

NEOLIBERALISM, MASS PROTESTS AND CHANGE: THE POSSIBILITY OF ANOTHER WORLD

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ABSTRACT

The preponderant failure in governance occasioned by the adoption of neoliberal policies among the less developed states, as exemplified by the immanent contradiction of underdevelopment and increasing declension in the quality of the hitherto inadequate government services and reactions so generated by the aggrieved citizens is the main concern of this paper titled: Neo-liberalism, Mass Protests and Change: the Possibility of another World. The paper deals with the origin and nature of neoliberal ideology, the benefit and the trappings inherent in it, as well as the implication of its adoption on the political–economy of the developing world and what it translates into for the common man. It is a compendium of increasing reactions of the once – passive downtrodden to the betrayal of trust and violation of social contracts. Drawing lesson and experiences from global waves of occupy protests, this work is situated on Marxist/Instrumentalist Perspective and African Socialist Perspective.

Keywords: *governance, neoliberal policies, underdevelopment, mass protest, change, class consciousness.*

INTRODUCTION

The emerging global change from military dictatorship to civil rules in nations hitherto governed by tyrants marks a milestone in the global history of an epoch where the demands for a voice on how people are governed prevail. *Vox populi vox dei* goes the saying that translates into “the voice of the people is the voice of God” – it is probably, the time when God wants to speak for the masses. These popular demands have been generally tagged the occupy protests. Long-term rulers (not leaders) have been cataclysmically deposed. History is a testament to the waterloo of dictators in the rank late Moammar Gadhafi of Libya, Zine el Abidine Ben Ali of Tunisia, Egyptian Hosni Mubarak, in manners reminiscent of the 1789 French revolution. These perceived internal strivings that lead to implosions in these countries are not without their principal external factors with the handwritings of neo-liberalists boldly indelibly engraved on the proverbial rock of ages.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

This paper was written to underscore the extent to which the masses can go in defending their rights and to sensitize the people and government of Nigeria to the need for change in ways of governance.

METHODS

Desk Review method has been adopted in writing this paper.

THEORETICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The pertinent theories that are adopted in this study are Marxist/Instrumentalist Perspective and African Socialist Perspective. These are discussed below thus:

Marxist/Instrumentalist Perspective

For the Marxist/Instrumentalist, the state is but an executive committee for managing the common affairs of the *bourgeoisie*. Its leading proponent, Ralph Miliband (1983), argues that the state is an “instrument” in the hands of the ruling class, used to dominate our society by virtue of the interpersonal ties between economic elites and state officials. Members of these groups, he points out, come from the same background and, therefore, share the same interests, linked together through an array of interpersonal and political ties.

An example of a scholarly work in which the Marxist/Instrumentalist perspective is employed to discuss the nature of the state in Africa, according to Bangura (2013), is Osagyefo Kwame Nkrumah’s classic *Class Struggle in Africa* (1970). In this book, Nkrumah identifies two groups of classes that have emerged in the African state due to colonialism and neocolonialism: (1) the *Privileged Classes* comprising the bureaucratic *bourgeoisie*, officers of armed forces and police, intelligentsia, professional class, compradors, etc.; and (2) the *Oppressed Classes* made up of workers, peasants, small farmers, and traders. He notes that the African *bourgeoisie*, the class that thrived under colonialism, is the same class that is benefiting under the post-colonial, neocolonial era. He states that the *bourgeoisie*’s basic interest hinges upon preserving capitalist economic and social structures; it is therefore allied with the international monopoly capital to exploit the masses whose aspirations can only be fulfilled through “scientific socialism” (Nkrumah, 1970:11–12). He defines “scientific socialism” as a universal and abiding principle that involves “the genuine socialization of productive and distributive processes,” and argues that “those who for political reasons pay lip service to socialism, while aiding and abetting imperialism and neocolonialism, serve bourgeoisie class interests.” He adds that “workers and peasants may be misled for a time, but as class consciousness develops the bogus socialists are exposed, and genuine socialist revolution is made possible” (Nkrumah, 1970:26).

