

## **Lack of National Creed and the Deficiency of True National Spirit in Nigeria: A Case of Nation Without Nationalism**

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### ***Abstract***

*Nations in their modern forms as nation-states are products of agreement, consensus, of the citizens whose nationality of them is a matter of voluntary predilection and or predisposition. The state or nation-state in modern parlance and conception is a voluntary contrivance based on social contract by the citizens of such state desirous to live together based on shared destiny, common aspiration, shared ideals, and as well as on commonly shared world view. This conception of state based on the theory of social contract occasioned by the doctrine of the state of nature has come to form the baseline of consideration of the modern state, nation-state or country. Thus, is a union not necessarily of common ancestry, but of common experience, interests, and common state or national aspiration desirous of harmonious coexistence under a common creed. Such shared aspirations of the citizens motivate allegiance to, and the love for, one's nation or state which invariably translate to the spirit of nationalism. This paper seeks to essentially link national or state creed to the shared principles of the citizens of a nation and maintaining such ideals in form of the spirit of nationalism. It argues that the apparent lack of a socio-political doctrine is grossly responsible for the widespread deficiency of the real sense of*

*nationalism in Nigeria. The paper concludes that, Nigerian experience amounts to a nation-state of no man's land and a nation without real patriotism.*

**Keywords:** Nation, Nation-State, National Creed, National Spirit, and Nationalism.

### **Introduction**

It goes without saying that whatever exists must exist for specific purpose or purposes which constitute its end, finality or determination. Every existent being tends towards a definite end which depends on its nature, its potentiality, or its integral constitutive elements. It equally follows that the purpose of the existent being justifies its existence in the way of its reason for being. Therefore, whatever exists is deemed to be necessitated by specific purpose; an essence that explains its existence; and nothing lives for nothing, and everything exists for something, or for some reason. Similarly, every Nation-state as a modern and a conscious human contrivance exists for a purpose as commonly envisaged and avowed by the citizens as the desired objective in associating and unifying as a cooperate entity. Such usually agreed and declared intention of a nation-state energizes and vitalizes its existence and motivates its citizens. In other words, every nation-state has its avowed reason for being as envisioned and articulated by its founding members. Such avowed intention for being which expresses the aspiration of the founders of a nation-state constitutes its mission statement often enshrined in the constitution of the nation-state as a creed. Love of one's nation, patriotism or nationalism has to be founded on such understanding, of the citizens in such Nation-State's capacity to realize such aspiration reposed on it. Nation-State which is, therefore, a modern concept founded on citizens' free will or freedom to form and constitute a political association with specific geographical space under a joint administration is, ideally, never a natural phenomenon, an incident of nature because it is a product of the consensus of the citizens.

As a political space of freedom and progress of the citizens, every Nation-State promises the citizens the full self-realization, public

happiness, liberty, and justice as usually articulated in respective state constitutions. Hence, the citizens find legitimate cause to align with the state and identify fully with it and embrace it with conspicuous optimism which the citizen, in turn, manifests in the enthusiasm and passion that amount to the love of one's nation, patriotism or nationalism. A nation-state is a platform for the realization of proper humanity inherent in the citizens, and it should guarantee the public happiness of the entire citizens as a corporate organic entity of like minds. The shared purposes or ideals of the citizens of a Nation-State amount to the very substance of the nation-state and, as such, its essence or *raison d'être*, the spiritual pillar on which it hinges. Such creed has to be enshrined in the ground norm of the nation-state in the form of National Constitution which as its name implies, is the document by which the nation-state constitutes itself as a sovereign political entity. In sum, national feeling, passion or love of one's nation-state derives fundamentally from the fact that the nation or state promises the citizens by its nature and by the mode of its constitution to be a genuine means of self-realization and the commonly cherished good life. Love of one's nation, patriotism, or nationalism is, therefore, founded on the shared creed, beliefs and belief systems, as well as in the shared hopes, aspirations and ideals or dreams of the nation-state.

