

Marxist Philosophy and the Quest for Freedom in Africa

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Abstract

This essay discusses Marxist philosophy. Marxism, as it is usually refers to, is a socio-political theory that aims to resolve the contradiction that has led to the exploitation of the masses by those who own private property. For Marx, economic exploitation arises more fundamentally in a capitalist system because of the property relation attached to it. Hence, those who do not have property become slaves to those who have. The domination or alienation of the workers, to Marx, has created property-less majorities. Marx argues that the need to put an end to capitalism requires a revolution. Eventually, he posits that capitalism will be replaced by socialism, and later by communism. The essay seeks to show under what ground is revolution justifiable. We also intend to show the merits or demerits of Marxist philosophy to contemporary struggle for freedom in Africa. The essay concludes that when Marxist philosophy has been critically digested and adopted (though, reformulated), it would serve as an ideological orientation needed to realizing genuine freedom.

Keywords: Marxism, Capitalism, Communism, Revolution, Freedom, Exploitation, Africa.

INTRODUCTION

When problem arises, suggestions as to how it could be solved would come from different angles. Some would suggest that it requires a psychological analysis. Others would say it is fundamental that its sociological root should be surveyed. Moreover, there are those who would argue that it has political, economic or moral undertone. Whatever the position advanced, it seems good to note that scholars are continually formulating theories upon which our lives can be adequately ordered. In other words, philosophers, politician and social theorists are always providing suggestions on how our society could be better. In spite of this, however, crises continue to loom day in day out. As we said above, society is faced with many problems. In this essay, we are to examine the root of socio-political and economic problem that confront our society. As it is needed to be asked at this juncture: How can political, social or economic problems be resolved? It is an attempt to address this question that led Karl Marx to write what we now described as Marxism or Marxist philosophy.

Marxist philosophy therefore serves as a theory, philosophy or ideology that provides the guideline on how we can attain political, economic and social development or resolve these problems. In this regard, it is a critique of all hitherto existing socio-economic modes of production aside primitive communism and future communism that would emerge. Thus, Marx shows us the strategy that we are to adopt to attain complete freedom and holistic development. This strategy demands that we should engage in armed revolution with those that have exploited us throughout our lives. It is after our victory that is certain, that we can fully enjoy our existence. The questions that we would explore in this essay include: Is revolution a viable method to realizing freedom? What guarantee does Marx have that this method is potent enough to bring about the desired goal? Can an unjust method be morally permissible for justice to take place? And finally, can peaceful method be used to end alienation?

Be that as it may, we intend to achieve our aim be looking at the issue before us in two compartments. In the first segment, Marxist political philosophy shall be discussed. In the second segment, we shall attempt a criticism of Marxist political philosophy taking into consideration the above questions. It is after we have done this that our thesis given above would be defended.

MARXIST PHILOSOPHY: AN EXPOSITION

In the opinion of Michael Rosen (2000: 528), "Karl Marx was the most important of all theorists of socialism." Before Marx formulates his version of socialism, no doubt, he has learnt more from his studies of British political economy, German classical philosophy and Utopian socialism. These three sources have been largely agreed to have influenced the perspective now known as Marxism. It is not our interest, in this essay, to discuss the influence of these varieties of thoughts on Marxist philosophy; nonetheless, it is vital that we mentioned this. It seems vital because no man is an island of knowledge. The core of this assertion is to pinpoint that Marx, though contributes his own quota to scholarship, is indebted to others scholars among whom we have Hegel, Adam Smith, David Richardo, Saint Simon, Robert Owen, Engels, Feuerbach, Darwin among other philosophers.

