



قوائم المحتويات متاحة على ASJP المنصة الجزائرية للمجلات العلمية
الأكاديمية للدراسات الاجتماعية والإنسانية
الصفحة الرئيسية للمجلة: www.asjp.cerist.dz/en/PresentationRevue/552



Demilitarizing Politics in Ghana: Which Civil Reconstruction after the 1979 Elections?

عزل الجيش عن السياسة في غانا : أي إعادة اعمار مدني بعد انتخابات 1979 ؟

^{1,*} Dr.Walida DJEBAILI

University of Oran2-Mohamed Ben Ahmed.

Article info:

Article history:

Received : 07-11-2019

Accepted : 03-01-2020

Key words:

Political reconstruction,
Economic crisis,

Civilian government,
Military intervention.

Abstract

There is considerable evidence to assert that Ghana had undergone not only rapid but spectacular transformations since independence from Britain in 1957. It emerged as a young independent country exhibiting significant economic potential, recorded political achievements, an efficient civil service and rather inconsequential ethnic frictions for national unity. But the post-independence era was tinged with political and economic turbulences. This article attempts to shed light on the mainsprings of this long-lasting political turmoil and the repercussions it had on the political stability and the socio-economic life of Ghana after the 1979 elections. An attempt is made to answer the following key questions: Why, despite such a great potential, did the country run towards political chaos? Did the People's National Party (PNP) achieve political stability and economic salvation as promised? Or was the civil reconstruction a deep illusion? A combination of internal (particularly frequent military interventions) as well as external factors tightened the stranglehold on President Hilla Limann. With neither drive nor goal, the PNP ill-conceived policy aborted a return of democracy to Ghanaian politics.

ملخص

الكلمات المفتاحية:

هناك أدلة كثيرة تؤكد أن غانا قد مرت بتحويلات سريعة ومذهلة منذ أن استقلت عن بريطانيا عام 1957. لقد ظهرت كدولة مستقلة شابة لديها إمكانيات اقتصادية كبيرة ، وإنجازات سياسية مسجلة ، وخدمة مدنية فعالة، واحتكاكات عرقية لم تؤثر على الوحدة الوطنية. لكن فترة ما بعد الاستقلال كانت مشوبة بالاضطرابات السياسية والاقتصادية. يحاول هذا المقال تسليط الضوء على التأثيرات الرئيسية لهذه الاضطرابات الطويلة الأمد وتداعياتها على الاستقرار السياسي والحياة الاجتماعية والاقتصادية في غانا بعد انتخابات 1979. سنحاول الإجابة على الأسئلة الرئيسية التالية: لماذا، وعلى الرغم من هذه الإمكانيات الكبيرة ، واجهت البلاد فوضى سياسية؟ هل حقق حزب الشعب الوطني الاستقرار السياسي والانتعاش الاقتصادي كما وعد؟ أم كان التعمير المدني وهماً عميقاً أدت مجموعة من العوامل الداخلية (التدخلات العسكرية المتكررة خصوصاً) والخارجية إلى تشديد الخناق على الرئيس هيللا ليمان. من دون محرك ولا هدف أجهضت سياسة الحزب بذلك عودة الديمقراطية إلى السياسة الغانية.

إعادة البناء السياسي،
الأزمة الاقتصادية،
الحكومة المدنية،
التدخل العسكري.

1. Introduction

A look at the contemporary history of Ghana in the late 1970's reveals striking signs of political instability, economic recession and social malaise. From 1966, military takeovers had almost become a tradition in a country that had fiercely defended democracy and was the first in Africa to get independence. The period under review following the 1979 parliamentary and presidential elections is of particular interest to study.

The 4 June revolution of 1979, a military uprising architected by a young pilot in the Ghanaian Air Force, Jerry John Rawlings was a turning point in the history of the country and was of a paramount importance for any civilian government to come. In fact, after months of a cleaning-up campaign, the military handed over power to the victorious party in the 1979 elections, Limann's People's National Party (PNP); nevertheless, their withdrawal was conditional. This was a first in Ghana. Rawlings and his men went back to the barracks but affirmed their strong commitment to watch over the civilian government in materializing the goals of the revolution.

This was a double-edged sword for Limann. His steps were scrutinized. Rawlings continuously reminded him that his military intervention was not meant at keeping power, but a revolution that out broke against corruption, profiteering and malfeasance. The revolution was for the people of Ghana. The PNP government advanced carefully towards reestablishing political stabilization and soon realized that the task would be tougher than foreseen. With Rawlings constantly on his back for accountability, Limann rapidly showed signs of inefficiency and mismanagement. In this respect, an attempt is made to answer the following questions:

- What is the origin of the 4 June revolution and its impact on the PNP's policy making?
- To what extent could the civilian government demilitarize the political scene?
- Which economic strategies did the PNP put forward to stop the vertiginous collapse of Ghana?
- What was the impact recorded on the daily life of the population and how did the latter react to the rising

autocracy of a government that advocated democracy during the electoral campaign?

