

Nepu in the Fifties As Political Party; Role and Impact on Some Selected Districts of Southern Katsina Emirate

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ABSTRACT : *This study examines the evolution, role, manifesto and impact of NEPU (Northern Element Progressive Union) on some selected districts of southern Katsina Emirate, in the fifties as one of the defunct colonial Nigerian Political Parties. The study highlights the Political struggles, agitations and commitments to a cause, socio-political and economic brutalities encountered by the leaders- of NEPU and majority of its figures at National and Local levels. This shows how some of the members of this political party those that were consummate and died-hard sacrificed their lives for the betterment of the masses. The principal causes for the formation of NEPU were purely fundamental, ideological and the desire to render selfless service to humanity, for the unity, progress and well-being of Nigerians at large. It further draws into light the role played by Aminu and his party members in the emancipation of the masses against inequality, inequity and maltreatment for the attainment of good governance. Similarly, the study has also examined the concept of politics, the ideological set of people refer to as NEPU people and the nature of the political, economic and social brutalities underwent through. At the tail end, the study recommends a way forward for stable democracy, free and fair election to be sustained.*

KEYWORDS: *NEPU, Political, Party, Role, Impact, Southern, Katsina Emirate.*

I. INTRODUCTION:

This study examines the role, manifesto and impact of NEPU as political party on some selected districts of southern Katsina Emirate in the 1950's. The study has been carried out to highlight the socio-economic and political/conditions that necessitated the formation of NEPU along side, there was the need to emancipate the deluded masses through allocation of authoritative values and the quest for power i.e politics. The study has further examined the autobiography of late Mallam Aminu Kano (1938-1983) as a founding father. At the tail end, the study has shown the nature of the problems confronted by the political party and its members. Many died-hard politicians were severely persecuted, forced to migrate and left their home- villages, towns and cities as exiled politicians. In a nutshell, this demonstrates a history of political commitments, thought, ideology, patriotism, sacrifice, dedication, struggles for emancipation, eradication of sufferings and the need to wipe out political oppression. It should whole heartily be agreed that the overriding concern of NEPU, was to bring human and material exploitations to an end for the establishment of an egalitarian society in Nigeria if voted into power.

Nepu As Political Party

Northern Element Progressive Union was founded in 1947, as a result of the constructive efforts of Raji Abdullahi and Mallam Aminu Kano, and after its formation with its prescribed manifesto was directly, accordingly and effectively headed by Late Aminu Kano. However, its existence was short-lived due to the hostilities it faced not only that of the British colonial regime. The study has rightly observed that the conservative nature of the Emirs in Northern Nigeria had adversely affected NEPU and its people nearly in all nook and corners of Nigerian area. For example, in Katsina the formation of NEPU had in the fifties (1950's) led to the withdrawal of the most radical and consummate politicians from N.P.C (Northern People Congress) founded by Dr. R.A.B Dikko to NEPU. Dr. R.A.B. Dikko, was the first Northern Doctor to get himself fully involved into politics. NEPU had in the fifties witnessed the emergence, rise, role and influence of its certain consummate and died-hard politicians, Funtua district in the 1950's had witnessed the enormous role of a young politician and a political activist in person of Late, Alhaji Wada Nas. He was not only a freedom fighter against maltreatment and oppressive rule. In Dandume district there was late Alhaji Sambon- Barka Kafi-Sambon-Maska who firmly stood behind the masses and was always in conflict with traditional authority and non- NEPU political figures because of political- ideological differences. In Bakori district, there was Mallam Mamman Getso, who was a political migrant from Karaye district of Kano province. In Kankara district, there were great political figures such as

late Mallam Abdullahi Zaki Gundawa, late Mallam Dabo, Late, Abdu Zomo and Maituge Mahalbawa in Gundawa, Ketare district of southern Katsina Emirate. In Malumfashi district NEPU had also gained recognition, acceptance and loyalty of people such as Alhaji Datti Ningi of Kofar Gardi.