AFRICAN SOCIALIST PERSPECTIVE

AbdulKareem Bangura (2013) had pinpointed Mwalimu Julius Nyerere as one of the most noteworthy advocates of the African Socialist perspective of the state. Mwalimu Julius Nyerere (1989) saw the state as a society that ensures the sharing of economic resources in a traditional African way. Thus, the African socialist state is distinct from the classical doctrinaire socialist state, which yearns for the representation of the interests of the working class. To Nyerere, the African socialist state is also neither the opposite of the capitalist state nor a response to it, but something completely different. It is fully African, appealing to an African identity that is even stronger than anti-capitalism. The African socialist state is, therefore, a recapturing of the spirit of what it was to be African. In his essay, "African Socialism: Ujamaa in Practice" (1989), Mwalimu Nyerere states that traditional African society succeeded in ensuring that both the "rich" and the "poor" were completely secure. When natural catastrophe brought famine, it brought it to all: "rich" and "poor." No one starved, either for food or for human dignity, because s/he lacked personal wealth; instead, s/he could depend on the wealth possessed by the community to which s/he belongs—that was and is socialism. He argues that there can be no such thing as acquisitive socialism, for the term is self-contradictory since socialism is essentially distributive: those who sow reap a fair share of what they sow (Nyerere, 1989:212).

Mwalimu Nyerere also notes that those Africans who talk about the African way of life and, quite rightly so, take great pride in maintaining the tradition of hospitality which is so great a part of it must keep in mind the following Swahili saying: "Treat your guest as a guest for two days; the third day give him a hoe." In actuality, Mwalimu Nyerere, asserts, the guest was likely to ask for the hoe even before his/her host had to give him/her one, for s/he knew what was expected of him/her and would have been ashamed to remain idle any longer. He adds that there is no such thing as socialism without work. A society which fails to provide individuals the means to work or, having given them the means to work, prevents them from getting a fair share of the products of their labor, needs to be put right. Likewise, individuals who can work and are provided by society with the means to work but do not do so are equally wrong. They have no right to expect anything from society because they contribute nothing to it (Nyerere, 1989:213–214).

Thus, for Mwalimu Nyerere, the first step for Africans to develop their states must be to re-educate themselves; to regain their former attitude of mind. In their traditional African society, they were individuals within a community. They took care of the community, and the community in turn took care of them. They neither needed nor wished to exploit their fellow humans. And in rejecting the capitalist attitude of mind which colonialism brought to Africa, Africans must reject also the capitalist methods which go with it. One of this is land being owned by the individual. To Africans, land always belonged to the community. Each individual within the society had a right to the use of land because otherwise, s/he could not earn a living, and one cannot have the right to life without also having the right to some means of sustaining life. But the right of Africans to land was simply the right to *use* it; they had no other right to it, nor did it occur to them to try to claim it (Nyerere, 1989:214).

Essentially then, following Mwalimu Nyerere, the foundation and the objective of the African socialist state is the extended family. True African socialists do not look on one class of men and women as their brothers and sisters and another as their natural enemies. They do not form an alliance with their brothers and sisters for the extermination of the nonbrothers and non-sisters. They rather regard *all* men and women as their brothers and sisters as members of the ever-extended family, which is *Ujamaa*, or “familyhood,” that describes African socialism. It is opposed to capitalism which seeks to build a happy society based on the exploitation of human by human; and it is equally opposed to doctrinaire socialism which seeks to build its happy society on the philosophy of inevitable conflict between human and human (Nyerere, 1989:217).

Mwalimu Nyerere concludes by stating that it was through the struggle to break the grip of colonialism that Africans learned the need for unity. They came to recognize that the same socialist attitude of mind which in the early days gave to every individual the security that comes with belonging to a widely extended family must be preserved within the still wider society of the nation. But Africans should not stop there. Their recognition of the family to which they all belong extended further—beyond the ethnic group, the community, the nation, or even beyond the continent—to embrace the whole society of humankind (Nyerere, 1989:217–218).