- What was the impact of Limann's 180 degree turn on Rawlings? Did the disillusion of the military lead to a powerful come back?

Objectives of paper: This article aims fundamentally at disclosing the following issues:

- Assessing the PNP's period in office with achievements and failures.
- Understanding the tradition of militarism in Ghanaian politics.
- Examining the impact of political mismanagement on the economic and social sectors.

Methodology of research: Due to the nature of the subject, a historical method was adopted in covering the theme of demilitarizing politics in the late 1970's. An analytic descriptive method, proper to historical topics was used to explain and uncover the mainsprings behind the political turmoil in Ghana.

1-Rawlings's First Revolution

When on 5 July 1978 political power was seized in a palace coup in Ghana, few were surprised. On assuming office after the overthrow of Colonel Ignatius Kutu Acheampong, in power since 1972, Lieutenant-General Fred Akuffo addressed the nation, and explained the necessity and the urgency of the action. When a government becomes arbitrary and does not allow for change, he firmly declared, the only way out is to remove it by force. But Akuffo's period in office was more an interlude (barely ten months in office) rather than a real transitional phase in Ghanaian politics (Bobatope, 1982, p. 43)[3]. Economically, the lack of time at its disposal, associated with a care for the petty bourgeois classes more than the mass of the people cast doubt on the success of the Akuffo interregnum. The devaluation of the cedi from 1.69/\$ to 2.75/\$ did not relieve the economy, and Ghana's external debt continued to rise sharply to reach \$ 1.3 billion in late 1979 (Leith&Soderling, 2003, p. 36)[8]. Locally, the purchasing power of the masses further declined, food shortages continued, prices were sky high, and it became very hard for workers to make ends meet. For them, any real change from then on

was to see enough food in stores at prices they could afford. The radicalized sections alienated completely from the system and continued to protest against the severe economic conditions of the country. The resort to strikes was frequent during the Akuffo interlude, and work stoppages were recorded in different sectors: postal services, Ghana's four breweries, the oil refinery, the Ghana Industrial Holding Corporation (GIHOC)... The military attempted in a first place to calm people down by establishing commissions of inquiry to investigate in the Cocoa Marketing Board (CMB), and the timber and diamond industries, but these failed to restore public confidence in the government. Workers became cynic about those commissions. They learnt the lesson and understood that no charges would be retained against the corrupt elements. On 3 November, 1978, the situation worsened with the strike of the civil servants. Overwhelmed, the military declared a state of emergency and embarked on large dismissals of strikers accusing them of criminals whose only concern was to destroy national economy. Hardly therapeutic, Akuffo adopted an arbitrary policy to handle the striking movement by resorting to arrests and harassments. This further fueled mass discontent and exacerbated an already charged atmosphere.

The rest of the Akuffo era continued to be tinged with political uncertainty, economic crisis and social unrest. In early May 1979, the government made the terrible mistake of reacting extremely violently to a clash with the powerful students' movement, the National Union of Ghanaian Students (NUGS). In a clean-up campaign, the students were stopped by the police to check their permit. The situation precipitously deteriorated and the police fired one student (left to bleed to death), and seriously injured two others. Disorder spread like wild fire. This was Akuffo's last mistake. At this juncture of events and socio economic malaise, and although the preparations for free elections were well on their way, discontent had already risen dangerously enough to worry Akuffo who rapidly felt the danger lurking. He knew that if he could use force to force down civilian revolts, he could not do much if the military up rose. He multiplied declarations on the will of his government to hand over power to a democratically civilian government

to save his own neck. But it was probably too late for him to expect a military support at this juncture. On 15 May, 1979, barely ten months after his assumption of office, a young pilot in the Ghanaian Air Force, Flight-Lieutenant Jerry John Rawlings, together with some junior officers, attempted a coup to depose the government.

The coup in itself failed mainly because the Air Force officers could not secure the support of their colleagues in the Armed Forces. Rawlings and his friends were immediately arrested, charged with subversion, punishable by death in Ghana, and brought to trial in court martial (Chazan, 1983, p. 279)[5]. As the trial progressed, Rawlings aligned further sympathizers in the army particularly when he recognized his sole responsibility for the coup, demanding the release of his men who were, he said, only acting on his orders, therefore only doing their job. This recognition was the first of the kind in the Ghanaian history. Rapidly, indiscipline spread among the Armed Forces calling for an immediate release of the coup topplers (Shillington, 1992, p. 37)[9]. On 4 June 1979, the junior army officers and soldiers attacked the prison and released Rawlings and his friends. Late in the afternoon, Jerry John Rawlings was elected by general acclamation the chairman of the newly born Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC) and the Akuffo regime was overthrown in a military coup. The AFRC comprised fifteen members including junior and middle-ranking officers in addition to representatives of lower ranks in the army. Rawlings assured Ghanaians that he had no intention to stay in power, and that free presidential and parliamentary elections would soon be held on 18 June to get Ghana back to democratic rule. However, Rawlings added, handing over power to civilians would be postponed to 1 October to allow the AFRC to materialize the 4 June Revolution's objectives: to reinstate justice in Ghana. The AFRC ruled Ghana from 4 June to 24 September 1979, the date of the establishment of the Third Republic. During this 112day-period, Rawlings firmly continued his "house- cleaning" operation which targeted all forms of corruption, profiteering and malfeasance of the previous regimes. Before handing power to the civilian government, Rawlings