### **Nation, State or Nation-State and Nationalism**

The term nation is believed to have originated in French word which in its Latin equivalent is *natus*, meaning "birth," (Appadura, 15), implying the place of one's birth. Originally, the term nation had to be understood regarding where one is born or where one's ancestry is believed to have originated, but in the modern context, the nation has come to mean loosely and widely where one is voluntarily associated as one's country. Today, the nation is often used interchangeably with the term state which, besides ancient Greek city-state model, is a modern concept stressing common administration among men and women of a definite geographical location consenting to share the political space as well as the geographical space as a nation, state or country. Nation and state can be equated, except that in strict terms, nation stresses natural affinity, a claim of common ancestry, while state stresses common administration. Consequently, people share

nationality by belief in having common ancestry, while people belong to the same state when they are under common administration. The nation is determined by circumstances of birth while the state is a product of conscious agreement, and a consent to share a common political space under the general government. However, since modern age, after the French Revolution, and with the attendant ascendancy of the concept of freedom and the right of self-determination, nations have mutated into voluntary associations and hence constituting themselves into nation-states (Baradat,40). Nation-state, therefore, depicts a nation that has transformed into a state by overcoming tribal/ethnic feelings and cleavages and replacing them with the sense of unified nationalism, solid and indivisible by ethnic/tribal affinities. Hence, our preference of nation-state rather than mere state, since most states today evolved from nations to states. The usage of the nation-state in this paper derives from D. D. Raphael's assertion that: "The State in the modern world is usually a Nation-State, i.e., a nation organized as an association. The nation is a community, a group with all the conditions for a common life and giving rise to natural sentiments of loyalty and identification, but not limited to a specific set of purpose"(40). When a nation as natural identification of common ancestry transmutes to an association based on shared will, voluntary agreement to associate under a joint administration for universal benefits of statehood, it becomes a nation-state, and this is what most modern nations have become since after French Revolution of 1789. Nationalism as a manifestation of the love of one's nation, as above defined, implies among other things, pride for one's country, unalloyed support, and loyalty to the nation which in other words means patriotism to one's country. In its patriotic dimension, nationalism demands from the citizens a complete loyalty which can sometimes lead the citizenry to utter passivity as much as shying away from taking a firm stand against irresponsible and dictatorial authorities or regimes. This obtains when the state in the pretense of demand for nationalism begins to muffle or stifle healthy criticism and such amounts to an abuse of the true spirit of patriotism by the state. When this happens, obedience becomes a matter of course without citizen's initiative or consideration of the nature of the commands/laws or decrees he or she stands to obey. This form of

abuse of nationalism has been the most significant weapon dictators ,and totalitarian regimes use to quieten opposition to their governments.

Nationalism as a matter of natural necessity need be founded on specific creed which in effect forms the ideological basis of the nation's existence. By ideology, is a thoughtful articulation of ideas formulated for the practical purpose of achieving certain set goals (Baradat,1- 8). A national ideology is a pragmatic conception. Such ideology ought to serve as a motor for the realization of such desired goals. Ideologyis designed in such a manner to give mental-psychological impetus to national goalsregarding mode of existence and developmental. A rightideology is that which achieves the intended result without minding its truth or ontological values. In other words, the nation builders should first conceive in clear terms a prototype nation and articulate in clear terms how the state would be. The nation's creed like any right ideology has to be pragmatic in being a true means or instrument of realization of national aims and objectives regarding national aspirations.

### **The Making of a Nation-State and Nationalism**

The physical making of a nation-state requires primarily a definite geographical location, a space or a well-defined territory with well-defined boundaries designating it as a nation or state. The inhabitants, the prospective citizens have to harbour the belief that they sharecertain qualities or characteristics in common such as all or some of the following: shared experience, language, culture, ideals, hopes and aspirations and above all, the desire to be together as one united nation-state for mutual benefits of harmonious coexistence. The desire to belong to a nation-state can be ascertained through a conscientious or reliable referendum of the natives of the geographical enclave demanding a nation-state. Through a consensus or overwhelming majority “Yes” vote,a widespread desire for a nation-stateis obtained and such spells the general will to associate as one people irrespective of possible differences in specific modes of living. But the spiritual making of a nation-state, that is, the making of the spirit of the nation, on the other hand, borders on either pre-existing sense of national consciousness or on generating such feeling through appeal to shared ideals and or hopes and benefits

likely to accrue from such union intended as a nation-state. This can be achieved through articulation ideology adequate in convincing the uniting citizens.