THE ORIGIN AND NATURE OF NEOLIBERAL IDEOLOGY

What is neoliberalism? Neoliberalism is essentially about making trade between nations easier. It is concerned with free movement of goods, resources and enterprises, in a bid to always find cheaper resources, to maximize profits and efficiency. Neoliberalism requires the removal of various controls deemed as barrier to free trade such as (a) tariffs (b) regulations (c) certain standards, laws, legislation and regulatory measures (d) restriction in capital flows and investment.

It is a policy, which, according to Martinez and Garcia (1997), thrives on de-unionization of labour force, reduction of public expenditure on essential social services, such as education and health by the government, and privatization of public enterprises, to mention but a few. These policies are rationalized by the guiding principles of neoliberal ideology, among which are stated thus;

- Sustained economic growth is the way to human progress.
- Most efficient and socially optimal, allocation of resources.
- Economic globalization would be beneficial to everyone.
- Privatization removes inefficiency of public sector.
- Government should mainly function to provide the infrastructure to advance the rule of law with respect to property rights and contracts.

Neoliberal ideology or neoliberalism is rooted back to about two hundred (200) years ago. Neoliberalism, the modern system of free trade, free enterprise, and market based economies was documented as one of the main engine for the development of the industrial revolution of mid 18th century, rooted in the 1776 book of the renown British economist, Adam Smith’s the Wealth of Nations.

Smith, who some regard as the father of modern free market capitalism, suggested in his book, “the Wealth of Nations” that “for maximum efficiency”, all forms of government intervention in economic issues should be removed, and that restrictions or tariffs should be removed on manufacturing and commerce for development within a nation.

Neoliberalism is said to be rooted in mercantilism, a system in turn rooted in the Middle and Dark Ages of Europe, which parallels various methods used by empires throughout history to control their peripheries and appropriate wealth accordingly. Neoliberalism, according to Smith J. W. is mercantilism dressed up with more friendly rhetoric (Smith 2003). Neoliberalism, following the chain of mercantilism is a neocolonial tendency to continue the subjugation of the rest for west. This was captured in William Appleman Williams’ description of mercantilism at its zenith as the chief way for a nation to promote or achieve its own wealth and happiness, was to take them away from some other countries. William further stated that Adam Smith’s free trade was introduced when the “injustice of mercantilism became understood and embarrassing. Free trade is never fair trade, as its inequality is little more than a philosophy for the continued subtle monopolization of the wealth producing process... so long as weak nations could be forced to accept the unequal free trade, they would be handing their wealth to the imperial–center–of–capital of their own free will.

Free trade formed the basis of free enterprise for capitalist. For the capitalist European countries to succeed, and remain competitive in the international arena, they had a strong foundation of imperialism, colonialism, and subjugation of others in order to have access to the resources required to produce such vast wealth. As Smith J W noted, this was hardly free trade that Adam Smith suggested.

TRAPPINGS INHERENT IN NEOLIBERALISM

Neoliberalism since its introduction has been a very attractive package for state actors especially in the global south, where Eurocentric modernization theory of development has been prescribed as the only way out of underdevelopment; the benefits of neoliberalism are numerous. Of these benefits is technological transfer which though has been criticized as being not adaptable to the less developed countries, due to topographical, cultural and climatic variations.

Freedom is good. Who would have argued otherwise, if the freedom attributed to neoliberalism had been beneficial to all? Indeed, it is fraught with the perpetuation of the privileged position of the few capitalists, to the detriment of the masses (who are paradoxically being hand-held to be beaten to stupor by the privilege class). Seen from power perspective, neoliberalism guarantees the global powers, unfettered access to plunder any territory, given the weakening of the state, state actors have no choice than to kowtow, to the neocolonialists of the LCDs. This however, has further undermined the development of the LDC, in an unfair industrial competition, the toll of which manifests in increasing loss of job, due to industrial liquidation fold up from, weakness in competing with foreign “dumped goods” on Nigerian soil. Under the free enterprise of neoliberalism, unimaginable innovative products have crept into the remotest market. Exposure of the Nigerian markets to capitalist exploitation is a rape on the masses, who

