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KARL MARX AND CLASS – A CASE OF CLASS SYSTEM AND ITS CONSEQUENCES IN NIGERIA

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INTRODUCTION

In human society there are many distinctions between individuals, distinctions in terms of nationality, age, sex, social status, education etc. All these are the manifestations of social inequality and social grading of people which is known as social stratification. Although naturally inequalities exist between individuals in all societies, there are distinctly different kinds from social inequalities between people. They are insignificant in themselves in so far as they are not used as a basis for social inequality resulting to the social rankings which man has himself introduced. Rousseau (1974), a famous eighteenth century philosopher summarized the distinctions as follows:-

“I think of mankind as being characterized by two kinds of inequality, one which I call natural or physical because it starts from nature and consists of differences in age, health, physical strength and qualities of the spirit and soul. The second, which we might call moral political inequality because it is based on convention and agreements made between people. The later kind of inequality consists of various privileges which some enjoy at the expense of others, for example, being richer, more honoured, more powerful than others and even getting others to obey your order”. Thus we do not mean natural differences between people when we talk about social inequality which is the essence of social stratification, though, more often than not, people use these natural differences to justify their exploitative positions as exemplified by the domination of women by men to biological differences.

According to Magubane (1984) social stratification which encompasses cultural, social, economic and political institutions in their totality is usually substituted for class by bourgeois scholars, hence “class is viewed as a descriptive category of social stratification subject to empirical specification in concrete

societies". Because of ideological and political strings attached to this concept of class it has been so subject to distortion and disputation.

Going closer home, one discovers the same phenomenon of class analysis. This problem is not only on that of the class definition on a general scale or definition of the concept itself but also on the existence of classes in Nigeria. This has been a major source of controversy among the academics in general and Nigerian social scientists in particular. The difficulty in the analysis of classes in this case arises as a result of so much tremendous external influences upon Nigeria's evolution as a society. The issue is not made easier by the fact that she is as of today not totally independent from formal colonial rule. To compound this problem, some analysts more often than not tend to emphasize the diversities and heterogeneous nature of its people, their culture and socio-political organizations.

However, people like Frank, Rodney, and Wallestein, who belong to the Unequal Exchange school agree with the existence of class in the peripheral states such as Nigeria, arguing that this is only distorted by such things as the development of under-development.

In Marx's use of scientific historical analysis of the society (dialectic), the society evolves by and from within itself. But in the case of Nigeria, it is absurd and wrong to attempt to interpret its growth as a single historical event because contrary to Europe or America, its civilization and development is in no sense continuous with the Western civilization that was imposed on it nor does it merely develop out of it, in accordance with any internal rhythm of social evolution within a single system.

This work therefore specifically addresses itself to the primary problems of examining the divisions in the society using the Marxian framework of analysis with the aim of looking into class system and its consequences in Nigeria.

KARL MARX AND CLASS

According to Onimode (1981) "*classes are large groups of people differing from each other by the place they occupy in the historically defined system of production, and by their relation (in some cases, fixed and formulated in law) to the means of production by their role in social organization of labour and consequently by the dimension and mode of acquiring the share of social wealth which they dispose*".

Karl Marx conception of class is a group of people who share a common economic position in society. In other words, Karl Marx definition of class is in terms of man's position in economy. Marx identified in society of his own day three classes of people, namely:-

- Landlords,
- Capitalists and
- Labourers.

Landlords own the land, the capitalist own the enterprise, and the labourers source of income is wages. Marx recognized these three groups but in actual fact, the criterion he used was ownership of property. The landlords and capitalists were grouped together while the labourers stood along. The means of production include land, tools, factory, all use for production. The non-owners of the means of production are the labourers who are exploited, dehumanized, degraded. All they do is to sell their labour power.

The owners of the means of production are known as the bourgeoisie while the labourers are known to be the proletariat. The two classes relationship is marked by hostility, antagonism and there is always conflict. It is this violence/ conflict that Marx said would lead to revolution and this means change, a revolutionary transformation of society.

To Marx the social structure is continually evolving out of the life process of definite individuals as they seek ways of producing their material needs. Man must be in a position to live in order to be able to act effectively in the society, therefore, he must produce foods, clothing and shelter. This is because these are the primary needs of his that must be met if he is to make history.

In order to effectively satisfy these needs he must therefore fashion out tools with which to produce, hence, accordingly, the first historical act of man is the production of the means to satisfy his basic needs – the means of production.