Nationalism is a value-laden concept for the fact that the way or manner national feeling is manifested depicts the premium values of the nation as a definite people. Nationalism is, therefore, not of the same value, in all nations and as such we observe contemporary variants of nationalism manifested in different nations based on the nation-states' hopes and aspirations as distinct peoples. Hence, nation-states are of certain shared ideals, shared interests and in some cases of a people of common ancestry and shared history that are desirous of advancing jointly such shared ideals. The nature of nationalism of any nation-state attests to such shared valued interests and ideals the nation-state cherishes. National education is an instrument of producing national consciousness and in propagating patriotism, civic commitment, allegiance or loyalty to the nation-state for the ultimate purpose of maintaining socio-cultural cohesion. The spirit of a nation-state informs its nationalism which is a manifestation of the national spirit which, in turn, is based on shared principles, beliefs and belief system - in other words, the national creed.

At the point of conceiving a nation-state, the necessity, the benefits accruing and possible to accumulate from constituting such a nation-state have to be articulated by the founders. The aspirations of the intending citizens should be ascertained, and the potentials of the prospective nation-state well understood for the proper formulation of the national dream as the aim and objective of the nation. Such articulation has to take cognizance of what is realizable, sustainable and commonly shared as a body of beliefs, ideology, doctrine or creed. When such belief is found worthy of being the spiritual foundation of the nation-state, it is made the spiritual pillar on which the nation-state is built. Nation-state creed has to be such that it motivates, and fires or energizes the citizens towards contributing their level best to the greatness of the nation-state. The creed of a nation-state has to be the engine or motor of nationalism, of a national dream which every citizen has to work towards seeing the nation realize, maintain and guarantee. In every expression and or exhibition of patriotism, the citizens of the nation-state are indirectly testifying

their joy and satisfaction in belonging to the given nation-state that cherishes such creed on which the nationalism is anchored.

A nation, therefore, exists according to the nature of her prevailing national consciousness, and consciousness here can be equated with nationalism, national feeling, love of one's nation, patriotism; all of which amount to pride of belonging to the said nation of one's cherished ideals and which one is keen and ready to uphold or defend with every weapon or instrument available to one. Nationalism, therefore, aims at protection, defense and sustenance of a nation or nation-state for which one is very keen to contribute to for mutual benefits of the citizens. A nation or nation-state without a definite creed, principles, belief or dream which the citizens commonly share, is naturally doomed to prove a nation of a collection of individuals with divergent beliefs, hopes, and aspirations as well as differing prospects and dreams for the nation. Socio-political cohesion is bound to be a serious problem in a nation without a national creed. Every citizen strives to make out of the nation what satisfies the citizen's fancy and such nation must, as a matter of natural necessity, be stagnant if not degenerate as every citizen devours the nation-state as the citizens try frantically to satisfy personal interests, at personal whims and caprices.

In sum, championing nationalism of any form amounts to making the spirit of the nation, and in turn, nationalism mirrors the soul of the nation, essence or its real being; the *raison d'être*, and as such, it is critical in the life of every nation. A nation, state or nation-state without a creed is in effect a "no man's land" and as such every man's land for total exploitation by both the citizens and by intruders and invaders for their selfish individual interests. Such a nation cannot but be a breeding ground for corruption, a political space of cutthroat rivalry and explosive politicking as every opportune citizen strives to cut corners as much as the citizen's might permits for personal interests and aggrandizement. Such a nation without a national creed, doctrine or faith can prove an exemplar, a paradigm or an archetype of a modern state of nature of war of every man against every man, and in African, just as in Nigerian, a situation of conflict of every tribe against every tribe in the frantic bid for hegemony or political dominion.

### **Nigerian Nation and Nationalism**



Nigeria at its inception through the British act of 1914 amalgamation was not a nation, nor is it a nation now in the strict sense of the word as in keeping with the definition of nation as an association of men and women with a definite geographical location who believe to have or claim to or who have a common ancestry. Nigeria is also not in the modern sense a nation-state as there is no shared or common doctrine, faith or creed which every Nigerian is expected to imbibe. Nigeria is merely and formerly regarded as a state, country, or nation: In the broadest sense of the term nation as a people with common descent, lineage or extraction. In a loose and general reasoning, we can regard Nigeria as a nation as well as a state for the fact that various peoples, ethnic groups making up Nigeria are under a so-called common federal administration formerly referred to as the Federal Republic of Nigeria. In actuality, Nigeria is supposed to be duly constituted as a state of nations but the reality of this, based on contradictions in the Nigerian Constitution, remains highly debatable.