Marx was influenced by Hegel as we have said. It was from Hegel that he borrowed the formula with which he can confront the problem that assail him. This problem is how the workers or masses could attain their freedom. He believes that workers are not truly free in the capitalist mode of production. So from Hegel, Marx borrows an

ideology that would enable him to explain how the situation of the 'have-not' or workers could be changed. As we need to clarify, the condition of the masses demands that they get a better life otherwise they would die of hunger or poverty. Hence the workable formula that would serve as an explanatory system was taken from Hegel by Marx. This method is called dialectics. Hegel's dialectics operates on triadic movement. A position is claimed to explain a problem (thesis) is shown to be inadequate by its contradiction (antithesis), and the latter is also shown to be inconsistent by another thing or concept therefore blending the positive parts of both (the synthesis). The synthesis of the thesis and antithesis is what Hegel calls the absolute or spirit. This spirit is not a particular thing like table, God or man, but the combination of all existing reality. Hence, Hegel uses dialectics to show how things in nature are reconciled. His dialectics gives supremacy to idea, consciousness, mind or thought over matter. According to Samuel E. Stumpf and James Fieser (2005: 313) "the movement of the mind from being to Nothing produces a third category Becoming. The concept of Becoming is formed by the mind when it understands that Being, for the reasons already mentioned, is the same as Nothing. Becoming, Hegel says, is "the unity of Being and Nothing." It is, he says, "one idea." Becoming is therefore the synthesis of Being and Nothing.

Marx agrees with Hegel that the subject of dialectics is to understand unity in the midst of diversity so as to seek for change, yet he rejects Hegel's idealistic clothing of dialectics. To Marx, dialectics is supposed to be clothed with materialistic garment. Thus, Marx removes idealism from dialectics and as such change its inner working to a materialistic kind. As he maintains:

The first work which I undertook for a solution of doubts, which assailed me, was a critical review of the Hegelian philosophy of right, a work the introduction to which appeared in 1844 in the *Deutsch-französische Jahrbücher*, published in Paris. My investigation led to the result that legal relations as well as forms of state are to be grasped neither from themselves nor from the so-called general development of the human mind, but rather have their roots in the material conditions of life (Marx, 1995: 263-264).

Having said this, Marx proceeds to discuss the nature of his own dialectics. Unlike Hegel, Marx does not believe that a mystical entity called 'spirit' is responsive for the change in evolution of man or of society. For him, matter, not spirit; is the driving force in history. By matter, Bertrand Russell (1948: 750) holds that "Marx' view is not the wholly dehumanized matter of the atomists, but man's relation to matter, of which the most important part of, is his mode of production." Hence, the refutation of dialectics that fails to capture the mode of production as the condition for the motion or change as well as the root of contradiction as fail to grasp the nature of reality in an appropriate manner. Karl Popper (1945: 102) quoted Marx thus:

My own dialectic method is not totally different from Hegelian but is its direct opposite. For Hegel...the thinking process is the demurge (creator) of the real world, and the real world is only the outward manifestation of the idea. With me, on the other hand, the ideal is nothing else than the material world reflected by the human mind translated into terms of thought.

Against this background, Marx posits that dialectical materialism which is his own method still operates within the laws set for it by Hegel. These laws are now generally referred to as laws of dialectics. They are (1) the law of unity and struggle of opposites, (2) the law of qualitative and quantitative changes and (3) the law of the negation of the negation. With these laws, Marxist philosophy develops its internal logic for the exploration of the crisis of freedom, development and alienation. We should explain these laws briefly to make Marxist philosophy more simplistic. This shall be done in the next paragraph.

The law of unity and struggle or contradiction of opposites presupposes that a thing on the one hand cannot be separated from other things. That is, phenomena of nature are connected to one another. Marx would show later how the workers are connected with the producers, rulers with the ruled and so on. On the other hand, this law also presupposes that things that are connected are conflicting. As Marx shall show us later, the interest of the capitalist and workers are conflicting. It is this contradiction that informs the second law of dialectics. The second law presupposes that changes in quality may bring about quantitative change and vice versa. In this case, Marx shall later demonstrate how increase in production output by the workers would lead to their exploitation. In the same way as increase in workers could lead to increase in the quality of service with a consequence of low wages. Thus the law of quality and quantitative changes suggests that change occur rapidly, so that progress or development is not a gradual process but a leap. This contradiction that would lead to positive change takes Marx to consider the third law. The law of negation of the negation explores the stages of development. The contradiction in a system is therefore removed by its negation, and this is in turn negated by another. Marx shows how feudal system has been negated by capitalist system and how this would be negated by socialist system, then by communism which is the riddled of history solved. It is now better to discuss Marxist philosophy.