Except in the most primitive level, production is an organized activity, not of individuals, but of societies which in conformity with their technological and scientific achievements develop social structure and institutions as a framework for carrying out the activity of production. For Marx, the history of mankind is therefore the development of different modes of production, that is, of different types of social structure, from primitive and ineffective to highly complex and efficient ones; all of which must be seen primarily as machineries designed to master the forces of nature to ensure man's survival and comfort. In the social production of their means of existence, men enter into definite, necessary relations which are independent of their will, productive relationships which corresponds to a definite stage of development of their material productive forces. The aggregate of these productive relationships constitutes the economic structure of society, the real basis on which a juridical and political superstructure arises, and to which definite forms of social consciousness correspond (Marx: 1956).

With these definite relations that men enter into, inequalities and contradictions in terms of who gets what are bound to occur and according to Marx, in all historical societies with exception of prehistoric epoch these elements of inequalities and contradictions featured. It involves the exploitation of one group by another. During the primitive communalism stage, the contradictions and inequalities were not pronounced. Everything was communally produced and owned, no appropriation of surplus goods since goods were produced for subsistence and there was no private property.

Whatever is used for and made in common is common property, the house, the garden, the long-boat. The division of labour is purely natural, it exists only between the two sexes – each is master in the appropriate sphere. "But men did not everywhere

remain stationary at this stage” (Marx 1977). Domestication of animals and plants ushered in inequalities and contradictions with surplus production of commodities. Some tribes separated themselves from the major groups hence, “the first great social division of labour”. Exchanges took place between the tribes through their respective heads of gens. The cultivated land that was formerly that of the tribe later was handed over to the gens, by this later to the household and ultimately to individuals for use. Soon individual ownership and exchange of commodities became predominant.

The contradictions and inequalities became rapid with the division of labour made glaring by the invention of iron tools, hence, man entered into a revolutionary stage of development. Iron extended agriculture to wider areas and provided handicraft with tools. Wealth grew rapidly and as the wealth increased so also division of labour. The continuous rise of production and with it, of productive activity of labour, raised the value of human labour power. Thus we enter into the epoch of slavery which also lately depended on slave labour. There developed a leisure class of the slave owners who appropriate the surplus produced by the slaves. Here the contradictions and inequalities were between the slaves and the slave owners with the slaves at the receiving end. With this there developed production for exchange and trade on an unprecedented scale – yet in underdeveloped form (Crawford: 1982).

The distinction between the rich and the poor made its appearance, alongside that between freeman and slaves-with the new division of labour, a new cleavage of society into classes. The division between property as between heads of society clearly manifested itself in this period.

The property differences within the same gens transformed the identity of interests into antagonisms of the numbers of the gens and with it the road to civilization was reached. Civilization increased and strengthened divisions of labour and to these divisions another “third division of labour” which creates a class

that is no longer engaged in production out only in exchange of the products – the merchants.

All previous classes were exclusively connected with production but for the first time with the creation of the merchant class, “a class arose which without in any way participating in production won itself directing role over production. This class made itself indispensable and became a class of parasites, especially during the tail end of the feudal period in Europe.

Feudalism came in with the fall of Roman Empire. With the fall of Roman Empire and the inability of the central government to maintain peace and order, there was a need felt by ordinary Romans to protect themselves against the stronger people than they were, hence they became vassals of the lords, they attached themselves to. During this Feudal period, the major contradictions in society were between the Feudal lords and vassal and the set of rights, duties and obligations which made up that relationship. This is because land, the major force of production was owned by the lord whereas the serfs had only rights to use the land in-return for services or payment for the lord. But when the philosophical and political ideology accepted the view of freedom and equality of all men, the capitalist who had hitherto stayed at the peripheral towns felt free to operate thereby embracing the development of the class system in a more systematic, more sophisticated, different from (Marx and Eagels:1939).

Towards the last stages of the Feudal period, towns began to spring, up, industries began to be built and consequently, many people were dispossessed of their lands. In addition to this, the artisans who could not compete with the cheap industrial manufactured goods began, together with the landless peasants, to look for job thereby becoming wage labourers, to look for jobs thereby becoming wage labourers. In this new emergent bourgeois society, the major contradictions are now between the capitalists. The nouveaux riche-and the workers who own only their labour they hire to the employers in return for wages.

