

Scientific Socialism; A Panacea For Poor Leadership Situation In Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

Humans are significantly inconsequential, socio-political, paranormal entities with gregarious natural impulses that are polymorphously perverted. Going by human natural quest, to live with one another in harmony within a space (State), it becomes exigent for human unpredictable nature to be properly regulated for peace to prevail. Unfortunately, the Nigerian State is faced with serious leadership challenges as witnessed in every sphere of Her nation. This paper observed that humans by nature are inherently corrupt, and the need for the use of formidable force (Scientific Socialism) to regulate every sphere of society cannot be overemphasized. Hence, the paper through the historical dialectical method uncovered that other forms of socialist ideology are good; however, Marx's scientific socialist ideology is more efficacious in bringing about a more radical revolutionary change that could overhaul the entire socio-political scheme of things in a contemporary Nigerian leadership situation.

Keywords: Socialism, utopian socialism, african socialism, scientific socialism, historical materialism.

INTRODUCTION

Socialism as a philosophy, became more prominent in the 18th century when there was clamour for a common brotherhood amongst humans, equality, and liberty. The situation that gave rise to socialism during this era, was the inequality that was witnessed in the British colonies of the new world and France in particular (Beer, 2020; Bevir, 2011; Pierson, 1973). The industrial revolution that took place in the 18th century also buttressed the growth of industries and this gave rise to competition and profit motive amongst the capitalist who owns the industries. This also resulted in rural-urban migration and the creation of mass industrial workers who turns out to be at the mercy of the capitalist. Equally, the mass industrial workers were subjected to exploitation by the capitalist. Not only that the workers were exploited but their working conditions became so poor beyond imagination.

It was when the negative realities' of the exploitative situation downed on the oppressed workers, which consequently paved the way for a socialist thought, which was aimed at restructuring and reconciling the different spheres of the then capitalist society.

What is socialism? There have been attempts by some schools of thought, towards explaining the meaning of the term socialism. It should be understood that the term socialism has no clear court definition as such, we are going to embark upon a descriptive definition to better appreciate the meaning of socialism. (Kilroy-Silk & Schmidman, 1970) tries to describe

socialism thus; “it is a protest against the material and cultural poverty inflicted by capitalism on the masses”. He further states that it expresses a concern for the social welfare of the oppressed, the unfortunate and the disadvantaged, it affirms the values of equality, a classless society, freedom and democracy. According to Joseph A. (Schumpeter, 1997), socialism is a critique of liberalism and the socio-economic order it promotes.

In general, socialism is a fight against capitalism and its inherent exploitative tendencies, selfishness, and individualism which creates and buttress an unfair social and economic order. In socialism, there is communalism. That is, the production and distribution of resources are jointly carried out by the individuals that make up such a society. Socialism is reformatory and revolutionary in character. Also, socialism promotes equality in all spheres both social, economic, and political. As earlier noted, the clamour for private ownership of property or wealth is frowned at in a socialist state. Another feature of socialism is the emphasis on the change of society. Socialism is a humanist movement aimed at self-realization of humans, a reappraisal of values and the abolition of that which alienates humans from their real personality and need for a common brotherhood amongst humans (Ofuebe, 2001)

Utopian Socialism

Utopia according to oxford advance learner’s dictionary (2002), is a state of perfection that does not really exist. The founder of the school of thought was Thomas Moore. Others include; Saint Simon (1760-1825), Charles Fourier(1772-1837) in France and Robert Owen (1771-1858) in Britain. They all were against the capitalist system which encourages private ownership of property. They tried to put forth some penetrating ideas about a further communist society. They strongly believed that their writings at this time would bring about a positive change in the existing social system. They also believed that society could be transformed through the dissemination of the enlightenment ideas, and not necessarily through struggle or a radical revolution as envisaged Karl Marx. Claude Henri de Rouvroy Saint Simon and Charles Fourier sharply criticized the then existing capitalist system of production and described it as an ahidous system that has no positive contribution to human development as such must be expunged. Charles Fourier concluded that the capitalist. Society is just as transient as all the other preceding historical formations and that it would be replaced by a harmonious social system of the future. However, the dreams of the utopian socialist did not come to pass. ClaudeHenri Rouvroy Saint-Simon for example addressed his ideas of improving the existing social system to European Monarchs in the hope that they would help him carry out his dreams. Charles Fourier on the other hand sent notices in Newspapers calling upon rich men to donate money for the organization of a new society. However, his idea did not work out for him because no one responded to his suggestion towards the donation of the fund. The utopian socialist also emphasized the need for collective ownership of property and the need for communal production and distribution. Charles Fourier did not understand that the exploiters would not voluntarily give up their power, riches, and privileges to the oppressed. Also, Robert Owen was one of the utopian socialist that took a more practical dimension to the struggle for a classless society devoid of exploitative tendencies. At the factory in which he was a co-owner,