Marx and Engels start their polemic work entitled Communist Manifesto with the expression:

The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggle. Freeman and slave, patrician and plebeian, lord and serf, guild master and journeyman, in a word, oppressed and oppressor, stood in constant opposition to one another, carried on an uninterrupted, now hidden, now open fight, a fight that each time ended, either in a revolutionary reconstruction of society at large, or in the common ruin of the contending classes (Marx and Engels, 1995: 300).

If we are to resolve a conflict between two people or two classes at least one would seek for the root of the conflict. Conflict often arises from disparity in worldview or interest. Then we need to inquire from Marx what was responsible for the fight he and Engels mentioned above. The answer to our query is easy to come across in different works of Marx and other Marxists. Let us ask Marx: What causes this fight?

Marx says that every problem of society has economic root. In other words, it is how to share the fruit of production between the producers and workers that is the major problem of society. Marx insists that the producers (owners of land, machine and companies) in a capitalist system exploit the workers to the extent that many workers cannot feed themselves daily. It is this exploitation that often leads to fight. In fact, Marx adds that it is not through that economic alone that the workers are dominated, those who have acquired enough resources from the exploitation of the workers are now those who find themselves in government. Because of the excess profits that they have realized from the sweat of the workers they are now in charge of every facet of the society. They now control religion, they determine what the law would be, what should be taught and not be taught at the state and federal universities, they legislate on what is right and moral. The worst of it, they use the state (which include—police, army and prison) to put the workers under control. Hence, Lenin referred to Engels who writes:

Because the state arose from the need to hold class antithesis in check, and because it arose, at the time, in the midst of the conflict of these classes, it is, as a rule, the state of the most powerful, economically dominant class, which through the medium of the state, becomes also the politically dominant class, and thus acquires new means of holding down and exploiting the oppressed class (Lenin, 1976: 16).

At this point, Marx connects economic problem with other issues in the society. These issues are political, religious, legal, educational and moral. He argues that the economic issue is the major problem of a society. In this contention, he is maintaining that whatever takes place at the economic angle would have its corresponding effects at the legal, political or religious angle. What this means is that if there is massive exploitation in the economic aspect of reality, the legal and political lives would reflect this massive exploitation. And going by this, justice cannot be realized. For Marx, D. McLellan (1995:207) reports that “The state is an expression of human alienation similar to religion, law, custom and morality, and equally based on a particular mode of production...” This means that if we are to seek for just social system, then we should ensure that there is no mal-normal at the economic foundation of life. He writes:

As a certain stage of their development, the material forces of production of society come in conflict with the existing relations of production, or what is but a legal expression for the same thing—with the property relations within which they had been at work before. From forms of development of the productive forces these relations turn into their fetters. Then begin an epoch of social revolution. With the change of the economy foundation the entire immense superstructure is more or less rapidly transformed (Marx, 1995: 264).

It follows therefore that property or what one could call private property right is the main origin of the conflict that Marx is referring to above. Those who have acquired property either by the exploitation of others or by inheritance from those who have dominated others are now trying to force others (workers) to live at their mercy. Hence, they try to make others their slaves—slaves of machines. The superstructure which includes state, law, religion and morality are therefore describes by Marx as ideology. What does ideology mean for Marx? M. D. A. Freeman (2001: 965-966) explains ideology as:

(i) a system of beliefs characteristic of a class or group; (ii) a system of illusionary beliefs, false ideas, false consciousness (that is, as opposed to true or scientific knowledge); (iii) the general process of the production of meanings and ideas. There is no concentrated treatment of ideology in the works of Marx and Engels.

Although Freeman’s position is right of Marxism, they use the word ideology mostly in the first two senses above and as such they warn that the workers should avoid false consciousness through which the capitalists have caged

them. The warning goes to the extent that they even warn that political economy is against the interest of the masses that are longed overdue for freedom. However, Marx does not think that freedom could come by dialogue or peaceful means. Since there is class struggle and the legal or state as instrument of exploitation cannot be used to reconcile it, then it means that in the existing social order the workers would not be able to gain their freedom as well as achieve development unless this existing social relation is destroyed. The goal of Marx later shifted to equip the workers with the necessary tactics that would ensure their victory at last.