Nigeria as a nation started in 1914 with the singular act of amalgamation of what hitherto used be known as Northern and Southern Protectorates of Great Britain by the British colonialist administrator, Lord Lugard. Nigerians today owe the name Nigeria to the then girlfriend of Lord Lugard who later became his wife, and with joint acts of these lovers, Nigeria was born out of the colonial/expansionist interests of the British Monarchy and its people. The choice of this nomenclature, Nigeria, by Lugard's girlfriend and for their baby nation was born by the fact of the area bordering along the River Niger. Hence Nigeria means merely Niger Area and the people are deemed to be people or native inhabitants of such Niger Area. That the name Niger derived from the Latin word, "Negros," "negro," meaning "black" for the predominance of dark skin inhabitants of the peoples South of Sahara Desert is quite a different matter from the making of the new nation. In other words, it did not matter a thing that the name Nigeria ultimately derived from the darkness or blackness of the skin of the predominant inhabitants of the area involved.

Despite that Nigeria is made up of more than two hundred and fifty (250) tribes and people of about five hundred native languages and or dialects, having had common experience of British colonial rule, there was a palpable will among the independence agitators or the



founding fathers to be together under one nation, though with expression of fear of marginalization by some minority tribes and language groups. The minority fear of marginalization, however, was somewhat assuaged and there were joint and concerted efforts and struggle for independence from the British colonial masters by all tribes and language groups except the Southern Cameroonians who opted to join their kits and kin in the neighbouring Cameroon which was at that time a French colony.

Throughout the colonial era the desire for independence was anchored on the concept of self-rule and actually on the absolute virtue of freedom, and as such, self-rule appeared to be the basis of pre-independence nationalism. The anticipated benefits of the so-called autonomy as preached by Nigerian nationalists was quite attractive, and the tribal chiefs and their subjects were energized by them as they were induced and cajoled into supporting the agitation for the self-rule. The independence propaganda by the western educated Nigerian nationalists captured the fancy of the traditional rulers who were promised to have exalted positions in the newly independent nation as royal fathers, and they could not hesitate as they readily joined the struggle for Nigerian independence. Self-rule, by implication, became the creed, the article of faith in desiring independence, for as one of the so-called Nigerian freedom fighters for independence in the person of Obafemi Awolowo put it in a pre-independent interview over his hatred of the British says: "... it was morally wrong for one nation to govern another ..." (759). With independence, Nigeria can boast of having a Nation of her dreams, and enshrined in its constitution, but the crux of the matter demands what the dreams of the Nigerian founders at independence were, and how far the contemporary Nigerian Nation builders, if any exists, have formulated or articulated such dreams as the essence or the reason for present Nigerian existence? Another pertinent question here is, if at independence the self-rule implied Freedom as the Nigerian National creed, where did we miss it or lose sight and or grip of Freedom as national creed or faith? Coupled with the preceding is if Freedom was the Nigerian national creed, why is it not emphasised in various Nigerian Constitutions as where Nigeria fundamental stands or hinges?

### **Contemporary Nigerian Nation and Lack of National Creed**

No matter whatever blame is laid on the lack of foresight of the Nigerian founding fathers, the fact remains that Nigeria of today is entirely different from what the founding fathers envisaged as well as the Nigeria they constituted at independence. Giving this preceding fact, one cannot help to ask where we got it wrong or where we derailed from the original dream of the founding fathers. Evidently, the founding fathers constituted Nigeria based on some rivalry among the three major tribes namely Housa/Fulani (united by the Islamic religion), Igbos and Yorubas. The Nigerian nation took off on the wrong note of ethnic rivalry and competition of sometimes severe and dangerous proportions as the three major ethnic groups struggled for dominion and the control of the central government for more significant benefits of the controlling ethnic group. In other words, Nigeria from its Independence has been apparently sitting on a time bomb of ethnic conflict of human deserver. On the other hand, the founding fathers occupied themselves with the struggle for parochial ascendancy. Consequently, they did very little or nothing to see the new nation of multiple ethnic groups evolve or mutate into a nation-state through a well-articulated national ideology, creed, doctrine or faith as a unifying factor, of Nigerian nationalism. Consequently, right from the time of independence, Nigerians have always maintained primary loyalty to respective tribes or ethnic groups, and as Obafemi Awolowo is often quoted, he asserted himself first as a Yoruba man, and then a Nigerian. Hence, the new nation did not aspire to evolve a nation-state. Instead, their founding fathers retained ethnic loyalty over and above national commitment, and the effect was that ethnic nationalism took the front seat as Nigerian nationalism was given a secondary consideration in the scheme of things of national politics. The founding fathers were at best tribal/ethnic heroes and worse tribal bigots. Tafawa Belewa and Amdu Bello for the North, Obafemi Awolowo for the West and Nnamdi Azikiwe for the East, and by their joint conscious and unconscious effort they laid the foundation of hero or personality worship. This preceding impression was founded on the pretext that each regional hero was a leader of his region, a messiah, as the only individual capable of taking his local people to the promised land of development and prosperity. This trend persists to date as we often

