay the foundation for the rebuilding of the shattered economy through its policies such as the attraction of investment capital by launching the Investment Code and setting up the

Investment Centre. Efforts were made by the regime on how to exploit Ghana's gold requirement.

It has also been shown that the Limann government's confrontation with the court in the Apaloo Case and the Ghana Journalist Association was a political setback of great proportion. The two cases brought the credibility of the government into question. However, unlike his predecessors, Limann did not express disquiet about the outcome of the court rulings.

The study has further revealed that the regime suffered a myriad of attacks from opposition entities both within it and outside it. There was power struggle in the party and got worse following the death of Alhaji Imoru Egala. It identified internal conflicts, factionalism and disunity as the bane of the PNP that was largely responsible for the demise of the Limann government. The party disintegrated over internal ideological cleavages. While the top members of the PNP were all of the socialist stock, the old guards from maturity and taste of some affluence, had watered down the deep Nkrumahist red to light red colour as against the red hot fired brand of the younger generation emerging out of the Nkrumahist stock. Those who were strongly attached to their old socialist objectives under Nkrumah felt that Limann and a wing of the party hierarchy were betraying the ideals of the founder of that tradition out of which the PNP had emerged. On the issue of ideology, the leadership of the PNP played to the gallery when it suited their interest. Limann's greatest setback was the fact that he was viewed as a latter-day convert of the Nkrumahist tradition. Besides, he was not used to the rough tactics in Ghanaian politics. It has also been established that his



independent mind and his determination not to yield to the pressures coming from his party was his burden. Due to his characteristic stubborn nature, Hilla Limann never enjoyed the support of those segments of his party who engineered his election and were interested in financial rewards. And with the death of Imoru Egala, he lost control of the party. And so, since the PNP was structurally fractured, from all angles, things began to fall apart.

The other disabling factor that has been identified by the study was Rawlings change of heart before or soon after the handing over. He placed the regime on probation of no fixed period except that he reserved the power to determine the probation at will. Rawlings determined the termination of the probation and overthrew the Limann's government in December, 1981. He did not accomplish much due to the fact that his regime was short-lived, but certainly he laid the foundation for the rebuilding of modern Ghana. In spite of the doubts and criticisms that have been raised in certain minds he aroused in Ghanaians the principles of hard work, dignity, and honesty. His life in terms of his struggles and rise to prominence from a humble background is similar to Kwame Nkrumah, but he rather became economic moderate and espoused liberal and democratic values similar to those of Kofi Busia. History will remember him as a man who lived in self denial and a man who was not given the chance to complete his democratic mandate. Limann has left solid footprints in the sand of Ghana's political arena. This work no doubt, has contributed to the knowledge on the life story, works, achievements and failures of Hilla Limann, an illustrious son of Ghana.

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