Robert Owen ventured a bold practical experiment by cutting down the working hours of the workers in the factory and increased their wages. He also went as far as setting up a school for the children of the factory workers. In 1824, Robert Owen went to America where he set up a labour union which, however, fell shortly afterward.

The utopian socialist failed to understand that the proletariat was not yet sufficiently organized (Durey, 1992; Hunt, 1984; Pedersen, 2015). The workers lived in poverty and the conditions that would enable them to understand their great social role were still lacking. This is precisely why the views of Saint Simon, Charles Fourier and Robert Owen were utopic and not scientific. The utopian socialists were lone dreamers because their schemes were characteristically visionary and generally impracticable. The utopian socialist did not understand the nature of hired labour and they did not understand the laws of social development. They also did not understand the need to carry on the class struggle and the historic role of the proletariat. Owing to the shortcomings of the utopian socialist an alternative socialist thought emerged, which is popularly reefered to as scientific socialism of Karl Marx which emphasized the use of “formidable force” or “a radical revolution” by the oppressed.

African Socialism or “Ujamaa” Socialism

The word “African” in this sense shows that African socialism is a political philosophy that is basically African or has in its tenets an African social-cultural orientation (Lal, 2015; Satgar, 2018; Terreblanche, 2018). Ujamaa socialism is a socio-political thought of an African statesman called, Julius Kambarage Nyerere. Nyerere is a Tanzanian, he led the nationalist campaign for independence and was both Head of state and Head of government for a long period of time. It was as a result of the challenges faced by Julius Nyerere during his time as a leader that he developed the idea of “Ujamaa” socialism (J. K. Nyerere, 1987). Julius Nyerere was faced with both political and socio-economic problems during his time as a leader. Basically, he frowns at the colonial influences, of the west on African nations. He also found out that, a capitalist system with its inherent exploitative tendencies is not the ideal system for Africa and Tanzania in particular. He, therefore, set forth a scheme that he strongly believed will help curb the problems of poverty and underdevelopment that bedeviled Tanzanian people. The scheme also will help to retain the values of traditional African society. It will also help to create a just and egalitarian society. This scheme is what is referred to as African socialism or “Ujamaa socialism”.

According to (J. Nyerere, 1998), Ujamaa here means “brotherhood”. The characteristic of “Ujamaa” socialism are as follows; There is collective ownership of property. The state owns all properties and wealth of the country. Production and distribution of resources are carried out by the state such that everyone gets an equal share of the countries wealth. In “Ujamaa” socialism, there is no room for individualism instead what is tenable is collectivism. There is a strong brotherhood concern. Everyone acts towards the direction of a common goal. In short, the whole of the country is seen as one unified family. This principle I best describe as “one for all, all for one”. Ujamaa socialism frowns at exploitation. Any form of dehumanizing and exploitative tendencies was not welcomed in an “Ujamaa” socialist state. Every individual in an “Ujamaa” socialist state, belongs to the government as such, it is the responsibility of the government to

fend for its citizenry (Julius Nyerere:1968). All the needs and aspiration of everyone, is taking care of by the state. Neyerere in trying to put to practice his political thought did the following; As Head of state, he made the government build houses for the people of Tanzania. Schools were also built for the Tanzania people. Students were made not to pay any form of the fee instead the government pays bursary to the students. He also made sure that there was no room for anybody to own private property not even himself as the Head of government. Things like houses and cars, hotels were owned by the state.

Equally, he advocated for what he referred to as ‘villagisation’ program. Whence the whole country was divided into villages. He made sure that there wasa communal consciousness amongst the individuals that makes up a given village. Work done in factories and farm was a collective effort. Every one saw the next person as a brother whom he must share both pains and joy with. The government tried to ensure that no village was lacking anything, and there was no preferential treatment. Everything was equally shared amongst the villages.