The modern bourgeois society that has sprouted from the ruins of feudal society has not done away with class antagonisms.

It has but established new classes, new conditions of oppression, new forms of struggle in place of old ones.

Many considered the capitalist society as the most odious one in which man has been subjected to an unprecedented exploitation and alienation by fellow man. As markets increased, the manufacturing industry increased in complexity to produce in order to meet the demand for goods. This requires constant revolution in technology, which in turn means constant revolution in the relations of production and the whole relations of the society. This rapid improvement of all instruments of production and subsequently the development of the bourgeois leads to "a corresponding political advance of the class" and the continual exploitation of the workers. The basis on which this power of the bourgeoisie rests is the control it wields over the essential means of production and communication. It is this control which enables this class to maintain economic, social and political inequalities. In addition, the various institutions of the society such as the legal and political systems invariably become instruments of the ruling bourgeois class to further its interests.

The existing relations of production between individuals must necessarily express themselves also as political and legal relations. Therefore to Marx; the modern executive of a state is the committee for managing the common affairs of the bourgeoisie.

Despite this dominant position of the bourgeoisie, the relationship between it and the working class (proletariat) is one of dependence and conflict. The proletariat and the bourgeoisie in the capitalist society are dependent on each other, in the sense that the wage labourer depends on the sale of his labour power to the capitalist in order to survive since he does not own a part of the forces of production and lacks the means to produce goods independently. (Haralambos: 1980:43). The capitalists who produce nothing on their own too depended on the labour power of the wage labourers to produce so far as there would be no production and consequently no surplus to appropriate from the sale of goods without the labour of the workers. However, the

dependent relationship is not reciprocal. It is a relationship between the ruler and the ruled, the exploiter and the exploited.

According to Marx (1958) in capitalist society, goods, the labour power raw material and the machinery used to produce them are all calculated in monetary value or term. The capitalist, without taking any active part only invests in his money in the production of goods but in the end he accumulates capital in excess of what he puts in by selling the goods so produced at greater value than that of the cost of production. This difference between the value of wages and commodities is known as "surplus value" which is appropriate in the form of profit by the bourgeoisie. In this case, in as much as the capitalist does not take active part in production, he therefore exploits the workers the real producers of the surplus value. Here the aim of the capitalist is to make as much profit as possible and in order to do this the workers have to suffer in terms of poor meager wages which are barely enough to feed, cloth and shelter them.

Hence, the cost of production of a workman is restricted, almost entirely, the means of subsistence that he requires for his maintenance and for the propagation of his race.

In proportion therefore, as the repulsiveness of the work increases, the wage decreases. The workers gradually thus become not only the slaves to the bourgeoisie but also to the machines they use in production. This is because the constant revolution of technology has left man in a position where he is only an integral part of the production process. Here he can only express a small part of his creative ability because the work is now a routine practice that requires a sort of reflex action.

Owing to the extensive use of machinery and to division of labour, the work of the proletarians has lost individual character and consequently, all charm for the workman. He becomes an appendage of the machine and it is only the most simple, most monotonous, and most easily acquired knack that is required of him. Besides, for the fact that the workers have no control over the end product of their labour-their essence-alienation, both from their environment and from themselves, set in (Sandbrook: 1972).

Alienation means that man has been severed or removed from his natural environment, so that his relationship to the environment of which he is an organic part is no longer as immediate or intimate as it used to be. As self alienation, it means also that man has been stunted and perverted and became something less than real human being (Meyer:1954:58).

This concept of alienation is of a crucial importance to Marx because it not only brings the contradictions of the society into sharp focus but also heightened it. The society become more entangled in an insoluble contradictions with itself that it is left into irreconcilable antagonisms which it is powerless to dispel. But being the dominant class, the bourgeoisie consciously and spontaneously use both the infrastructure and the superstructure of the society to keep itself firmly in its position, thereby postponing the inevitable clash with the proletariat that the contradictions are bound to bring.

Thus, the superstructure becomes automatically beneficial to the ruling class and in that sense only does it turn into the "executive committee of this class". As said earlier, the constant revolutions in technology mean expansion of industries to satisfy the market demand. But as technology develops, the rank and file of the workers swells everyday.