are devoid of buffers like the Japan's Social Safety Net, and Canada's and Norway's Human Security Programmes (1994 Human Development Reports) which indeed can be described as capitalism with a human face. Technology transfer is not enough a benefit derived from neoliberal policy in Nigeria, as it constitute an avenue for continuous exploitation of the poor, and constitute a means of further entanglement of the country, to the apron strings of the West. It is high time Nigerians learn to set themselves free of western domination, and look inwardly for a great path to development.

THE IMPLICATION OF NEOLIBERALISM ON THE POLITICAL ECONOMY OF THE DEVELOPING WORLD: WHAT IT TRANSLATES INTO FOR THE COMMON MAN

The conditionalities for the germination of neoliberalism are fraught with policies such as the reduction of public expenditure on social services, welfare cut, and privatization of public enterprises. One wonder, what sort of policy would recommend such denudatory measure for nations that are yet to develop, where most people live on less than a dollar per day, where infrastructural decay advance daily, where numerous young and able youths have lost hope of gainful employment, where medical facilities are in shambles, where the school system is epileptic...

Viewed from a paternalistic perspective, presidents or heads of states are proverbially the fathers of their citizens, whose right to every legally claimable right must not be denied under whatever guise. How thinkable then is it that a sane thinking father would heed advice of others that: he stops funding the welfare, education, feeding, health of his own household, he sells out their cottage industries, and retrench some working members of his household in the name of right sizing. What kind of father opens his doors to strangers for the purpose of enslaving his children right under his roof or for the purpose of raping his children under his supervision?

What kind of disposition does he expect from the member of his ill-treated household, cooperative or rebellious?

The fundamental objective behind the notion of neoliberalism is has been discovered purely neo-colonialist through the unequal trades of mercantilism. William Appleman William (1976) had described mercantilism as a way through which a country safeguards her wealth and happiness by taking them away from another country. For smith (2003), so long as weak nations could be forced to accept the unequal free trade, they would be handing over their wealth to the imperial centers of capital of the own free will.

One may be tempted to ask why a country would voluntarily cede her resource to another. Smith's (1994) thesis on World Wasted Wealth proffered the answer where he stated that "powerful countries design their trade policies to intercept the wealth of others (mercantilism) through trade war, covert war or hot war, while the weaker less developed countries usually lose in these exchanges. He concluded that it is the military power of the more developed countries that permit them to dictate the terms of trade, and maintain unequal relationships.

These trade wars, just like colonialism, must be waged, with or without provocations. This fact cannot be better portrayed than as stated by Woodrow Wilson, thus: "since trade

ignores national boundaries, and manufactures insists on having the world as a market, the flag of his nation must follow him, the doors of the nation which are closed must be battered down, concessions obtained by financiers must be safeguarded by ministers of state, even if the sovereignty of unwilling nations be outraged in the process. Colonies must be obtained or planted in order that no useful corner of the world may be overlooked or left unused.” Woodrow Wilson, President of the United State, quoted by Noam Chomsky, in Power and ideology. To better appreciate the implication of neoliberalism for the life chances of a common man, there is the need to operationalize neoliberalism against the constitutional safeguard of the citizens.

Constitutional Safeguards for the Rights of the Citizens

Studies have shown that neoliberalism, from all intents and purposes, has constituted deterrence on constitutional safeguards of fundamental human rights of citizens to welfare, deeply enshrined in the constitutions.