Marx believes that what the proletariat are experiencing at the moment is a dictatorship of the bourgeoisie. What this means is that it is the capitalists that are leading, putting to an end the lives of the workers at their wills. To Marx, this would continue until the workers are conscious of their class as the exploited one. This is not all; capitalist production system would bring about or improve the intelligence of the workers. When the conditions of the workers become unbearable Marx says that the revolution would then emerge by necessity. The workers would fight for their life—their freedom. For this to happen, the workers would cease the instrument of production (their huge numbers would make this easier) and put an end to the reign of the bourgeoisie (capitalists). Marx (1975: 74) remarks:

We have seen above that the first step in revolution by the working class is to raise the proletariat to the position of the ruling class, to win the battle of democracy...The proletariat will use its political supremacy to wrest, by degrees, all instruments of production in the hands of the state, i.e., of the proletariat organized as the ruling class, and to increase the total of production forces as rapidly as possible.

When this has been achieved, capitalism will give way to social ownership of means of production. That is, socialism would be used to replace it. When this has been done, enemies of socialism would be confronted so as to put an end to the remnant of capitalism. When the capitalists have been defeated, capitalist economy will wither away in the same way that democracy which is its political system will also wither away. As democracy withers away, state (which include army, police and prison) would cease to exist). H. Draper (1977: 288) asserts, for Marx, the destruction of the state had only one implication for communists, the cessation of organized power of one class for the suppression of another class. In this case, the dictatorship of proletariat is now in place. This dictatorship is violent and bloody.

After this physical confrontation between the two contending classes, the workers because of their numbers would come out victorious. This victory will pave way for the reconstruction of society. Exploitation would no longer exist since private property which was the major factor responsible for the exploitation of the workers by the capitalists would no longer be allowed. In other words, in the socialist society, efforts would be made to ban private property and any antagonist to that will be suppressed by the commune. The commune is the name for the working class that shall take over the administration of the society from the bourgeoisie. Marx (1975: 28) maintains that, “The bourgeoisie society would be replaced by an association, in which free development of each is the condition for the free development for all.” When all the obstacles confronting the socialist state have been defeated, a transition into communism would therefore be possible says Marx. Thus they conclude that:

Communism as the positive transcendence of private property as human self-estrangement, and therefore as the real appropriation of the human essence by and for man; communism therefore as the complete return of man to himself as a social being—a return accomplished consciously and embracing the entire wealth of previous development. Communism is the riddle of history solved, and it is known to be this solution (Marx and Engels, 1975: 296-297)

We have so far been discussing Marxist philosophy. There is a need to employ this theory to address the challenges to freedom that Marx has noted above. We doubt that Marx’ submission and method can be used to resolve the issue of injustice done to man by man if the conflict in Marx’ theory is not confronted and resolved. Hence, a criticism of his position shall therefore be done in the next segment. In the rest of this essay, the merits, demerits and the potentiality of using Marxist philosophy to resolving the crisis of human freedom in Africa shall be pursued.

A CRITIQUE OF MARXIST PHILOSOPHY: MERITS, DEMERITS AND THE CASE OF FREEDOM

To attempt a critique is to show the plausibility or otherwise of a position. Let us start by saying that Marxism has been a household name among those who studies law, sociology, economics, politics and philosophy. This means that Marxist philosophy has a penetrating effect on the lives of scholars across disciplines, regions and the world. Now, scholars in Africa, following Marx, have championed arguments in line with Marxist ideology for change and have described Africa as a socialist state. Works like Frantz Fanon’s *Wretched of the Earth*, Walter Rodney’s *How Europe Underdevelopment Africa* and Kwame Nkrumah’s *Consciencism* are examples of ideas that unconditionally affirmed the critique of political economy and capitalism by Marx. In addition, the crisis of

slave trade, colonialism and neo-colonialism have received the same treatment among African scholars. The point is that Marxist philosophy has served different intents. But, to be able to achieve all the aim sets for materialist theory of change by Marx himself and the use to which this theory has been put, as we intend to do here, it seems crucial that we are critical about Marx's position. Being critical entails that the plausibility or otherwise of Marx's analysis (and those of others including ours) must be shown very clearly. There is a need to add that our conclusions must follow from our premises.