Basically, “Ujamaa” socialism emphasizes an African communal existence (Fouéré, 2014; Nyanto, 2020; Wakota, 2018; Yoon & Mudida, 2020). But just like any other political philosophy, “Ujamaa” socialism had its own shortcomings. Neyerere failed to understand the concupiscible nature of humans. The insatiable desire of man to acquire the wealth of his own. In the first place, there was no way “Ujamaa” socialism would have come to stay because it discourages competition and where there is no competition, there might be no innovation as such, which could lead to a retrogression in development. Also, the principle of collective consciousness was not possible because man by nature is egoistic and has inherently in him what is called the Survival Instinct (Merkl & Leonard, 2003). Equally, the principle of co-operation could not work, because everyone happens to come from a particular family lineage as such, could only relate closely to one who is of the same lineage. This also affected the villagisation strategy. Also, the principle of equality wouldn’t have worked, because man by nature was not created as equals. The reason here is that human beings as we all know are gifted differently. Some have more outstanding talents than others as such, can’t be equals. Even in heaven as we are made to understand Biblically, there are hierarchies and God is at the Apex. So, there is no doubt, that there must be inequalities amongst men. In spite of all these shortcomings, Ujamaa socialism in its own right qualifies as an African socio-political thought. Even, the positive impacts of the practices of “Ujamaa” socialism in Tanzanian, are felt to date. Thanks to J.K Neyerere

Scientific Socialism

Scientific socialism owes its existence to Karl Marx, Engels and V.I Lenin of Russia. As earlier noted, the shortcomings of utopian socialism, paved way for scientific socialism. Marx and Engels as we are going to see, decided to label their own socialist thought as scientific because, other socialist thoughts were impracticable and visionary in character by trying to improve the welfare of humans holistically, but, Marx and Engels adopted a scientific approach aimed at analyzing and understanding the plights of the new industrial society with its inherent exploitative tendencies. This scientific analysis is drawn from the fields of economics, sociology

and history. With these scientific methods, they hope to effect a positive change in the new capitalist society (Cohen 1982)

Dialectical Materialisms, Historical Materialism, and Economic Determinism

Marx's political philosophy is based on the tripartite fundamental principles of Dialectical materialism, historical materialism and economic determinism. For Marx, matter is the basic causal factor in the historical process and in the evolution of social and political systems. He argued that, it is not minded or reason like some philosophers agreed, that is the causal factor in historical development. For him, dialectical materialism is the key to understanding all reality, especially human reality. What then is dialectical materialism? According to Karl Marx (1992), dialectical materialism is the view that the material and economic conditions of man's existence basically determine his social and political existence. Marx had a materialist conception of history. Historical materialism is the special and practical application, which Marx gives to Hegel's idea of philosophy of History. For Marx, the moving force in history is not the insubstantial spirit or the Absolute idea of Hegel, but, rather the relations in which men stand to one another in the process of production. History according to Marx, moves by contradictions and conflicts, the actors in the cosmic drama being real events in the ordinary, empirical sense, not the Absolute idea or Spirit, as held by Hegel.

Marx holds that man's history, his economic and social institutions involves tendencies that work out with an iron necessity toward an inevitable goal. Equally, Marx strongly believes in economic determinism. He holds that the social and psychological condition of man, as well as his legal and political institutions, are determined by his economic conditions. For Marx, even man's intellectual life, his religious, artistic and moral ideas are causally determined, fundamentally, by the circumstances of his economic existence. Emphasizing his views on economic determinism, Marx (1992) states that;

“In the social production of their life, men enter into definite relations that are indispensable and independent of their will. The mode of production of material life conditions the social, political and intellectual life process in general. It is not the consciousness of men that determines their being, but, on the contrary, it is their social being that determines their consciousness”.