had added special clauses, “The Transitional Provisions”, to the new constitution of the Third Republic before its official promulgation, which the future president accepted, and which stipulated that it would be unconstitutional for any government in Ghana to “alter or retract” any official action taken by the AFRC, in addition to the indemnification of all the architects of the 4 June Revolution.

At the end of his period in office, Rawlings was rather proud of the achievements of the 4 June revolution. Inflation was considerably reduced, people could get the majority of their basic commodities at sustainable prices, the dismissal of the upper hierarchy of the Cocoa Marketing Board and the rise in the cocoa producer prices relieved much the farming community. Life was brought back to tolerable levels. In a parallel direction, huge amounts of money (C 23 million) returned to the government’s coffers ranging from unpaid debts to unpaid taxes. The assets of many companies were seized by the council and great numbers of foreign traders, namely Syrians and Lebanese were expelled on account of malpractices and illegal deals. Rawlings closed his three- month period of rule by declaring that the objectives of the revolution had been achieved but that their implementation needed to keep going. The role of the AFRC would stop at this point to let the elected civilian government ensure that the revolution will go ahead. Before going back to the barracks where they would resume their military duties, the AFRC members reminded the civilian government that the “seeds had been sown” and that it was their responsibility to ensure the harvest. Rawlings assured the future government of the help of the architects of the revolution whenever needed.

2-The 1979 Presidential Elections: A Return to Democracy?

Thus, the new Constituent Assembly, dominated by middle-class elements, was not very much keen on a complete reversal of the Second Constitution but rather in favour of an Executive Presidency with more power to govern adequately. At the same time, provisions were made to impede this power to turn to despotism, and to secure individual and collective liberties. The new constitution of the Third Republic

was also to establish a system of public accountability, to assure the financial independence of the Judiciary and protect the human rights. The Council of State would be entrusted with the supervision of government activities and would include delegates of all key groups in Ghana: the military, the civil service, the traditional chiefs, and former Heads of State. Provisions also concerned economic rehabilitation, national unity, equality, and social, cultural and educational progress. The new constitution was meant to innovate, to protect, and to restore the rule of law. Hence, the electoral campaign displayed-mainly but not only- the two classical tendencies that Ghana knew since independence: the socialists through the People’s National Party (PNP), led by Dr. Hilla Limann, a diplomatic northerner comprised wealthy patrons, trade-union leaders, farmers, students and clerks, and the capitalists through the Popular Front Party (PFP), under the leadership of Victor Owusu, a former minister, that gathered professionals and academics with strong support in the rich gold-producing region of Ashanti. Yet, the two trends shared the same broad lines on economic themes, civil rights and national unity. Ghanaians were listening to nicely written manifestos about the politicians’ aims and policies and hoped them to be more than mere slogans. The fear of past experiences could still cast doubt on the sincerity of political speech in Ghana.

Presidential as well as parliamentary elections were held in Ghana on 18 June 1979, followed by a second round on 9 July for the former which opposed Limann’s PNP and Owusu’s PFP. The 140 members of a unicameral parliament were elected in the country’s nine regions for five years (Yaw, 1980, pp. 13-27)[10]. These revealed a clear majority for Dr Hilla Limman’s PNP which obtained 71 of the 140 seats. For the second round of the presidential elections where Limann polled 61.98% of the votes as opposed to Owusu with 38.02% (as shown in table 1), the success of the PNP was imputed to its rural basis as Limann was the first presidential candidate from the discriminated Northern regions. Seemingly, the party had a more important national basis than its opponents. An additional feature of its success was the important portion of youth among its candidates

for parliamentary elections, regarded as the real channel to secure their support. representative of the masses and therefore an effective