In proportion as the bourgeoisie that is, capital, is developed, in the same proportion is the proletariat, the modern working class, developed a class of labourers who live only so long as they find work, and who find work only so long as they find work, and who find work only so long as their labour increases capital. These labourers who must sell themselves piece-meal, are commodity, like every other article of commerce, and are consequently exposed to all the vicissitudes of competition, to all the fluctuations of the market (Engels: 1977).

The paradoxical role of the rapid improvement of the instruments of production also lays in the fact that it has immensely facilitated means of communication, draw all, even the most primitive nations into civilization. It has created enormous cities, has greatly increased urban population as compared with the

rural, and has thus rescued part of the population from the ideology of rural life. This contact between people in the end facilitates the development of class-consciousness. People become more political and are able to relate their conditions of existence to the whole economic structure of the society. Here Marx lays emphasis on consciousness in bringing the proletarians together and the decisive role it plays in the class struggle.

Initially, according to Marx, the consciousness is not general or even among the working class. The consciousness first manifests itself in the individual workers who vent his anger on the machines or tools of production. Then as a result of contact and persistent expropriation the workers begin to form groups in factories. At this stage too their attack is uncoordinated and not directed against the root of their exploitation:

They direct their anger not against the bourgeoisie but conditions of productions, they destroy imported wares that compete with their labour, they smash to pieces machines, they set factories ablaze, they seek to restore by force the vanished status of the workman of the middle ages.

At this stage too, the mutual competition and conflict among the workers prevented them to come together on a large scale and therefore form "compact bodies" Besides, the local factory union formed is only concerned with wage increase and better conditions of service. But as time goes on, the proletarians become a class. Here the class struggle's start. All the local struggles, "all of the same character" are brought into "one national class struggles between classes". To Marx "every class struggle is a political struggles". The proletarians thus organizes themselves into a political party, albeit still bedeviled by the competition between the workers themselves, in order to fight for the control of state apparatus. This organization of the proletarians into a class and consequently into a political party, is continually

being upset again by the competition between the workers themselves.

But it ever rises up again, stronger, firmer mightier. It compels legislative recognition of particular interests of the worker...(Engel: 1977).

The experience gained by the proletarians in the course of the struggles between the bourgeoisie and aristocracy and between the bourgeoisie themselves comes into usefulness at the eleventh hour of struggle with the bourgeoisie in order to transform the society. The bourgeoisie itself, therefore, supplies the proletariat with weapons for fighting the bourgeoisie. In essence, what the bourgeoisie therefore produces above all are its own gravediggers.

However, before the eventual proletarian revolution and inevitable transformation to the socialist state, Marx maintains that "a small section of the ruling class cuts itself a drift and joins the revolutionary class, the class that holds the future in its hands the proletariat class. This section to him however is reactionary. Reactionary in the sense that it only comprehends theoretically the historical movement as a whole. Besides, the fraction only joins the proletariat in order to save it from extinction because of its inability to compete with the bourgeoisie.

In this case, they constitute a cog to the wheel of proletarian progressive movement and therefore one conservative, only interested in their future interests. In this light, Marx sees the proletariat class as "the only revolutionary class. Because it seeks not only to abolish the present mode of appropriation and also every other previous mode of appropriation, but also it seeks in its place to institute a distinctively new one in the interests of the "immense majority". And in order to do this, the whole society must be turned "inside out" because: All previous historical movements were movement of minorities, or in the interest of the minorities. The proletarian movement is the self-conscious, independent movement of the immense majority, in the interest of the immense majority.

Finally, in the end when the revolution occurs, the society will eventually be transformed into a socialist one. This period will

mark the dictatorship of the working class. But this is just a transitional period to the good classless society envisaged by Karl Marx – the communism. Here the class struggle, alienation and unequal distribution of societal reward will end in favour of the proletarians.

A CASE OF CLASS SYSTEM AND ITS CONSEQUENCES IN NIGERIA

The existence of classes in Nigeria is not in doubt, and like all other peripheral capitalist societies the consequences are obvious and numerous.