Aminu Kano As A Party National Leader And Figure

Mallam Aminu Kano was born in 1938 at Kano. His political and philosophical ideas on how to revolutionize his immediate society in a positive sense had enabled him to undergo through some changes over the years for instance, in the fifties, Aminu and his people of NEPU were fervent, clear-militants and idealistic. On many occasions never seemed to lose the masses. The traditional rulers were his constant enemies. Aminu's own attitudes towards tradition accounted to a great extent for what success he was able to achieve in his approach to tradition-ridden masses, while recognizing that it was basically harmful against the progress. He knew that it could not be swept away completely. Aminu states that:

“I have resolved to serve my Nation through the principles of the NEPU, with the best of my ability in order to ensure true quality of life to my people. So help me God”.

Aminu and his political party had both attempted to make use of certain conventional attitude rather than fighting by approaching each group within the community in this way by establishing rapport quickly and effectively. Aminu entered the political arena with a reputation and many observers considered the 1950-1959 as the best part of Aminu's life. It is interesting to note that the solid foundation laid down by Aminu and his political party was basically for the success of NEPU and the well-being of the Nigerian masses in general, regardless of religious, tribal, political, economic and socio-cultural backgrounds. These were some of the fundamental factors that significantly made the above pointed periods as the most important rather than the high level decision making and the conscious implementing of pre-determined plans. As a political party leader had made his big decision of becoming a professional politician and assumed his role as a mass-leader with the form and shape of his future clearly in focus, that is not to say that his period began with the organization of NEPU and ending with Aminu's election to the Federal Parliament in 1959 did not bound in excitement and crisis.

History of Nepu In Some Selected Districts Of Southern Katsina Emirate (1945-1960)

The history of NEPU, as a political party in some selected districts of southern Katsina Emirate such as Funtua, Malumfashi, Dandume, Ketare and Kankara cannot be complete without examining the sufferings, persecution, tortures, political brutalities, difficulties encountered and as well as a series of exiles or massive migrations of NEPU people witnessed in the area within the above stated periods. Studies proved that it was consequent upon the failure of the NEPU members to join other political parties that made their political, economic, social, and religious life to have encountered challenges from other opposing political parties especially, NPC.

Who Are The Nepu People ?

For a proper understanding of the people refer to as NEPU members and the central direction of the study. At this point, it would be appropriate to define the concept of politics as a subject of our writings” *Politics” is an allocation of authoritative values and the quest for power/governance”*. The NEPU people on political, philosophical and ideological grounds are equally set of died-hard and consummate politicians, with a common high-minded political idealism, radicalism, sense of belongings, oneness, political identity and unity agitating against the interests of traditional authorities for the well-being of the deluded masses, i.e the oppressed ones who constituted the majority of the Nigerian population.

Similarly, it will not be out of place to mention a few out of the multitude number of popularly known NEPU died hard politicians, among others include the former Honourable Minister of Special Duties during late General Sani Abacha's regime, late Alhaji Wada Nas Funtua, late Mallam Abdullahi Zaki Gundawa, in Ketare district, Sambon-Barka of Dandume district and Alhaji Datti Ningi in Malumfashi district. These bonafide members of NEPU, were described as its political figures in their respective communities. They were selfless, patriotic, radicals, dedicated, consummate and professional politicians based on the teachings and ideological guidelines of Aminu. On contrary, the other opposing political parties including AG, NPC and NNPC both the political parties' leaders and their followers majority of them had joined politics purely for political positions and material reasons.

NePU Manifesto In Katsina

NEPU'S manifesto had since in the forties got acceptance and recognition especially among the patriotic Nigerians including the elites and less privilege Nigerian individuals. Politically, it has been argued that prior to the formation of NEPU, there was a serious administrative oppression of the rulers against their subjects, which had as a result generated a lot of outcry for the restoration of justice. To evidently support this literature, it can be exemplified with the imposition of a variety of taxes in the 1930's, 1940's and 1950's. In these periods, there were land tax, individual tax, cattle tax and cult tax, colonially imposed and described as occupational tax. NEPU manifesto saw this as human and material exploitations that must be brought to an end, if voted into power. Furthermore, NEPU also had it at the back of its mind that if succeeded politically there would be stable democratic rule, a state free of communal/tribal conflicts, uprising and societal crime which may lead to the establishment of an egalitarian society.