Table1
Comparison of First Round and Second Round Presidential Election Results

Region	First round presidential elections				Second round presidential elections			
	N°. of votes won		% total votes cast		N°.of votes won		% total votes cast	
	Limann	Owusu	Limann	Owusu	Limann	Owusu	Limann	Owusu
GREATER ACCRA	70.225	40.917	34.39	20.04	140.327	53.073	72.56	27.44
ASHANTY	101.396	156.999	29.41	45.53	144.45	196.933	42.31	57.69
BRONG-AHAFO	54.187	102.061	29.07	54.76	77.203	124.436	38.29	61.71
CENTRAL	53.837	29.418	32.91	16.46	115.395	47.209	70.97	29.03
EASTERN	86.925	68.669	37.06	29.28	128.765	101.976	55.8	44.2
NORTHERN	38.585	42.843	27.06	30.04	105.881	54.033	66.21	33.79
UPPER	78.274	34.803	48.61	21.61	130.688	45.137	74.33	25.67
VOLTA	68.732	19.598	42.52	12.12	149.529	25.224	85.57	14.43
WESTERN	77.873	30.941	48.52	19.28	126.067	38.076	76.8	23.2
TOTALS	630.034	526.249	35.51	29.66	1118.305	686.097	61.98	39.03

Source: Naomi, Chazan, *An Anatomy of Ghanaian Politics : Managing Political recession, 1969-1982*, Colorado, Westview Press, 1983. p294.

Since independence in 1957, no presidential task had been as delicate as Limann's. With the military constantly on his back, the new president had to advance carefully towards the reestablishment of political stability and economic rehabilitation. The AFRC officially handed over power to civilians with the inauguration of the Third Republic on 24 September 1979. Hilla Limann assumed office at the head of the victorious PNP and embarked on a new political scheme that marked the end of seven years and a half of military rule in the country (Biswal, 1992, p. 166)[2]. Though back to their barracks, the members of the AFRC made it clear to the new government that their task was now to watch the politicians over and to ensure the implementation of the resolutions of the 4 June Revolution and the respect of its decisions and achievements. The AFRC traced the route for the PNP and intended to go along with it as a watchdog. The military retreat from the political scene was subject to terms and conditions, and if Limann wished to hold the reins of power in Ghana, he had to submit to public accountability via the AFRC. Rawlings repeatedly assured his people that he would never allow Ghana to get back to despotism and corruption. But the situation the new president inherited needed a carefully planned programme to

get the country from the abyss in which the successive military governments had thrown it. The country was in a state of bankruptcy; its reserves in foreign currency had virtually been emptied. The failure of the former political programmes gave birth to a highly inflationary market, an exceptionally low local production and a vertiginous collapse in the country's exports. The scarcity of consumer goods- which the AFRC had partially lightened- along with an external debt that continued to increase dramatically tightened the stranglehold on Ghanaians. Similarly, the political apparatus was suffering from a state of dislocation. The different ministries showed a striking inefficiency to perform their duties, and many structures were inappropriate to handle government affairs. Corruption had prevailed at all levels and individuals in power were associated with wealth accumulation and personal prestige. While drafting its rehabilitation policy, the new civilian administration deemed it necessary to put a brake on any further intervention of the military in Ghanaian politics. The succession of the coups that the country had known since 1966 had greatly undermined the state and its organs. To succeed in this new phase of civilian rule, supremacy had to be exclusively in the hands of politicians, a clear reference to the AFRC's continuous meddling

with political affairs. Limann tried early to discredit the military and tried to convince public opinion that the civilian administration was capable of establishing the sense of public accountability in Ghana on its own. It did not need a watchdog to carry out the process.

3-Early Disorders in the PNP Administration

As the first months in office moved on, Limann's task proved increasingly difficult. The new president was faced with a country engulfed in a big chaos, and soon his policy appeared to lack cohesion, worsened by the PNP's intra-party conflicts over political positions and policies which threatened its internal unity. Three predominant groups could clearly be distinguished within the party: the first, which controlled the party machinery and its finances, was the most powerful. These were «old guard» politicians of the fifties and sixties, with political experience and capital; hence their firm hand on the party's funds. The second group, the leftists, was a number of young politicians whose aim was to restore Ghana's prestigious place in Africa when the country was one of the pioneers of the Panafrikan movement and a cornerstone in the struggle against imperialism. This group which was ideologically the closest to Rawlings was dominant in public relations within the PNP. The third group, the pragmatists including the president himself, prevailed in the cabinet. These had a technocratic approach (relying largely on management by specialized experts) to handle political issues. When they chose to resort to the International Monetary Fund (IMF) loans to rehabilitate the country's economy, they were faced with a firm opposition from the two other groups. It became increasingly difficult for the president to control his party.

The democratic process for which the PNP government had been primarily elected was rapidly fading away. A growing intolerance of opposition increasingly characterized the politicians in office. Ghanaians were desperately watching Limann's rising dictatorship through systematic dismissals of soldiers who were suspected of ties with Rawlings (Awoonor, 1984, p. 10)[11]. Things took a dangerous dimension with the record of massive use of severe torture in prisons before the trials were organized. Democracy

as initiated by the 4 June Revolution dwindled away. The situation worsened with the spread of corrupt practices. Ministers could control the distribution and sales of the primary commodities which the AFRC previously secured for people at controlled prices. Shortages of necessary items like flour, sugar, rice, soap and cement were recorded on the local market while their prices rose sharply to bring back a former situation of deprivation from which Ghanaians suffered much. Possibilities of wealth accumulation were confined to party functionaries at the detriment of the working masses, heralding the death rites of the PNP. The diversion of the Limann's administration from the initial policy guidelines that the AFRC had drawn added fuel to an already explosive situation. Many key groups revoked their alliance with the governing party as corruption scandals became difficult to conceal. Limann thus lost an important political support for his party in parliament and opposition grew stronger. His pragmatic approach in economic, social and political affairs revealed a striking predilection for capitalism and the western world and had finally nothing to do with the socialism he defended during the electoral campaign.