Section 14 (2b) unequivocally stated that the security and welfare of the people shall be the primary purpose of government: The constitution further stated on section 16 (1b) that the state shall control the national economy in such manner as to secure the maximum welfare, freedom and happiness of every citizen on the basis of social justice and equality of status and opportunity. Further, on section 16 (2), the constitution stated that the state shall direct its policy towards ensuring (2b) that the material resources of the nation are harnessed and distributed as best as possible to serve the common good; (2c) that the economic system is not operated in such a manner as to permit the concentration of wealth, or the means of production and exchange in the hands of few individuals or of a group; (2d) that suitable and adequate shelter and adequate food, reasonable national minimum living wage, old age care and pension, and unemployment, sick benefit and welfare of the disabled are provided for all citizens. The constitution asserting its foundation on the ideals of freedom, equality and justice on Section 17 (2c) stated that, in furtherance of the social order - governmental actions shall be humane, while it stated in the subsection (2d) that the exploitation of human and natural resources in any form for whatsoever reasons, other than the good of the community, shall be prevented.

[1] (3) The State shall direct its policy towards ensuring that - (a) all citizens, without discrimination on any group whatsoever, have the opportunity for securing adequate means of livelihood as well as adequate opportunity to secure suitable employment; (b) conditions of work are just and humane, and that there are adequate facilities for leisure and for social, religious and cultural life; (c) the health, safety and welfare of all persons in employment are safeguarded and not endangered or abused; (d) there are adequate medical and health facilities for all persons: (e) there is equal pay for equal work without discrimination on account of sex, or on any other ground whatsoever; (f) children, young persons and the age are protected against any exploitation whatsoever, and against moral and material neglect; (g) provision is made for public assistance in deserving cases or other conditions of need; and (h) the evolution and promotion of family life is encouraged.

[2] 18. (1) Government shall direct its policy towards ensuring that there are equal and adequate educational opportunities at all levels. (2) Government shall promote science and technology (3) Government shall strive to eradicate illiteracy; and to this end Government shall as and when practicable provide (a) free, compulsory and universal primary education; (b) free secondary education; (c) free university education; and (d) free adult literacy programme.

[3] The extent to which these constitutional safeguards have been accorded free reins in Nigeria has been very dialectical. Neoliberal policies have greatly undermined the possibilities of the actualization of these constitutional immunities of Nigerians against poverty, illiteracy and wants.

These constitutional provisions constitute the responsibilities of the Nigerian state, especially during democratic dispensation. Is it right to blame the failure of campaign promises on the influence of neoliberalism? When great men of integrity as Nyerere decided to resign rather than implement neoliberal policies, despite the fact that African countries, according to Olukoshi (2015), were cornered to implement Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP). Where is the place of integrity and trust in our governance in the discharge of the obligation of the state to the citizens? These provisions focus on welfare and security of the Nigerian citizens. To what extent can it be defended that neoliberal policy is greater in supremacy to the constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, to which every democratically elected leaders have sworn to uphold. Neoliberal privatization policy, which purportedly vitiates the capacity of the state and thus, engendering human security deficit in the Nigerian state are alien to our constitution. Privatization as conceived in Nigeria is being deceitfully packaged as principally aimed at reducing financial loss to the government, and not necessarily designed to improve the welfare of the citizens. This could be deduced from the objective of privatizations as outlined in decree no 25 of 1988. This is needed to reduce the financial burden of the Nigerian state as one of the major reasons for privatization was also highlighted by former President Olusegun Obasanjo, when inaugurating the national council of privatization on 29th July, 1999 (Ariyo 2009). This question now is how far has Nigerian state gone in attaining the elusive efficiency, given her sworn resolution to neoliberal privatization? The answer is quite obvious, with the erratic power supply, despite the crazy bills being imposed on Nigerians, the large scale infrastructural decay, and pervasive corruption in the polity, the dwindling standard of education, despite high fees. The removal of oil subsidy without the appropriate safety nets for the citizens, means denying the poor citizens of the basic services they were enjoying from the state. It has been acknowledged in the literature that privatizations have spawned negative social results.

For Ariyo, in terms of implementation, many Nigerians have become victims of the right sizing and its attendant retrenchment that have accompanied the transfer of ownership from the state to the private sectors.