There is no doubt that contemporary socialist theory owes its origin to Karl Marx and it is within the framework of Marxian scientific socialist theory that modern socialist movements find their origins. According to (Kilroy-Silk, 1992), modern socialism begins with Marx. An interpretation of post Marxian socialism as either a reaffirmation of Marx, a reinterpretation of Marx, are the vision of Marx, or a reaction to Marx would not be too much of an exaggeration. According to Marx, the history of man has alongside with it class stratification and class struggle, as such, he distinguishes in history, five modes of production which gave rise to five corresponding kinds of humans society viz; the Asiatic, Ancient, Feudal, Capitalist and the future society (Socialism). The Asiatic period was characterized with hunting and gathering. People who wandered about in search of means for subsistence as such, do not have a permanent place of residence. Where ever they decide to settle, they build huts and barns. And

the hunting and gathering was done in the group. There was a division of labour such that, as the men goes hunting, the women does the gathering.

Equally, during the Ancient period there was less hunting and gathering. Much of agricultural practice was witnessed. This period is also known as the slave era. Where people were used as machines in carrying out agricultural activities. In this era also, there was a great margin between the slaves and their masters. And there was less of technological advancement. All that was tenable then was the local or indigenous technology so, as the slaves work in the farms, the Masters does the supervision. When it is time for harvest, the slaves does the harvesting. This era paved way for the incoming era known as the feudal era. In the feudal era, the serfs were allowed to rent lands for agriculture purposes and in turn, they pay rent to their Lord. The feudal lords are the owners of land. Also in this era, we have guards who ensure security in the system.

This period like the Ancient was predominantly agrarian. And there was little advancement in technology. This era ushered in the current period known as capitalism. The capitalist system allows the private ownership of means of production. The capitalist era is predominantly industrial and most of the industries belongs to the western capitalist bourgeoisie class. While, the proletariat were made to work in the industries and were given little or nothing for their take home. Another feature of capitalism is competition. There is room for competition between the different industries in a capitalist society. This competition brings about better ways of doing things. That is to say, competition in a capitalist system brings about advancement or improvement in technology. In a capitalist society, the capitalist are the movers and shakers of the society. As such, they can influence and order human activities to their own advantages. Subsequently, in the capitalist society, there is usually a rural-urban migration people move from the rural areas to urban centres where the industries are located, so as to be employed, this has given rise to high population density in the urban centres and its negative consequences. Another features of capitalism is profit maximization. The capitalist are in business to make profit. As such, stops at nothing to ensure that profit is been maximized usually to the detriment of the proletariat.

Equally, the proletariat are made to work for longer hours and their working condition is very poor in a capitalist society, the surplus profit is been enjoyed by the bourgeoisie alone. The capitalist has little or no concern towards the welfare of the proletariat and the proletariat are more like slaves of the Ancient period.

Marx's Critique of Capitalism

Capitalism, is the system of production in which the owners of means of the industries or means of production, depends on the exploitation of the working class for their livelihood. It is the fourth stage in the progress of history and are sult of the preceding series of revolutions in the modes of production, distribution and exchange. According to Marx, man is an animal labourans, which means man is a labouring being. However, in the dignity of labour we have human essence. Man, therefore, becomes a tool in the hands of the capitalist thus losing his dignity as a human personality. This is one of Marx's major criticism of capitalism. What is

man living for if he loses his dignity? (Fromm, 1992), expressing this point, says that “Marx’s central criticism of capitalism is not the injustice in the distribution of wealth”, it is the perversion of labour into forced, alienated meaningless labour, hence the transformation of man into a “crippled monstrosity”.

For Marx, capitalism has divided men into two classes of the privileged oppressors (the bourgeoisie) and the miserable oppressed (the proletariat). He adduced that, owing to the law of history, capitalist system is bound to be replaced like the preceding modes of production and human societies, by a “violent revolution” of the working class, which will pave way for the highest and the last stage of history, devoid of class antagonism. This stage he called Socialism. Marxist socialism is, therefore, a humanism springing basically from an intense disapproval of the harm capitalist society wrought on human nature, and geared toward a resolution by the creation of a new and better order.

Marx’s Perspective on How Socialism could be Attained

Marx maintains that socialism can only be attained by means of a radical revolution. Changes in historical processes come to be via persistent struggles and revolutions and not by non-revolutionary means. According to him, “force” is like a midwife of every society pregnant with new one. For him, a change in the mode of production introduces a crisis into the existing societal relations and superstructure which are slower in their rate of change. To effect a change to a higher stage. The new beneficiaries of the new mode of production concoct the overthrow of the superstructure through revolutionary means. Hence, a new phase of history emerges.