The first question that we would explore in this essay is: Is revolution a viable method to realizing freedom? This question is needed to be raised, here, because it appears to us that the issue that Marx intends to resolve is that of justice. Marx seems to argue that there is an injustice in the distribution of economy resources. To be certain, he observes that the producers make surplus profits from the exploitation of the workers and thereafter adopts the state, law, morality or even education to dominate the workers. This appears unfair. Moreover, it suggests that there is inequality and impartiality in capitalist distribution of rights, dues and privileges. The solution, then, is to end it once and for all. Marx therefore seeks for justice through revolutionary approach. Freeman (2001: 974-975) writes:

Marx's view of justice emerges most clearly in *Capital* and the *Critique of the Gotha Programme*. In *Capital* he writes of the content of justice as corresponding to the mode of production so that "slavery on the basis of capitalist production is unjust; likewise fraud in the quality of commodities." In the *Gotha* critique, Marx asks: "What is a just distribution?" His response is: "Do not the bourgeoisie assert that the present-day distribution is 'just'? And is it not, in fact, the only 'just distribution on the basis of the present-day mode of production'?" For Marx and Engels then, judgements about justice are not made by reference to abstract or formal principles independent of the existing mode of production: they do not postulate an ideal against which social reality can be measured and, if need be, adjusted.

Following from this excerpt is clear that bourgeoisie mode of distribution is unjust because the workers are left exploited. Here, Marxist philosophy seeks to bring the issue of injustice against capitalists. Since the capitalists are the one dominating every sphere of life Marx does not think that law could be used to inform a desirable outcome for the masses. Only violence can do this. To us, the issue of violence needs to be critically appraised. It is needed because we are now more bothered about the threats that action like war could bring to our society. There is a need to look at Marx appeals for justice for the workers in the court of the bourgeoisie and his view that revolution is just. The latter point is implicitly drawn from Marx's view since he has neglected the fact that what led him to his postulation initially was the problem of injustice. The question that Marx, if alive, would answer is this: Would one who seek equity goes with a dirty hand? The argument of Marxism seems good to the extent that it opens clearly the conditions of workers in the capitalist system and thus, it shows that the capitalist system largely operates on a scale of injustices. That is, there is lack of fairness in the distributive process and the issue of wages paid to the workers clearly strike the fact of injustice in capitalism. However, it would have been better if this exploitation is rejected by an appeal to somewhat different political ideology like self-reliance, socialism, communism, welfarist state or neo-welfarism as theorists in the present-day Western and African societies are beginning to advance. The first position that one should draw here is that revolution is dangerous, inhumane, unjust, immoral, unnecessary and unpractical to bring freedom to the masses. It is dangerous because the workers lives are exposed to danger through it. This danger includes environmental disasters, homelessness, injuries and death. From this, it is logical that it becomes inhumane. Something that is inhumane, to us, seems unjust. A case of injustice leads one to bother herself with the issue of morality of such issue. It is unnecessary as well as unpractical since it could lead to more hazard than success.

What guarantee does Marx have that this method is potent enough to bring about the desired goal? We doubt that violence could be fruitful to seek peace if other methods better than this are still available to us. Afghanistan and Pakistan are examples of countries that have suffered severe attacks since the first time violence is relied upon as a means of getting their freedom. More recently, Egypt, Libya and Tunisia experienced a change of government in a need to seek for freedom, however, these countries have experienced since then, a breakdown in law and order. Lives are continually being lost from crisis which one could resolve peacefully through constitutional framework. This is not to say that freedom from domination can easily be attained if force is not added. In praxis, we have witnessed government killing activists that are seeking for just order through constitutional means rather than violence. Ken Saro Wiwa of Nigeria is a good example. He fought to ensure that the people of Niger Delta, Nigeria were not exploited, but the government of Nigeria do nothing but to execute him under fraudulent justice. One may, then, be more sceptical that true or genuine freedom can be obtained in either democracy or military governed systems.