NEOLIBERALISM AND MASS PROTESTS: GLOBAL REACTIONS TO THE CONTRADICTIONS IN GOVERNANCE

With the US as the sole administrator of the UN, citizens' welfare, a fundamental aspect of the people's constitution became sacrificed on the altar of capitalist neoliberal anti-people ideologies. Against these, mass movements across the globe were recorded at different times, in different places, through different means, preceded by different prevailing circumstances. All revolting the tendency to subject the globe to a 'cosmocratic government' of a very remote few.

On December 1995: two thousand people took to the streets of Paris, France, and engaged in mass strikes in opposition to welfare cuts and employment reform. On September 2001: two million peace protestors mobilized across the world in opposition to the US led invasion and occupation of Iraq. On January 2003: a hundred thousand anti-globalization protestors converge on Porto Alegre, Brazil, in order to discuss alternatives to global neo-liberalism (Durr Schmidt and Taylor 2007).

Manuel Castells (2004) identified through different historical period, five major social movements against globalisation: the First Informational Guerrilla Movement: Zapatistas of Mexico, the Militia and the Patriots of the United States of America, the Lama of Apocalypse, Aum Shrinkyo of Japan, the Al-Qaeda network, and the anti-globalization movement. Of these the Zapatistas of Mexico, the Militia and the Patriots of the United States of America are to be our subject of discussion in this section.

The First Informational Guerrilla Movement; Zapatistas of Mexico

North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) of 1st January 1994, and the adoption of neoliberal practices of privatization and commercialization by Mexican government, resulted into mass protests of peasants known as the First Informational Guerrilla Movement; Zapatistas of Mexico. In a swift reaction, the peasants withdrew their children from school, and sold their cattle to buy weapons to fight against exclusionary consequence of economic modernization, and to challenge the inevitability of a new geopolitical order, under which capitalism becomes universally acceptable. Coupled with the use of net war, the Zapatistas forced negotiations and raised the issue of social exclusion and corruption to the eyes and ears of the public worldwide.

The American Militia and the Patriot Movement

The militia are the most militant and organized wing of a much broader self proclaimed patriot movement, whose ideological galaxy encompasses established, extreme conservative organizations such as the John Birch Society; neo-Nazi and anti-Semitic groups including KuKluxKlan (KKK), and the Posse Comitatus, among others. The movement had a paranoid conviction, according to Castells (2004), that the government was proceeding to disarm citizens in order to subdue them, submitting Americans to surveillance from hidden cameras, and black helicopters, and implanting biochips on the newborn. They see this conspiracy as a global threat, to jobs, to privacy, to liberty, to the American way of life. Just like the Zapatistas, the militia and the patriots made extensive use of the internet to spread the virus of their conspiracy theory.

In spite of its diversity, the patriot movement with the militia at its forefront does share some common goals, beliefs and foes. In its worldview, the patriot movement believes that American society is divided into two kinds of people, producers and parasites. The producers, the working people, are oppressed between two layers of parasites: corrupt government officials, wealthy corporate elites, and bankers, at the top; and stupid and lazy people, undeserving of the welfare they receive of society, at the bottom. The situation is being made worse by the current process of globalization, steered by the United Nations and international financial institutions on behalf of corporate elites and government bureaucracies, which threaten to transform ordinary people into mere slaves of a worldwide plantation-like economy. For this, citizens must take up their guns to fight for 'the future of America itself (Cooper 1995).

The New World Order, according to the movement, is a conspiracy of global financial interests and global bureaucrats that have captured the US Federal Government. Citing the instances endorsement of NAFTA in 1993, establishment of control on the sale of some types of automatic weapons,

LESSONS AND EXPERIENCES FROM OCCUPY PROTESTS

Speaking about revolutionary changes, the Arab Spring is a model of recent series of revolutionary changes. The Arab Spring is a revolutionary wave of demonstrations and protests occurring in the Arab world, that began on Saturday, 18 December, 2010, the revolutions have occurred in Tunisia and Egypt; a civil war in Libya, resulting in the fall of its regime; civil uprisings in Bahrain, Syria and Yemen; major protests in Algeria, Iraq, Jordan, Morocco, and Oman. Minor protests in Kuwait, Lebanon, Mauritania, Saudi Arabia, Sudan and Western Sahara. Clashes at the border of Israel in May 2011, have also been inspired by the regional Arab Spring.