The system of class in modern Nigerian society is not defined and outstanding remembering that Nigeria is a society with different ethnic divergence. In our context it would be over simplification to talk about classification in terms of owners and non-owners of means of production. Owners and non-owners of means of production can be talk of in the western countries. In Nigeria, our system is complex so that definite clear system is not obtainable. Secondly, there are so many groups who have different economic system, we have the poor and the rich. We can group the system of classification into four:

- (a) The higher officers, the salaries professional, all these formed higher class. Their characteristics include that they may not own land, they may not own industries, and they have no control over economy since our economy is controlled by foreign powers.
- (b) Below this class is the business stratum – this is divided into the real bourgeoisie and the petty bourgeoisie. The real bourgeoisie can compete with the foreign investors.
- (c) White-collar workers – this includes the civil servants like the teachers. They have no money but have respect and prestige.
- (d) Masses of the urban poor. This class includes the people who are employed by the government, who do the work of messengers, craftsmen and petty traders. This group of the masses of the urban poor. Marx called lumpen proletariat.

The urban poor have no political power and money. They are unskilled and mostly the daily paid workers because they are hired daily and they work for people (Richard: 1979)

In general, the Nigerian society can be classified as city dwellers and the peasantry who live in the rural area. There is complex mixture of political power and economic power. With Nigeria and other third world countries, we have a pattern of class system different from the western society even in their 19th century. In the Nigerian concept, what we are witnessing is the convergent of social stratification. These include economic power, military and prestige powers. They are not separated since the same people hold them and we have very few that hold these powers and forces. So there are serious problems facing us in Nigeria because the society is still polarized into the system of the Haves and the have-nots. Also between the top and lower groups, we still have tiny groups. Such divisions promote and create class antagonism and conflict in the society (Allen: 1972).

Onimode (1983) rightly divided classes in Nigeria into four, which are not mutually exclusive.

- "The first is what has been called "bureaucratic bourgeoisie", the ruling group and executive committee of the bourgeoisie as a whole, foreign and domestic. They include top decision-makers in government ministries, corporations and other parastatals, as well as private sector, ministers/commissioners under military rule in 1997- governors, permanent secretaries-higher academic and administrators.

- Second is the comprador bourgeoisie who is identified by its intermediary role between foreign capitalists and Nigeria. They are merchants, distributors, importers, and exporters. The capitalist farmer should also be included here because they share control over some capital and labour and depend on foreign supplies.

- Third, the professional bourgeoisie made up of bourgeoisie group of academics, doctors, lawyers and other professions.

- The fourth are the middle and lower based salaries sector in the public and private sectors...primary school teachers, rank and file of the police and army, shopkeeper etc. This group is largely urban based classes and less homogenous”

Below these classes and as a part of middle and lower based salaries sector are the toiling masses, “Fanon’s (1983) *Wretched of the Earth*”, who are the worst exploited and most insecure members of Nigeria’s population” made up of workers, peasants, petty artisans and petty market women.

These classes as identified by Onimode (1981) can however be regrouped into two distinct but antagonistic ones. “The bureaucratic bourgeoisie”; the comprador bourgeoisie and professional bourgeoisie”, together with the traditional aristocrats forming a class of their own. The bourgeoisie class stands on similar positions in the economy with similar life style and life chances. They are “...the nation’s men of wealth, having acquired their riches through holding public offices because they have practically no economic base and in any case could not accumulate sufficient capital under colonial system. The only way to achieve the economic power needed therefore is to use public funds for investment in their private enterprises as well as use government power and resources to create investment opportunities for themselves” (Nnoli: 1981). It is no wonder that the politicians and bureaucrats of the civil regime (and some retired top military officers) are today among the wealthiest members of the society and, indeed, none of them is not a man of substance today” (Fanon: 1983).

The sad part of it is that this bourgeois class having exploited the masses does not invest the money in the national economy, rather, they are invested in foreign banks or spent on cars, houses and those luxurious things that do not contribute to the country’s development.

According to Garvin (1980) this bourgeoisie class lacks the commitment of a religious, socialist or nationalist character of the nationalizing, capital accumulating surplus-expropriating class which directed the industrialization of Britain, USA etc". It is satisfied with its role as the business agent to the western capitalists. Its mission has nothing to do with transforming the nation, it consists prosaically, of being the transmission line between the nation and a capitalism, rampant though camouflaged, which today puts on the mosque of neo-colonialism.

Consequently, the proletariat continued to suffer and day in day out, these people who have consistently borne the burden are called upon to make more sacrifices for the survival of the nation. The inequality and chasm between the two classes become more glaring with the proletariat at the receiving end.

The bourgeoisie that took over from the colonialists is only a bourgeoisie in spirit, a veritable petty bourgeoisie. It lacks economic strength and the doggedness of the western bourgeoisie. In addition, the Nigerian bourgeoisie does not invest in the country and turns its back on the people. The pre-independence revenue yielding farm products are not diversified or improved upon, and have even been abandoned for the so-called "back gold" – petroleum.