Economically, NEPU in its manifesto had pledged to ensure appropriate management, distribution and allocation of national resources for the well being of Nigerian citizens. It is interesting to note that NEPU'S manifesto, simplicity, equity, justice, physical appearance, agitations, struggles, positive ideological role and exemplary life of its leaders such as Aminu Kano and Raji Abdullahi had also motivated many to support the party strongly. It was some of these good qualities stated above that made NEPU to be re-named "**SAWABA**" which implies conduciveness. Even after the demise of this political party many of its members remained under the platform of P.R.P (People Redemption Party) still led by late Aminu Kano under which he contested for the post of National President. However, it should be borne in our intellectual minds that past studies conducted have demonstrated that NEPU's political principles, ideologies, doctrine, philosophy, goals, objectives, missions and teachings of Aminu Kano in general still exist in the hearts and blood of the surviving members. Most of these members until this moment they are not willing to change or alter any of their old existing political ideologies. Research has further revealed that despite all the political, economic, and social brutalities underwent through by the people of NEPU had never in any way attempted to democratically surrender. There were persecutions, tortures, imprisonment and administrative oppressions encountered by the people of this political party from the hands of other opposing parties and British colonial government in collaboration, with the existing indigenous political parties such as NPC, and NNPC. It was consequent upon this many people of NEPU were found more politically powerful, sound, aggressive and initiative against oppressors

Furthermore, NEPU'S methodology of campaigns, thought, enlightenment, persuasion, mobilization, education, political rallies, mission, public lectures, political general meetings and seminars differently and occasionally held had both immensely contributed in making it possible for the party to gain acceptance and recognition among the general masses. The party members were as a result also found more dedicated, committed, realistic, selfless and durable to political and economic difficulties. It has also been observed that Aminu's good political career, selfless and sincere service to humanity shown through certain national assignments rendered had morally and politically impressed people and had as a result attracted some Nigerians to vouch for him and his party.

The Role Of Sambon- Barka As A NePU Figure From The Defunct Funtua District.

The above named individual personality, popularly known as "Sambon-Barka Kafi-Sambon- Maska" hailed from a town called Dandume which is known as district created out of the defunct Funtua district. He was a powerful NEPU political figure, fearless, ideologist, consummate politician, radical and rigid to the political, economic and social interests of the traditional rulers. He was also seen as an important political personality or local opinion leader, influential, generous and a perfect practicing politician. He was by origin said to have been one of the descendants of Ibrahim Na-Gwamutse's family. This NEPU political figure was most of the times at logger head with traditional rulers because of administrative oppression, political and ideological differences as well as high level of strong opposition against the interests of each other as antagonistic camps. Sambon-Barka as a radical politician and local champion had twice shamelessly, fearlessly and directly opposed the District Head of Funtua's motion, known as (Sarkin- Maska) . the first motion or proposal of the District Head was opposed in 1945 when he recommended the planting of a "**Dalbejiya**" tree in Dandume. In reaction to his approval, the Sambon-Barka vehemently rejected and quickly instructed NEPU people of that environ to remove the already planted ones for replacement with "**Mangoro**" Mango tree for the satisfaction of NEPU political, economic and ideological interests. The second political conflict of interest between the three important personalities i.e. District Head of Funtua, Emir of Katsina, and Sambon-Barka occurred in 1950, over the formation and construction of Dandume market. When the District Head proposed the site for the formation of the market, the Emir of Katsina supported the idea, but Sambon-Barka and his people instantly and strongly disagreed with the approval and indicated the site of their interest for the establishment.

Nature Of The Difficulties Encountered By Nepu People.