today hear claims of ethnic/tribal leadership by certain notable individual politicians referred to as Yoruba leader, Northern or Housa/ Fulani leader as well as Igbo leader. In effect, within each ethnic group, some persons aspire to emerging ethnic hero built around the concept of messiah ship by which each ethnic group considers a vehicle for ethnic ascendancy of domination at the centre. The so-called minorities are not out of this trend as we equally hear of Middle Belt leader, Niger-Delta leader or South-South leader or leaders. In effect, the personality/hero worship in Nigerian politics has led to wholesale politicking as politicians target ethnic/tribal groups by wooing their so-called leaders and their traditional rulers expected to deliver their people wholesale by giving the impression that their salvation consists in voting the man, the politician that will cater for their ethnic uplift. This trend of ethnic rivalry leads to a common argument in which every ethnic group claims to be marginalised in the national scheme of events and while there can be genuine cases of ethnic marginalisation, the fact remains that the claim of marginalisation has become a bargaining chip for each geopolitical region, ethnic group or tribe.

In the contemporary Nigerian nation, ethnic feelings or nationalism and attendant ethnic politics and politicking have gone a long way in devastating Nigeria as a nation as Nigerians are more divided along ethnic lines today much more than at independence or during the first republic. It is quite difficult to find a patriotic Nigerian, an enthusiastic Nigerian, whose concern centres on the progress of Nigeria as a nation, one who in a matter of national affairs can prove selfless and detribalized. It is an uphill task to find real Nigerian statesman, a Nigerian who thinks himself a Nigerian and one who is genuinely concerned about how Nigeria can progress and develop. The spirit of self-rule propelled the desire for independence in the minds of the founding fathers of Nigeria, no doubt, but after independence, the spirit of cooperation as the biggest Black nation of the world provided some semblance of nationalism. That nationalistic façade was diminished by the military incursion into Nigerian politics and governance in nineteen sixty-six and brought a nation without nationalism out of the Nigerian nation. A politicised Nigerian military as politicians of First Republic flirted with them and corrupted them with ethnic politics, was at the time of their

incursion into politics already ethnic tools of seeking and fighting for ethnic dominion. The military failed to seek to make a nation-state out of Nigeria and never thought of national ideology, creed or faith, but rather continued to champion a foreign policy that centred on the unity of African continent. Nigeria under military dictatorship was labouring under the burden of ethnicity at home, while abroad in international relations and foreign policy dissipated much energies and resources on the global unity of African continent as well as financing independent struggles in some African nations and supporting self-avowed freedom fighters without thinking of freedom of her citizens. The military regimes apparently paid no attention to the national lack of creed, faith or ideology. Chinua Achebe laments what he considers, “poverty of thought” in the leadership of Nigeria especially our founding fathers' failure to articulate simple virtues as Nigerian ideals, and he faults the “unity and faith” inscribed in the Nigerian coat-of-arms as failing in practical meaningfulness (11-13).

The Nineteen Ninety-Nine (1999) Nigerian Constitution which is the currently operative constitution is entirely silent on the National Creed, Faith or doctrine as a foundation of the Federation or as unifying factor of the Nigerian “nation.” The Preamble to the Constitution says “We the people ...”, which is based on falsehood as we Nigerians never came together to give ourselves the said constitution, fails to articulate in clear terms national objectives, creed, faith or doctrine. What is very conspicuous is the Promulgation Decree Number 24 of May 5, 1999, considered in Nigerian parlance as “Enabling Law” inaugurating the constitution. It is, however, ridiculous that the grand norms of the nation would be inaugurated or be brought into existence through military decree rather than through a majority “Yes” vote or a consensus of the citizens obtained through an authentic national referendum. In effect, what ought to be a widespread democratic grand norm in a way constitution as a document by which Nigerians constitute themselves had to come into existence by a pre-existing law in the way of military decree thereby not making Nigerian constitution the first and real basis of Nigerian law and legal system. Nigerian constitution and structure, therefore, is a product of military Decree that preceded it. What a regrettable and appalling situation to practice Democracy with a Constitution