Now, applying this scientific socialist idea of Marx to capitalism, the bourgeoisie class continue to exploit and oppress the proletariat, a time will come when the proletariat will become conscious of themselves. When this consciousness has been gained, it will then result to a collective concern of all oppressed. The proletariat will now begin to form groups that will champion the overthrow of the bourgeoisie class. Equally, it is important to note that, the bourgeoisie class are aware of what might become of them if, the proletariat decides to turn against them. Owing to this fact, the bourgeoisie class uses religion as a tool for defence. Hence Marx(1992) educated that, “religion is the opium of the people”. The proletariat are made to understand that, it is better to remain poor and make heaven, than to be rich and go to hell. As such, the reward for labour is in heaven. Little wonder! Today, majority of the congregants in the church are poor people. The reason is because it is in religion, Christianity per se that the oppressed find solace. According to Marx, the law of history must always hold, as such, a time will come in history when capitalism will be expunged and socialism sets in. The proletariat, Marx maintains, would be recruited from all classes of the population. The increase in number will correspond with the consciousness of an increase in strength and the emergence of an aggregated consciousness as a class with the battle lines drawn against the bourgeoisie class. Led by a vanguard group, the class struggle will inevitable result in the overthrow of power from the bourgeoisie and the centralization of the means of production in the hands of the state, with the proletariats as the ruling class.

Marx (1992) concluded, by asserting that extreme socialism will give rise to a new order known as communism. Though this view is questionable but since that is not the target of this work, we shall let the sleeping dog lie.

The Relevance of Scientific Socialism to Contemporary Nigerian Society

The next question now is how relevant is Marx's scientific socialist ideology, to the contemporary leadership situation in Nigerian society? To break the ice, it is important for us to have a better understanding of pre-colonial Nigerian society and how it paved the way for the contemporary Nigerian situation. Nigeria as we know, is of diverse ethnic groups with over 240 different languages. However, the major ethnic group today includes Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba's. Nigeria before the coming of the white's was an agrarian society. The major occupation then was farming, hunting and fishing. Though, the works of blacksmiths was also witnessed. The society then, was predominantly communalistic and agrarian in nature.

Means of production such as land was communally owned. Farming was collectively carried out (Snyder et al., 2020; Swain, 1999; "The Hungarian Agricultural 'Miracle' and the Limits of Socialist Reforms," 2020). There exist a common consciousness amongst the people. The joy of one was the joy of all and the sorrow of one was the sorrow of all. Things were done in consonance with the societal norms. The relationship between individuals was fraternal in nature. The next person is seen as a brother and vice-versa. Also, the kind of education that was tenable in the pre-colonial Nigerian society was informal in nature and there exist mutual respect for each other. Though we had different empires during this time. For example we had the great Benin Empire, the Oyo Empire and the Kwararafa Empire to mention but a few. The major concern then was to ensure that each empire was protected from an external aggression. During this period, we were made to understand that, there was no room for individualism, as such, the abolition of exploitative tendencies. In summary, the pre-colonial Nigerian society, was the one of brotherhood and interdependence on each other.

The story becomes different when the whites eventually arrived Nigeria. They introduced a new religion and values which had a western bias. They also, introduce a type of education called formal education. Here people were thought how to read and write. Equally, they brought along side with them their cultural and technological bias. In short, the whole of pre-existing value system was affected by the coming of the whites. For example in the act of governance, Lord Lugard introduced the system of indirect rule in the northern region but, this couldn't hold water in the eastern and western regions of the country. There was also, the introduction of false labour. People were used a tools by the whites to achieve their aims just as Marx earlier noted the law of history must always hold. As such, a given situation will always give rise to a new situation.

Subsequently, the birth of the oil and gas regime in Nigeria became rather a curse than a blessing. This is so because the oil money controlled by our leaders are being stolen to enrich other countries at the detriment of Nigerians. This has made partisan politics lucrative in Nigeria. People no longer see adding value to themselves by way of schooling an honorable thing to do. Hence, we find mediocrity and incompetence in our socio-political sphere. The sublime quest

for political power, is to gain economic power and freedom in order to oppress and intimidate others. Fortunately, Nigeria makes a lot of money from the crude oil, but the problem is bad leadership as exemplified by the affluent class of the society. Needless to say that Nigeria is confronted with myriads of problems such as, kidnapping insecurity, unemployment, bad roads, poor water supply and sanitation to mention a few. The fact of the matter is that, the capitalist won't make anything in this country work, so as to remain relevant in the scheme of things and to continually oppress and intimidate the poor hoipolloi.