A number of the following problems can be termed as severe punishment or sufferings underwent through by NEPU people in all nook and corners of Northern Nigeria, with particular reference to some selected districts of southern Katsina Emirate. Among the worries encountered included, indignity, persecutions, tortures, political discrimination, maltreatment, imprisonment, denial of access to education, resources, brutal killing, massive migrations and financial constraints to enable their political party execute its long term intellectual and political commitments for the attainment of general political, economic and social interests in accordance with party manifesto. NEPU people until today at the back of their ideological and political minds they have the belief that *even the seed we sow must die for sacrifice, before it comes into normal and complete life (being)*. Similarly, it is equally important to reveal that on April, 4th 2002, I had an interview with another NEPU Local champion in person of late Mallam Dabo Gundawa of Ketare district in Kankara local Government area of Katsina State. He states that to him NEPU and politics are both do or die affair. This is because. *“To be imprisoned is a form of privacy for further action, brutal execution is a martyrdom, exile from homeland is a journey of discovery”* This aims at highlighting his high level of political minded idealism, sacrifice, dedication, ideological belief and commitments to a cause for positive change to be achieved under the pretext of political revolution

II. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the study examined some of the major political, economic and social circumstances that led to the creation of NEPU as political party in Nigeria. Among the identified problems included oppressive rule, imposition of taxes, maltreatment of masses, improper allocation and distribution of resources to mention but a few. The study has further shown the role played by the party and its people for the emancipation of the deluded masses through political struggles, agitations and other forms of strategy, in accordance with ideological teachings of Aminu Kano and party manifesto. In the course of the struggles, many of its members lost their lives, properties, prestige, some were persecuted, indignified, publically harassed and forced to leave for exiles. At the tail end, the study portrayed the role of some selected NEPU figures and their encounters with traditional authorities and opposing political parties such as NPC. The nature of political, economic and social brutalities underwent through by NEPU people have also been examined aimed at proffering solution, so that Nigerian democratic rule will be brighter, stable, just and powerful in near future and Aminu had diligently and honestly served his nation through various national assignments and committees. Aminu's house has today become a Centre of Democratic Research and Training known as (**Mambayya**), with its location at Gwammaja, in Kano metropolitan city of Nigeria.

III. RECOMMENDATIONS.

For the well-being, betterment, progress, political stability, unity, integrity and sense of belonging in Nigeria. The followings are offered as solution to the problems confronting democratic rule today.

- All citizens should be administered and treated equally by any government in power regardless of political, economic, social, religious and tribal backgrounds.
- Policy makers or leaders in general should be just, not oppressive, be dynamic, powerful and altruistic.
- Free and fair election should be encouraged, promoted, maintained and be accepted as good political culture in Nigeria.
- General political education should have a place in Nigerian Educational Curriculum.
- Nepotism, tribalism, bribery and corruption should be wiped out.
- Greediness should be tackled.
- Sycophancy is a terrible disease of hero-worship should be discouraged
- Selfless service to humanity should be encouraged, promoted and honorary awards should not be for all, rather than the deserving ones.
- Drugs trafficking/hawking, alcoholism and Indian hemp smoking found rampant among Nigerian youths should be tackled especially during the elections. This will minimize brutal killings and suicide being committed on daily basis.
- Employment opportunities should be created for Nigerian school leavers and graduates
- Sensitization campaigns against election rigging and violence should have a proper place in Nigerian constitution/politics.
- Developmental projects e.g construction of bridges, schools, hospital, hotels, maternity clinic, places of worship, public convenient toilets and roads should be constructed and put into use and
- Contracts of whatever sort should first be awarded to indigenious contractors for the growth and reconstruction of our national economy.

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Informants

S/no	Name	Date of Interview	Years	occupation
1.	Mallam Dabo Gundawa	5 th April, 2002	85 years	Farming
2.	Mallam Abdu Zomo Gundawa	5 th April, 2002	85 years	Rearing
3.	Alhaji Sule Dangoje Gundawa	10 th May, 2013	100 years	Farming
4.	Mallam Lurwanu Alhassan Gundawa	12 th May, 2013	75 years	Farming
5.	Alh. Mamman Na- Alhaji Murtala	20 th May, 2013	80 years	Trading
6.	Maituge Mahalbawa	22 nd May, 2013	88 years	Farming
7.	Mallam Isa Makaho Tudu	22 nd May, 2013	90 years	Farming
8.	Haruna Abubakar Karaye	25 th May, 2013	45 years	Scholarship
9	Alh. Isyaku Abdullahi Saulawa Katsina	27 th May, 2013	80 years	Retired Civil Servant