derived or given birth to by military Decree. In effect, the Constitution of Nigeria having come from the force of military Decree fails to come from the power of the citizens expressed in a referendum. The likely conclusion here is that present Nigerian Constitution came from the military that lacked legitimacy which relied on force instead of people's or citizens' power to whom political power belongs. Constitution as a document by which a people constitute themselves cannot be a consequence of the earlier law. It is always the case that the existence of a Republic derives from the Constitution as the original law and the ground norm on which every other code has to be based. How then is it that in Nigerian case there had to be a Military Decree preceding the constitution? In this Nigerian case, a military dictatorship had to decree a constitution and by extension, a Republic into existence. Military Decree is undemocratic, and how can Democracy be based on undemocratic background? This is quite absurd as much as it is very laughable, just to say the least. Before a robust democratic constitution, there is no legitimate and or legal authority, for the constitution in constituting a nation, republic or nation-state is the first authority, the ground or basic norm, from which every power in the state, nation-state or republics derived.

The Promulgation Decree fails to advance or foster any discernible national ideology, faith, doctrine or creed as the basis or foundation of the so-called Nigerian Republic as a nation-state of people who consciously strive at establishing a commonwealth based on declared principles, goals, objectives, or creed. This singular lacuna and or deficit remain the bane of lack of true spirit of nationalism which invariably results in numerous national problems and vices. Such issues and vices range from ethnic/tribal conflicts, through religious disputes, to the looting of national treasuries in the form of public corruption, various acts of economic sabotage and so on. Lack of national creed denies the citizens common grounds of interest, the common good, that is, some common or shared minimum basis of national cooperation in the way of absolute principle, doctrine or ideology. In effect, two or three Nigerians may not find a spiritual and abstract common ground for being co-nationals; instead, they may view their desire to remain seen as Nigerians for the reason of material benefits the country can provide such as oil money to be

stolen by either crook or hook. Nigerians are left without an abstract and transcendental reason to feel attached to Nigeria, and we often hear that we should do as much as we can to make Nigeria better for we have no other country we can call ours. This means in effect; we are reduced, probably by nature or circumstances of birth to be Nigerians and over and above that we cannot find some conscious social reasons to belong to Nigeria. It states the obvious, i.e.; we are Nigerians because we are not from any other country, and should we find any country to accept us, we can loot the much our might permits and run to such other country or countries to enjoy the loots. It explains why most of the Nigerian politicians enjoy multiple nationalities and maintain their families abroad while Nigeria is the farm where they harvest, and they enjoy their Nigerian harvests in foreign countries where they are stashed. This phenomenon accounts for why it is pretty difficult to believe that a real Nigerian exists, for, Nigeria lacks spirit, and is made of only a body in the sense of geographical expression that promises material resources for looting and not for national development. Nigerians cannot but be selfish as Nigeria is an object of exploitation to be devoured, and milked to exhaustion. Hence, Nigeria is deficient in the real and true spirit of nationalism, and this is an absolute function of lack of national creed, faith or doctrine to generate the spirit of love of one's nation.

### **The Place of Creed in National Cohesion and Nationalism**

The place of national ideology or doctrine in ensuring national cohesion in nation-states cannot be overemphasised. From our discussion so far, we can figure out pivotal roles of national creed in guaranteeing national cohesion and, by extension, engendering a true spirit of nationalism. Firstly, national doctrine forms the basis of national association as the commonly shared ground on which the nation-state hinges. In making a nation-state, the prospective citizens must be motivated by objectives which they hope to realise through the nation-state. It is about non-material, but rather spiritual-moral ideals or principles which citizens believe in as the motor for realisation of the set objectives of the nation. If nothing goes for nothing, it then follows that nation-states need not exist for anything, and national creed is a conscious articulation of the *raison d'être* of the nation which in other words serves as the essence of the nation-

state. National creed should be such that the citizens fully align and identify with it as that which promises good life and progressive living. It, therefore, has to be attractive to the citizens and should capture their worldview as well as their hopes and aspirations in life and existence. The other nature of true national creed motivates and sustains the true spirit of nationalism.

