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WRITE A TWO PAGES REVIEW OF CHAPTER 7, ”POLITICAL PARTIES IN NIGERIA”, IN SALIENT ISSUES IN GOVERNMET AND NIGERIA’S POLITICS.

Political parties are an important link between the government and the people. It developed in the nineteenth century in response to the occurrence of elections involving large numbers of voters. According to Herman Finer, defined political party as “an organised body with voluntary membership, its concerted energy being employed in the pursuit of political power”. Also Agbaje [1999], defines political party as “a group of persons bonded in policy and opinion in support of a general political cause, which essentially is the pursuit, capture and retention, for as long as democratically feasible, of government and its offices. From all the given definitions of a political party, we can deduce that a political party is a group of citizens, more or less organised, having some compromise in broad principles of national policy with an effort to gain political power through constitutional means.

The main feature of political party is to gain governmental power through constitutional means which means that the gaining of the power must be peaceful and lawful. Political parties must be national minded by taking its nations interest into consideration Also, they should be an organised body, because they only derive their strength from and effectively organised structure and they have manifestos which guides their conduct during the elections.

They are different types of political parties, some of which include; Elitist party, which is a political party that gets its members from the highest echelon of social hierarchy in the country, Ideological party, which is formed with political ideology which forms the base of the party, Brokers party, which is a party where its members are drawn from the high and low class in the society and has as its interest to breach the gap between the rich and the poor by carrying out social justice for the interest of all. Other types of political parties include; mass party and charismatic party.

The political parties perform different functions such as; interest aggregation, goal formations, political education, political mobilisation, ensuring political stability, managing conflict, organisation of government, electoral competition, provision of alternative government and policies and so on.

Political parties in Nigeria sprung up as a result of nationalists consciousness and movements, which led to the formation of groups to organise against colonial misrule. The first political party was the Nigerian National Development Party(NNDP). It was formed in 1923 following the creation of elective principle by Clifford’s constitution of 1922. It was led by Herbert Macaulay, the party was based in Lagos and later won three seats in the legislative council in 1923, 1928 and 1933. There were also other parties such as; National Youth Movement(NYM), formed in 1934 by a group of young Nigerians but led by Ernest Ikoli, Samuel Akinsanya and Dr J.C Vaughan and The National Council of Nigeria and Cameroon(NCNC) which was formed in 1944 and was later re-named The National Convention of Nigerian Citizen in 1960 when some parts of Cameroon broke away from Nigeria. It was the first party organised to seek total independence and was the major Nigerian party until 1950.

Between 1950 and 1951, two major political parties emerged. These parties were the Action Group(AG) and the Northern People’s Congress(NPC). The parties emerged from cultural associations due to the prospects of the 1951 elections. The Action Group(AG) emerged from Egbe omo oduduwa, which was formed in 1945, as a pan Yoruba cultural society ad was led by Obafemi Awolowo and their aim was to gain political power in the western region. The Northern People’s Congress(NPC) emerged from the Jam’iyya Mutaneim Arewa, which was formed in 1949. Their main aim was fighting ignorance, injustice and idleness in the northern region. The first republic gave rise to the emergence of many political parties apart from the three main political parties, some of the smaller parties were The Northern Element Progressive Union(NEPU), United Middle Belt Congress(UMBC), United National Independent Party(UNIP). The pre-independence political parties faced some problems, some of which were; they were without national outlook, emphasis were placed on personalities rather than issues, inter-party and intra-party conflicts.

In the third republic, they operated in a two party system and the constitution and objectives of the two political parties were set up by the military government. The two parties were the Social Democratic Party(SDP) and the National Republican Convention(NRC) which were established by government. The SDP was said to have won the annulled presidential election of 1993, while the NRC favoured more private initiatives and paid less attention to free education and other social welfare policies.

In the fourth republic, three political parties were registered by the Independent National Electoral Commission(INEC) among several parties that struggled for registration. These parties were; Alliance for democracy(AD), All People’s Party(APP) which later changed All Nigeria People’s Party(ANPP) in 2002, and the People’s Democratic Party(PDP) which won 1999 election and maintained stronghold on the presidency for sixteen years. Some of the other parties of the fourth republic are APC, APGA, PDC, NCP, FRESH, UPC, PPP, PPC, YDP and so on.