4-The Conflict with the AFRC, the Labour Force and the Students

In the barracks, Rawlings was observing the PNP actions with a rising disappointment. The looming threat, the president knew it, came from the revolutionary figure. The government had previously sought to keep the architects of the revolution away from Ghanaian politics by sending them abroad for "advanced military training", and sometimes by offering them huge sums of money in hard currency to ensure their departure from Ghana. A great number had accepted, Rawlings had not. Limann's urgent need at that time was to protect his government from Rawlings who, with the members of the AFRC, acted as an extra-constitutional authority in the country. The regime also resorted to smoother ways to ward off the Rawlings danger by persuading the leader of the AFRC to join the Council of State to advise the government and parliament on policy matters. Rawlings refused and firmly re-affirmed his intention and strong will to continue his revolutionary work,

and reminded Limann that the withdrawal of the AFRC was conditional.

Limann's reaction was not conciliatory. He embarked on a large campaign to denigrate and discredit Rawlings before the public accusing him of training opponents to the regime with the support of the Libyan authorities. The rift between the armed forces and the PNP government grew deeper, and 1981 recorded two attempts to overthrow Limann. A climate of suspicion reigned in the country and the battle between the president and the supporters of Rawlings turned gradually fierce and scary for the PNP regime. An open confrontation with Rawlings, added to the economic hardships and the large-scale corruption of the PNP officials gradually alienated many important social sections from the government. These were, in their majority, closely linked to the AFRC and felt that the Limann regime which they helped to bring to power had betrayed the 4 June Revolution: the June Fourth Movement, the New Democratic Movement, and the ever-present students' movement, the NUGS. Rawlings, the chairman of the most radical of these movements, the June Fourth Movement, declared: "We will not look on while the people continue to suffer...those who make a peaceful revolution impossible make a violent revolution inevitable" (Shillington, 1992, p. 76)[9]. Discontent with the regime spread to workers and individual trade unions. The Trade Union Congress (TUC), until then relatively neutral, had backed up the movement to contest the extremely hard conditions of the labour sector. Poverty and hardships for the mass of workers paralleled a standing enrichment of the elite. Social conditions deteriorated, armed robbery arose while the government continued to respond by massive dismissals of workers. In June 1980, all workers in the Ghana Industrial Holdings Corporation had been dismissed on account of demonstrations in the capital Accra. The Limann government seemed unconscious of the fatal error it was committing. Nowhere in the World could a democratic power survive without the support of the country's labour force. But the most violent confrontation was, as usual, with the students. The 1981 disturbances in the three university campuses of Ghana culminated in the use of force by the regime

to crush the students' movement. This was a flagrant violation of democratic principles and human rights which further heralded the end of Limann. On the military side, the president continued his harsh attacks to discredit Rawlings and all people connected with him were blacklisted. The pro-Rawlings army officers gradually felt the pressure and the unfairness of the government at a time when those loyal to Limann enjoyed a striking favouritism. Privileges, promotions and army command were confined to a handful of officers whom the president trusted. The hostility of the Ghanaian army towards the government intensified as the latter used the Military Intelligence to patrol the military. Finally, Limann resorted to "divide and rule" by encouraging intertribal conflicts within the army with a view to neutralizing the lower ranks which Rawlings could mobilize in a rebellion. While every means and way was used to assure the security and the survival of the regime, the popularity of Limann continued to decrease sharply. On a return trip from Libya, Rawlings was a victim of an assassination attempt with the implication of the Togolese army but he only gained in popularity and heroism, and firmly decided this time to uphold the gains of the revolution to which, he asserted, he would from then on devote his time and energy.