The protesters have shared techniques of civil resistance in sustained campaigns involving strikes, demonstrations, marches, and rallies, as well as the use of social media to organise, communicate and raise awareness in the face of state's attempts at repressions and internet censorship.

Many demonstrations have met violent responses from authorities, as well as pro-government militia and counter demonstrators, as many were wounded when Moroccan police beat protestors, and Bahrain troops laid siege on protesters' camp.

Some countries have since the occupy protests been plunged into civil wars, with adequate violations of laws of war, with the citizens reduced to refugee status, with businesses and means of livelihood collapsed, with the hope of greater aspirations of the countries and their citizens dashed. With the infiltration of small arms and light weapons as well as the culture of belligerence being adopted by the criminal elements in once peaceful, neighbouring territories such as high spate of kidnappings, ritual killing and baby factory businesses, aside from the upsurge of terrorist groups, such Boko Haram in Nigeria, ISIL/ISIS in Iraq and Egypt the and further infiltration of western capitalist and government in a supposedly winner takes all situation.

PROTESTS AND CHANGE IN NIGERIA: THE POSSIBILITY OF ANOTHER WORLD

A do or die mass revolutionary protest is novel in Nigeria, as it is in most African societies. The question that we are faced with at this juncture is whether we are likely to experience such cataclysmic protests of the magnitude of the French revolution or the Arab Spring scale in Nigeria, even in the face of glaring impunity, inequality, oppression, and suppression of the masses, who carry the yoke of mis-governance, and large scale plundering of resources of all by the few.

Literary and experiential analyses are to the rescue. Economic liberalization in the 1980s, the annulment of Nigeria 1993 June 12 election, and the January 2012 phantom subsidy removal by the then Jonathan Administration had sparked off massive protests, but which had soon fizzled out by mere firing of police tear gas. Nigerians, unlike the Arabs and the Frenchmen, had sizeable deposition of Erotic instincts (life enjoyment instinct) rather than the thanatos (death instinct). No typical Nigerian desires to die, but rather prefer to live and hope for better future, however gloomy. Going by the Marxian postulation of the prerequisite of the transformation of class in itself to class for itself, as a condition for the existence of class consciousness. We therefore examine the existence of class in Nigerian society by setting in perspective the criteria for defining class in Nigeria.

Class may be said to be non-existent in Nigeria, because of her multi-ethnicity, multi-religiosity, and other multitude of interests which erodes the clear cut adherence to class consciousness of a particular interest, which may be counterpoised by some other interests.

The answer to the question of whether the western conception of class is applicable to the social relations in Africa, by extension, Nigeria is on the negation. There exist only the top dogs and no underdogs in Nigeria. Yet, we are clamouring for change, we are envisioning the possibility of another world.

The concept of change is problematic. There's a global wind of change blowing across democratic societies. Protests are universally organized as reaction to unpopular policies, in rejection of undesirable development, or in agitation for attentions. The crowd is said to be amorphous, and with this, many protests planned to be peaceful have ended up being hijacked by miscreants and become violent and destructive, rather than causing the targeted change.

After 16 years of brutal assault on living standards and democratic rights, and serial corruption, by the former PDP government, there is an enormous and overwhelming outpouring of hope that with Buhari alleged incorruptibility, the change Nigeria needs has finally come. Thus the working masses and youth are seized with an enormous hunger for change. What is obscure to many Nigerians who clamour for change is what change really is, and what type of change are we talking about, or what it should entail, whether or not the change being clamoured for simply entails reforming of capitals. That is, making the system less corrupt, and more efficient as Buhari has sought to do, or through a through revolutionary change in the economic or the political structure of society, as socialists canvass. Reformatory changes would entail a pro-people government that would mobilize all of societies' wealth on massive public works programme to rebuild a