The truth of the situation is that in Nigeria today, the rich are getting richer and the poor are getting poorer. A situation best described in pidgin English as "Monkey dey work, Baboon dey chop". There is no doubt that, capitalism has taking over the Nigeria economy and this is as a result of industrial development and over-dependence on crude oil. Less attention is given to agriculture. Hence, the Nigerian populace is left in the hands of the capitalist. Most of the industries today, in Nigeria are owned by out past and present leaders who have stolen from the government treasury and in some cases they are co-owners of industries in alliance with western capitalist.

It is pertinent to note that the privatization program of the government of Obasanjo/Atiku, was nothing but a capitalist ideology. Who are the people that have financial strength, to buy shares or possibly by up companies if not the opulent class in the society. Also, the so called deregulation of the oil industries is a program that has inherently in it a capitalist tendency. Let's also take a lookat the information industry which happens to be one of the major exploitative mechanism been used by the oppressors today, in Nigeria. The coming of the mobile phone in the country for instance, has done more harms than good. Owning a mobile phone is like embarking on a white elephant project. So, this is strictly meant for the rich who could afford to own and maintain one. Most of the media houses are owned by the opulent class. Also, most hospitals that are of higher standards today in Nigeria are privately owned. You can imagine someone who is not a medical practitioner employing the services of medical doctors and nurses as the case may be to come and work for them in their established hospitals. At the end of the day, the workers are paid little next to nothing as takehome. While the C.E.O (Owner of Hospital) enjoys the major profits accruable to the establishment.

If you go to places like Kano, Kaduna, Abuja, Lagos Port-Harcourt and Aba where most of the minor industries are situated, you will begin to appreciate the need for the implementation of the scientific socialist thought of Karl Marx. In Kano for example where I was an eyewitness, a factory worker whose fingers were chopped off by one of the factory's machines, to my greatest surprise, instead of taking this poor boy to the hospital for treatment, he was rather paid off and advised to go and treat himself. This is to tell you how brutal and insensitive the capitalist could be, the working conditions of the industrial workers is very poor. Their remuneration is equally poor and they are made to work for longer hours like we find in the banks for instance. The educational system of the country is another case in point. The best schools in terms of qualitative teaching and learning with qualitative structures are privately owned.

The proletariat who happen to be workers in these institutions are poorly paid and treated as observed in the tertiary education system in Nigeria. Also, in the transportation industry, the major players are the affluent class of the society. Take the aviation industry for instance, most

commercial and private planes are owned by the bourgeoisie. Even in the maritime sector these oppressors have taking over almost every sphere of Nigerian's economy. It is pertinent to note that those who have economic power directly or indirectly own political power and authority. Should this situation of class, stratification and exploitation continue thereby widening the gap between the rich and the poor in this country of ours? what then will be the fate of the poor masses in this country?

Consequently, the scientific socialist ideology becomes relevant to the contemporary Nigerian society. It is pertinent to note: that Marx's scientific socialism which emphasizes a radical overthrow of the bourgeoisie by the proletariat has worked for countries like Russia which later became U.S.S.R meaning Union of Socialist State Republic. The fight was headed by V.I Lenin himself. Also in China today most companies and industries are collectively owned, this accounts for Chinese rapid technological advancement, because everyone works as a family, trying to put in their best. Equally, in Ghana and Congo scientific socialist reforms were witnessed.

CONCLUSION

It is time for the oppressed groups in Nigeria to speak in one voice and form a formidable front that will help bring about a positive change for the entire nation. Force, according to Marx, is like a midwife of every society pregnant with a new one. This means that, for the oppressed to bring about any change in leadership structure in contemporary Nigeria society, they must employ the use of formidable force in the course of revolting against the wicked and insensitive affluent class in the society. This could help usher in a better system of governance and leadership in contemporary Nigeria society.

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