The second issue is that if the capitalists are not ready to grant freedom to workers and the court system including

police and army are used to keep the people under control so that the leaders would amass all societal wealth to promote their class interest, then: Can an unjust method be morally permissible for justice to take place? Arguments are put forward that if the intention of the state is to promote justice she may force people to comply with this objective by forcing justice to take place. This position is advanced by scholars like Nicollo Machiavelli, Thomas Hobbes, Jean Jacque Rousseau, Karl Popper, among other philosophers. For instance, Popper (1945: 151) holds that:

The use of violence is justified only under a tyranny which makes reforms without violence impossible, and it should have only one aim, that is, to bring about a state of affairs which makes reform without violence possible.

Popper, like Marx, thinks that we can employ a violent method to achieve our cause insofar as we are doing this with a legitimate motive. This motive may be to achieve our freedom from a tyrant leader or leaders. As in the argument put forward by Marx, the leaders are those who are in the ruling class. They employ economic and political policies that have direct tendencies to affect the well-being of the masses. The condition of the workers is that of wretchedness. The capitalist of Europe and their government are constantly making it impossible for the masses to realize their essence. Poverty stare people in the face most especially the Africans—who are daughters and sons of slave trade and colonialism. Writing on the predicament of the Third World countries, Michael Parenti (1989: 12) observes:

In a word, the Third World is not underdeveloped but over-exploited. The gap between rich and poor nations is not due to the neglect of the latter by the former as has been often claimed. For forty years or more we have heard how the nations of the North must help close the poverty gap between themselves and the nations of the south, devoting some portion of their technology and capital to the task. Yet the gap between the rich and poor only widens because investments in the Third World are not designed to develop the capital resources of the poor nations but to enrich the Western investors.

Undoubtedly, Parenti's position shows the predicament of the Third World countries. Even in some Western states, exploitation of the workers is more real. Hence, the search for justice requires that we treat the capitalist system as it is in praxis. There is therefore a need to say that the accused (that is, the capitalist) needs to understand that unless economic resources is rationally distributed the issue of violence is likely to break out more in the future than we have ever experienced. Even if Marxist prediction does not come at this time, we insist that it would emerge later. This strikes the second position that crime rate would continue to increase if wealth are not rationally distributed. We decide not to subscribe to equal distribution that Marx advances because it appears to us that this is not practical or tenable. Some people have talents, skills and drive to succeed, to work and to grow than others. Some are interested in production whereas others want to consume. A case in point is African countries that spend over 70% of their budgets for each year on consumption rather than production when compared to Western countries like Russia, Netherland and Britain that invest in capital projects. This would largely account for the unequal distribution of resources unless the issue of surplus value is echoed here. The major issue is that we need to save the exploited countries and people because violence that happens everywhere always its root in exploitation of one person by another. The exploited groups are equally humans with dignity and worth; hence force may be applied by them to free themselves. This has negative implications for both parties. The argument is that if a state could compel her people to obey her law in the same way that a tyrant can be forced to vacate office for a democrat, it follows also that the capitalist can be forced to comply with the people's agitation.

But, the next question is: How would this be possible since they do not have the will to do so? It may be tempting to hold that violence is the only potent means to get this done; however, we suggest instead that violence would frustrate such an agenda. It is; then, correct to say that violent revolution is not a moral framework for change. The masses need education as a force to break the stronghold of capitalism. This education requires that they are well-equipped with the knowledge of politics, law, economics and philosophy. This is important because one needs to know the causes of the problems of society so that one would be able to argue for or against the policies of government that have something to do with their well-being. Adequate knowledge would therefore provide one with ways through which a given problem could be resolved. However, this education is lacking in Africa and other parts of the world. This accounts for why people now resolve to seek refuge in terrorism and violence for change. Thus, no argument whatsoever could account for the justice of violence or rightness of war. In both frameworks, they are immoral in the sense that they have tendencies to inflict harm on innocent.