failing infrastructure like road, rail, pipe-borne water, electricity, and hospitals as well as homes for the homeless, and free education at all levels. Such a reformatory change would also entail the overhauling of the agricultural sector, which used to be Nigeria's major foreign exchange earners. This will open up new jobs for the youth, not only in farming but also in agro-allied industries, thus, as emphasized by Soweto (2011), thousand underemployed engineers, biologists, scientists, agronomists, etc would practice their professions. Such changes would entail the resuscitation of the Nigerian textile industry which now employs about 100,000 employees, in a country of over 170 million who are not going about naked.

The change that Nigerians yearn for would remove the clause "as at when practicable", with regards to the provision of free and quality education for Nigerians. Nigeria should learn from Nyerere's Tanzania which practically eliminated illiteracy through free and compulsory education for all Tanzanians (the adult literacy rate rose from 17% in 1960 to 63% by 1975), with improvement in medical facilities. Private school phenomenon can be neutralized with a serious reformist government in place in Nigeria. According Olukoshi (2015), Nigeria needs a double digit growth rate consistently for about a period of ten years for us to get out of infrastructural decay.

Our hospitals, describe by Soweto as death centers yearn for well trained and qualified medical personnel with the right medical facilities in free for all medical and health centers. Government funded old people care facilities are not aberration in reformatory era in Nigeria, while meaningful living wage in a people's need oriented society is possible in Nigeria.

For a government so succeed in doing all these, it must do away with all pro-market policies of privatization and deregulation and instead be devoted to uprooting the capitalist system. Such a fundamental change would mean that the country's resources would be used in the interest of the majority, not for the profit of the few. To achieve this, would entail taking into public ownership the commanding heights of the economy, starting with the oil industry (cutting off private investors from the phantom petroleum importation, by making our refineries function efficiently), bank and their financial system, and placing these under democratic control and management of the working people.

How will the government get the resources to embark on pro-poor programmes, if not through the irredentist recovery of looted funds, and further severance of the grip of the economy from the so-called cabal in government and the business world? For instance, for as long as Nigeria's oil industry is dominated by a bunch of International Oil Companies (IOCs) alongside new indigenious compradorial oil companies, no amount of clean up that Nigerian National Petroleum Commission (NNPC) receives would ensure Nigeria is able to earn enough from its massive crude oil resources. At current rate, the IOCs benefit the most and their profits are repatriated out of the country. Nationalizing the oil industry and other key economic sectors is therefore an inevitable step to ensure that far reaching reforms in social conditions are able to succeed and sustained. However, this has to be linked with a democratically managed socialist plan of the economy, which

can rapidly open up the possibility of overcoming mist of Nigeria's socio economic challenges in a few years.

The government of today's Nigeria is faced with the threat of capitalist gang up by the rich elites and the multinationals, if it chooses to reform the capitalist system to satisfy yearnings of the masses. As it is in popular contemporary Nigeria parlance, "if President Buhari is bent on fighting corruption in Nigeria, corruption will definitely, and is fighting back". The business giants have the capacity to sabotage and frustrate the government, once their capitalist interests are threatened, through their capacity to control political parties, parliament, media and government institutions. Would the Nigerian president dare a revolutionary change, rather than reformist change?

CONCLUSION

It is high time we look inward for the solution to our problem of underdevelopment. Africans must learn to stay united against neocolonial tendencies, and uphold the virtue of trustworthiness in leadership positions. With a change of attitude and adoption of the virtue of discipline and honesty, there would not be any need for protest in Nigeria.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The aspirations of the masses can only be fulfilled through "scientific socialism" which Nkrumah, (1970) defined as a universal and abiding principle that involves "the genuine socialization of productive and distributive processes". Scientific socialism will involve the use of indigenous research in driving developmental projects, as well the recovery and use of all looted funds for the common goods. The system in its entirety requires overhauling. Once these are done, we stand to inhabit a new world.

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