National creed reinforces loyalty by assuring the citizens that they belong to the right nation and that they stand to continue to benefit by their nationality of the nation as long as they live. The nation-state as an instrument and the platform for the realization of the human potentials, the real humanity of the citizens, it has to be very promising to the citizens who in such regard see it as a means of complete self-realization. The benefits of the national creed in advancing the humanity of the citizens predispose the citizens to identify unconditionally in spirit with the nation, which in turn can be manifested by the citizens' desire to swim and draw with the nation (Marxey 597). The latter fact is a manifestation of nationalism at the highest degree which is a consequence of conscientious realisation of spiritual alignment between the citizens and the nation-state. In Socrates' trial, we observe his argument that if he benefited from the state when in need, why should he not comply with the dictates of the state even in a travesty of justice that amounts to losing his life as in his case in drinking the hemlock. This is a case of extreme loyalty to the state and perfect manifestation of the spirit of nationalism due to a moral understanding of the good of belonging to a state with cherished ideals or creed.

Thirdly, coupled with the preceding is the place of national creed in ensuring absolute respect of the political obligation of the citizens. The political liability in the way of the moral responsibility of the citizens may adequately be founded on the belief in the shared ideals, creed or doctrine on which the nation hinges. In this regard, the authority of the nation-state being charged with the responsibility of driving the political belief proves a common good, good to all the citizens whose hopes and aspirations the nation-state aims at realizing. Here a conscientious citizen finds it morally binding to render maximum cooperation and loyalty in the way of respect for the constituted authority considered as an actual means of realizing citizens' potentials, self-realization and life hopes and aspirations.



This ultimately guarantees national integrity through national cohesion and thereby assuring in turn, national peace, progress, and development. Besides, the afore-mentioned fundamental roles of national creed, there are very many subtle ways desired national creeds promote nationalism by making the citizens proud of their nations.

### **Conclusion**

Nation-states, as established in this paper, is not a natural product but rather human contrivances produced through the human reasoning for the sake harmonious social co-existence. At best, nation-states are the conscious and rational creation of socio-political spaces of equal opportunities, mutual respect and for progress and justice for all the citizens. As a republic which in its etymological signification means “public affairs” that is “*res*” “*publica*,” means a commonwealth; wealth commonly owned by the citizen by equality under the rule of law and mutual respect for the progress of all the citizens as a cooperate existence. Nation-states are expressions of the citizens' spirit, essence, as a people, and of their hopes and aspirations. In liberal democracies, nation-states are for the citizens and not the citizens for the nation-state, and as such, the nation-state manifests the spirit of its citizens and must be seen as being subordinate to the general will of the citizens.

Given the nature of nation-states, as we have observed severally, they must of naturally necessity exist on the specific indisputable basis, foundation or pillar, which is the absolute ground of every true nation-state. When a nation-state exists under specific creed, moral principles, doctrines of faith, different governments come and go after specific innovations without compromising such laid down creed, doctrines or moral principles/absolutes. A change in government and or of a political party in authority does not diminish or undermine the national creed as long as the citizens are politically conscious and alert. For to do so will cause the government and or party that tries to undermine the shared creed dearly in loss of power and in effect, the opportunity to govern. A nation without national creed, ideology, doctrine or moral principles lacks a basis for nationalism and such can prove a no man's land or a nation without nationalism. State in its modern conception is about social covenant,

an agreement made by the citizens on certain unifying ideals, doctrines or creed aimed at equality of opportunities and mutual respect based on justice and equity. In Chinua Achebe's dictum, "True patriotism is possible only when the people who rule and those under their power have a common and genuine goal of maintaining the dispensation under which the nation lives"(16). Without such shared creed, moral principles, doctrines or ideology, state or a nation-state cannot exist in the real sense of the word, and in such case, where there is no state there cannot be statesmen. Little wonder then that a supposed nation-state like Nigeria lacks true political leaders as it is primarily made up of a cabal of political brigands, treasury looters, pen robbers, and their likes who masquerade as national builders and political leaders. The state should precede statesmanship for there cannot be a statesman or statesmanship of no state. Therefore, until a state or nation-state is established through majority consent based on specific absolute virtue in a way creed, faith or doctrine, patriotism, nationalism or love of Nigerian nation will remain spurious, fake or unauthentic.

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