Can peaceful method be used to end alienation? There are those like Marx who believe that the workers or colonized people cannot get freedom from exploitation unless violent revolution is adopted. For instance, Frantz Fanon (1963: 27) avers, "National liberation, national renaissance, the restoration of nationhood to the people,

commonwealth: whatever may be the headings used or the new formulas introduced, decolonization is always a violent phenomenon.” To his mind, friendly discourses in conferences or peaceful consultation or still, constitutional means are ineffective ways of seeking for freedom. To him, these methods are not suitable to realize freedom for the oppressed because the exploiters are wolf in sheep’s clothing. They could design other non-violent means to exploiting the masses. Marx indeed discusses how religion has been employed to this end. To our mind, there are examples to show that this argument is correct. For instance, one could grant that the Third World countries have received political freedom from their colonizers, but in what sense can one say that these colonized countries are free when policies of these countries (say Nigeria, South Africa, Ghana) are frustrated by the advanced countries even at the level of the United Nations. In fact, numerous examples can be highlighted from the activities of the World Bank and IMF. In his inaugural lecture, Olumuyiwa Falaiye (2012: 14) writes:

I know from historical experience that the West has committed atrocities and exploited our people. The West does not give a hoot about us (Africans) and the West is not alone. The Arabs do not give a damn about Africans; neither do the French, the British, the Russians, Japanese, or Koreans. Certainly the Chinese are not in Africa simply because they prefer the name Salvation Army to the Peoples Liberation Army. Every foreigner or entity who visits Africa comes to pursue their interests, not ours (Africans).

As Falaiye rightly notes, everyone is trying to ensure that their needs are met. Just as Africa needs the resources of other nations that are not available in her terrain, other countries want to meet their needs by exploring Africans’ market. However, while Africans are restricted abroad through strict laws of consumption, production and change, Africans’ market is opened to the latter free without interference. There are no potent law on trade to check and balance foreign companies’ operation in Africa. One should not shy away from the fact that these laws are only on paper, they are not effective. But when they are effective, instead African companies are the victims of such laws. One would begin to imagine whether what Marx describes as the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie is not everywhere as Marx has envisioned. But, would peace resolve this crisis?

Of course, the answer is yes. There is a need for a social platform for the discussion of the crisis that is faced by the workers all over the world. There is also a need for a platform to discuss the crisis of exploitation that is opened to each affected countries of the world. Finally, there is a need for all governments of the world (Africa, Asia, Europe, America and others) to discuss the challenges that are to be faced should peace-talk is not pursued. All these platforms would represent the needs of the world’s citizens rather than local problems alone. The contending issue is that if urgent solution, as we have highlighted above, is not pursued, conflict resolution would be hampered. Consequently, crises rocking in Egypt, Pakistan and Afghanistan would be difficult to solve. The point is that people all over the world are alienated, exploited, dominated and marginalized by others who are either their nationals or foreigners. All these call for drastic solution. Unless we act now, violence revolution advances by Marx would be pursued by those who have not clearly understood Marx or those who have other motives as distinct from that of Marx or perhaps, by those who make more wealth when political instability is the order of the day.

On the final note, we need to ask: Is it possible to have a property-less society in the contemporary state? This, in fact, is one of the cornerstones of those who have been advancing either a socialist or communalistic socio-economic system. Marx, indeed, believes that only through a socialist system can freedom be realized. Also, he believes that it was when property right was advanced that social classes and class struggle emerged. Thus, he wants us to reject this property-society that capitalism tends to represent so that we would all have equal right to use and protect it. When this happens, he thinks that freedom would be restored to the workers. Today, this argument has been found in different variations in the works of African writers. For instance, Julius Nyerere’s Ujamma describes traditional African society as socialist. He argues that neither could anyone teach Africans how to work in harmony (socialize) nor could anyone show us how to resolve crisis democratically. He even says that in traditional African setting everyone is a worker and there was no class distinction. What Nyerere is defending here is that property is held in common among Africans until the West colonized Africa. Even if this was true of the past (as we agree it was), is it doubted that property-less society can be realized in the contemporary time even in communism? So, a more realistic effort should be advanced to face the crisis facing Africa today.

In conclusion, the invaluableness of Marxist philosophy has been discussed. We have attempted this to show the situation of workers in the capitalist system on the one hand, and to address the issue of freedom on the other hand. The paper shows the adequacies and demerits of Marx’s submission and thus applies it to address the crisis of political and economic problems in Africa. We conclude that a reformulation of Marxist political view would be highly necessary to solving the challenges to human freedom.

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