Limann came to power at a time when Ghana was going through one of its hardest periods ever recorded. A close look at his government's chances of survival requires taking into account several other factors that hardened the task for the PNP, notably the economic conjuncture. On taking over the charge from the military, he assumed command of a nearly bankrupt country. Despite the clean-up campaign of the AFRC, inflation had reached over 100% in 1979. The expectation to recondition economy was the determining factor for either the government's survival or overthrow. The different groups that supported Limann and brought him to power, namely those who financed the elections, exercised a continuous pressure on the president and his administration to materialize his engagements. The new government had to respond to the demands of the army and the police on the one hand, and to those of other social groups on the other. These principally comprised the workers and

the trade unions whose primary grievance was wage increase. In addition, the farming community suffered from problems that had to be urgently remedied. In fact, an increase in cocoa production still represented the miraculous solution to Ghana's economic hardships. Many cocoa farmers had cut down cocoa trees because of food shortages. They preferred to grow food for themselves to working exclusively for the export sector which drove them to total collapse. The impact on government revenues was dramatic as cocoa continued to be the main source of foreign exchange. In the crop season of 1978-79, Ghana recorded its lowest cocoa production since the 1950's. This generated a dangerous deficit in the balance of payments which persisted during the following crop season despite the government's efforts to straighten the situation, principally through the devaluation of the national currency. The disillusioned civil servants and the wholesale and retail distributors were another challenge for the PNP administration whose economic rehabilitation programme was still not clearly drawn for the public. There was a general sense of despondency which characterized the Ghanaian society at the time Limann took office. Hoarding, black marketeering, corruption, rising prices of primary commodities and basic food were the dark picture that the PNP was called upon to change. It was a crucial challenge.

5-The Economic Crisis: Which strategies of the PNP?

Unfortunately, the PNP government had no clearly planned economic strategy. It often resorted to short-term measures in an attempt to recondition the national economy. Its economic policy was overambitious and suffered partial implementation. Foreign exchange on which the president had no control often prevented the fulfillment of development projects. Limann initially relied on allocating more import licences to priority productive sectors. This liberalization of trade was expected to improve the supply of consumer goods on the market. This actually partly materialized, but the exorbitant prices of the necessary commodities only increased popular frustration. His second emphasis was on how to get foreign aid and foreign private investment for the rehabilitation of the

local industry. One main measure that revealed his capitalist orientation- when he had initially claimed to be a nationalist and a socialist- was his approach of the IMF and the World Bank for \$1 billion loan. The international institutions accepted but imposed drastic conditions on the PNP administration and a further devaluation of the national currency (Jeffries, 1980, pp. 307-17)[7] about which Limann and his close supporters could not have the approval of the rest of the members of the cabinet. The cedi was already at an official exchange rate of 2.75 against the US dollar, and a further devaluation reminded Ghanaians of army intervention. The opposition firmly rose against the president, accusing him of entailing further hardships on Ghana and of a resignation to the forces of neo-colonialism. Foreign aid was thus very difficult to obtain and even donations from governments and commercial banks were rare and insufficient. Limann had toured Western Europe, Africa, and the Far East in search for financial aid but the situation became more complicated as the World community was unwilling to invest in Ghana under such a conjuncture. Even the Import and Export Act, passed in August 1980 to liberalize trade and encourage foreign investment did not yield the expected result. The pressure mounted on the PNP: The country's external debt totaled over \$ 1.4 billion in 1981, the Mps were pressing for an increase in their emoluments and the population was demanding to be properly fed. The government was in front of an unprecedented crisis.

Particular attention was thus paid to a key sector, agriculture to which the government devoted C283.6 million in the 1981-2 Development Budget. Local production had to be stimulated to cover the shortage of food and other necessary commodities (Biswal, 1992, p. 170)[2]. Farmers, as usual, were called upon to double efforts to increase production. The government assured them of all the necessary support which nevertheless proved difficult to secure later. Despite the good will and intentions, the scheme was hampered by problems of input delivery and evacuation of the produce. Roads were in a piteous state. Thus, even when production recorded any increase, this was often meaningless as it was generally locked to rot in inadequate storage houses and could not get

to ports and markets. Moreover, the lack of spare parts for machines which the government could not provide in sufficient quantities on account of a lack of foreign currency often hindered the good proceedings of operations. Another main source of worry was fertilizers which the government had to import at high prices while the country desperately needed every coin of foreign exchange. 70.000 metric tons of fertilizers were necessary to increase agricultural production, a costly operation for an economy on the verge of collapse.

Another urgency was the rehabilitation of the two other cornerstones of the Ghanaian economy: the sectors of minerals and mining industry and fishing. In 1979, a noticeable decline in the production of the country's main minerals was recorded: manganese 20.1%, diamond 13.7%, gold 11.3% (despite a rise in World price from \$ 188 / ounce in July 1978 to 510/ ounce in December 1979), and bauxite 27.7%. It was imperative to attract foreign investors as the local manpower was not yet technically qualified to assure the development and expansion of such huge industries. Besides, the high cost of production, the acute shortage of spare parts and the lack of adequate transport facilities largely contributed to this delay, further worsened by the dramatic phenomenon of smuggling gold and diamond through the Ghanaian borders. The government thus allocated C 1.1 million to the State Gold Mining Corporation and the Geological Survey Department for the revival and expansion of gold mining, diamond and manganese. A college at Tarkwa, affiliated to the University of Science and Technology in Kumasi was also set up for degree courses in mining engineering. Still, the project did not bring the expected result, and the government soon realized that foreign aid was necessary for the total implementation of the plan, and as this was rather difficult to secure, the government resorted to a rise in taxation. Prices of beer, cigarettes and petrol sharply rose, and a tangible effort to reduce government expenditure was undertaken (Central Bureau Of Statistics, Dec 1981)[4]. Similarly, the fishing sector had not been spared by the crisis. A acute shortage of outboard motors and their spare parts, the lack of primary outputs like fishing nets,

and inadequate cold storage facilities culminated in a sharp decline in the output of marine fish from 226.2 thousand tons in 1977 to 184.1 thousand tons in 1980. The government attempted to straighten the situation through a fish farming project meant at demonstrating fish farm management techniques, in addition to the fisheries extension and the instruction of the staff.

In the industrial sector, namely the timber, the textiles, the tobacco, the aluminum and the cement industries, in addition to the industrial units manufacturing cocoa products were all at a standstill. Essential imported raw materials could not be obtained in adequate amounts and spare parts were scarce, engendering a drastic shortage of manufactured goods at exorbitant prices. Consequently, a large number of construction projects remained incomplete, and an important number of roads were in a state of deterioration and impracticability which in its turn severely dislocated the transport system. The latter paralyzed several key sectors in the national economy. The crisis worsened with the sharp rise in the price of crude petroleum whose exchange payment for import rose from \$115.8 million in 1976 to \$289.2 million in 1980. The critical shortage in foreign currency to import transport equipments, spare parts and tyres for vehicles often led to goods handling in harbours. The railway system was not spared. Due to difficulties in replacing the rolling stock, the timber and cocoa foodstuffs had to be transported through roads whose conditions accentuated the crisis. Often, the produce was left to rot in remote areas despite its scarcity on account of the recorded dramatic fall in production. The system of communication, too, suffered such a dislocation: the lack of essential spare parts culminated in an important delay of the country's external communications, telex and television systems. The Ghana Posts and Telecommunication Corporation became a name that did not mean much.

But perhaps the most dramatic aspect of the crisis was felt in the banking sector. The excess of liquidity reached alarming proportions and represented the principal problem that faced the PNP economists who could not find out how to save the sector from such a menace. The existing banking institutions in the country, 3 commercial banks, 2 merchant banks,

5 secondary banks and a co-operative bank saw their activities dramatically restricted. The banking sector was nearly frozen as the excess in liquidity impelled the banks to maintain high reserves ratio, restricting thus their lending operations to the public. The demand for credit for industrial expansion was also very low. The government was faced with an urgent need to sort out the issue, but its task was hardened by continuously rising deficits to respond to the finance of public needs. All basic public expenditure largely exceeded the capital budgeted for it at a time when government revenues continued to fall terribly. The total deficit on current expenditure rose dangerously from C 871 million in 1976-77 to C 4.440 million in 1980. This was inevitably accompanied by an increasingly important borrowing from the banks, mainly the Bank of Ghana, reaching an amount of domestic debt of C 9.341 million in 1980 (C 2.306 million in 1976) (Central Bureau Of Statistics, Dec 1981)[4].

The economic hardships continued to dramatically impact the daily life of Ghanaians. The aforementioned deteriorated transport and railway system, the irregular supply of water and electricity, the absence of doctors, nurses and drugs from hospitals, the lack of teachers in schools and the shortages of books were all factors that engendered emigration to neighbouring countries, Europe and America. Inflation reached 121% despite the tight controls on imports and retail prices. The “vigilante” committees, peaceful groups set up in markets to control hoarding, smuggling and selling above controlled prices, failed to prevent fraud and scarcities of products. Inflation continued to rise. The establishment of 15 basic commodities distribution centres (unions, cooperatives...) to control it proved inadequate on account of transportation problems and the phenomenon of black marketeering which had been building up over a too long period of time in Ghana. In addition, profiteering from the relatives of officials and PNP members represented another equally dramatic cause of the crisis. These obtained hard currency from the Bank of Ghana at low rates which they invested in lucrative business. In a parallel direction, the government was incapable of taking drastic measures to stop such ravage, and

in the end, people driven to despair, totally lost confidence in their rulers (Gyimah-Boadi, 1993, p. 101)[6]. A dangerous disposition to enroll in any anti-government action lurked. Strikes among the labour sector multiplied. In 1979, miners and gold collieries, teachers, clerical workers, and the Black Star line shipping company all went on strike for wage rise. The government reacted violently and used tear gas to disperse teachers. The students also joined the strike demanding the government to carry on the AFRC's cleaning-up campaign. The police was ordered to use violence to scatter the strikers, and one student was shot dead. The pressure mounted and the government, apprehending a more general disturbance, agreed to consider the pay-raise demand but no concrete results followed. This fueled the anger of workers who decided to resume the strike movement. The Dockers and employees of the Black Star Line Shipping Company paralyzed the port of Tema in the south east of the country in June 1980. The government reacted by ordering the immediate dismissal of 250 strikers, but this did not stop the strike. In September 1980, Limann announced the decision to raise the minimal daily wage for all workers from C 4 to C 12, going in effect on 1 January. The workers could not afford waiting for another 4 months in such hard living conditions, and the strike movement intensified extending to the medical personnel and the municipal workers.

6-The overthrow of the PNP regime

However, the PNP government could not turn a deaf ear to a more serious menace: the TUC. The latter warned Limann that it would resort to a general strike if the government was to play again with workers. To bring a short-term calm, the government assigned the organisation the task of distributing the necessary consumer goods to the workers at fixed prices. Some trade unionists succumbed to the temptation of profiteering and abused the workers. Only half of the distributed goods reached them, the rest being sold on the black market for up to 8 times their real price. The workers soon lost faith in the TUC, and their protest movement was inevitably escaping the union's control. This new development in the relations between the TUC and the workers worried the government which

had to ensure control over the labour mass. History had proved that no government could survive without control over its workers. As usual, Limann proved incapable of taking effective measures to cure the ills from the roots. He again resorted to short-term solutions that failed to bring change. He embarked on a large-scale reshuffle in the cabinet, changing ministers at a time when parliamentary opposition grew stronger than ever accusing the president of anti-popular position. A widespread displeasure with PNP policies continued to grow and extend dangerously. By the end of 1981, it was difficult to imagine the Limann administration in office for longer than that. A series of unsuccessful coups were recorded between November and December 1981 in an attempt to depose the president. On 31 December 1981, Limann was finally ousted by a military coup by the architect of the 4 June revolution, Jerry John Rawlings, the constitution was suspended and all political parties proscribed.

Conclusion

Limann inherited a country that was on the verge of total collapse but the president seemed to have worked for his own demise from the start. The fact that he was brought to power through the cleaning-up campaign of the AFRC was a double-edged sword. He was faced with two main issues: to revive a crumbling economy and to demilitarize politics. As time moved on, Limann showed an increasing intolerance of AFRC interference and Rawlings came to represent opposition. Attempts to keep him away from Ghana failed nor did smoother ways to corrupt him bring better results. The new president had underestimated the AFRC and Rawlings in particular who never ceased to act as a watch dog. The man was deeply disillusioned by Limann's deviation from the principles of the 4 June revolution. The failure of the civilian experiment was a failure in politics, economy, and social reconstruction. Limann's main concern from the start was to demilitarize politics in Ghana with a view to safeguarding his government and later ones from military coups which were accompanied by a disproportionate violence. The president failed to materialize such ideals. Rawlings and the AFRC never totally capitulated. Their watchdog role put

the civilian president in a situation of uneasiness, and his errors were thoroughly underlined. The AFRC was firmly watching over him and expecting him-unrealistically enough- to carry out the 4 June revolution in a too short period of time. The overthrow of the PNP put an end to two years of civilian rule during which President Hilla Limann had probably will to succeed but had an ill-conceived policy with no drive and no goal.

Conflict of Interest

The author declare that they have no conflict of interest.

References

1. Awoonor, K. (1984). *The Ghana Revolution: Background Account from A Personal Perspective*. Brasilia: Oases Publishers.
2. Biswal, B. (1992). *Ghana: Political and constitutional developments*. New Delhi: Northern Book Centre.
3. Bobatope, E. (1982). *The Ghana Revolution :From Nkrumah to Jerry Rawlings*. Enugu Nigeria: Publishing CO. LTD.
4. CentralBureauOfStatistics. (Dec 1981). *Republic of Ghana Economic Survey 1977-1980*. Accra: Statistical Service Board.
5. Chazan, N. (1983). *An Anatomy of Ghanaian Politics: Managing Political Recession, 1969-1982*. Colorado: Westview press.
6. Gyimah-Boadi, E. (1993). *Ghana under PNDC Rule*. London: Anthony Rowe LTD.
7. Jeffries, R. (1980). Rawlings and the Political Economy of Underdevelopment in Ghana. *African Affairs* , 70 (314), 307-17.
8. Leith, J., &Soderling, L. (2003). *Ghana-Long Term Growth,Atrophy and Stunted Recovery*. Sweden: NordiskaAfrikainstitutet.
9. Shillington, K. (1992). *Ghana and the Rawlings Factor*. London: MacMillan Press LTD.
10. Yaw, T. (1980). Media and Mass Communication and the Third Republic in Ghana. *African Affairs* , 70 (314), 13-27.

How to cite this article according to the APA method:

Walida DJEBAILI (2020), Demilitarizing Politics in Ghana: Which Civil Reconstruction after the 1979 Elections?, academic review of social and human studies, vol 12 number 02 Hassiba Ben Bouali University of Chlef, Algeria, pages.15-25