The bourgeoisie is not interested in the industrial development of the country. It is contented with being an intermediary especially to multinational corporations. "The basis of its strength is found in its aptitude for trade and small business enterprises, and in securing commissions from the western and American capitalists" (Fanon: 1983). Hence, the bourgeoisie does not set up industries that will be of great benefits to the country. Instead, assembly plants and other industries which largely depend on great foreign inputs, further ensure our dependency on the western capitalism are set.

In this case the observation by Vasilyeu (1985:28) rightly applies here. According to him, "the deformity and painfulness of the capitalist road in the middle East also manifest themselves in the fact that even the middle bourgeoisie, cannot always be

described as national. The part of it, which actively involved in trade speculation, makes a packet on export-import operations or on high monopoly prices maintained with the aid of the state. Its industrial section prefers or is compelled to build enterprises firmly tied to the head enterprises of corporations in developed countries. The level of modern technology and production is beyond the reach of local capital, which cannot set up independent competitive industries. Not only assembly plants but also processing plants are fully dependent on the technology, spare parts and maintenance facilities of corporations from the metropolitan countries". Consequently, the exploitation of the people is intensified and the incorporation of Nigeria into the capitalist economy consolidated.

The bourgeois class in Nigeria has adopted with enthusiasm and without any reservation, the ways of thinking of the western bourgeoisie which is greatly detached from the situations here. Consequently, our state of dependency on the west is reinforced with its attendant onward transfer of the economic depression there unto us. Thus political independence has not in any way solved the problem of economic backwardness, economic dependence on the west and mass poverty, nor has it enhanced rapid industrialization. Hence, our state of underdevelopment.

Poverty, ignorance and diseases are also the most conspicuous consequences of this class system in Nigeria. In this country, the rule is that the greatest wealth is surrounded by the greatest poverty. The bourgeoisie "by a kind of unexpected logic" annexes all the wealth of the country for its own use. The distribution of wealth that it effects is not spread out between a great many sectors, it is not ranged among different levels nor does it set up hierarchy of half-tones...the immense majority, nine-tenths of the population continue to die of starvation.

The ruling class has ignored poverty and social deprivations of the majority. The proletarians provide the scape-goat to rationalize its failure since it reinforces the "mainstream norms". In the words of Vasilyeu (1985) "the gap between the people's aspirations and the possibilities of realizing them is widening. The revolution of growing expectations is giving way to

a revolution (and some say, a reaction) of disillusioned hopes". The successive governments maintain the highly inequalitarian inherited colonial salary and tax structure with its fringe benefits...available to the earners of high salaries. Consequently, social and economic crisis, especially during the oil boom, is intensifying with its attendant political instability.

Tactfully divided by the bourgeoisie through the use of ethnicity, the proletarians become a ready tool of this class in its inter-class competition. There were arsons, killings and looting that resulted from the economic and political struggles. The workers, peasants and petty commodity producers, it seems have been effeminated by the bourgeoisie through the control and use of state apparatus, hence, they lack the consciousness to come together for class action. The university commodity, which makes up the most enlightened section of the country according to Fanon (1983) is "in fact characterized by the smallness of their number and their being concentrated in the capital". In addition, most of them have been socialized into bourgeois society and as such their thinking and actions are bourgeois oriented.

Corruption is riding high. There exists inside the new regime, an inequality in the acquisition of wealth and in monopolization. Privileges multiply and corruption triumphs, while morality declines. Today, the vultures are too numerous and too voracious in proportion to the lean spoils of the national wealth. Hence, the country sinks deeply into stagnation. In an attempt to cover this, the bourgeoisie resorts to economic repressions, calling on already over burdened proletarians to make sacrifices for the nation to survive while they have not in the main contributed their own efforts for the survival of the nation.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the classes in Nigeria are not of recent origin. They had existed in pre-colonial times through the colonial period up to this day.

The bourgeoisie have betrayed this nation and have proved incapable of steering the nation's ship to a free, just and equitable

society. It is only the proletarians that hold the anti-poverty, anti-starvation, anti-oppression and above all, the stability of this country. We cannot totally ignore their role if this country is not only to survive but also to advance. The complete identification of the interests of this group as the only authentic and revolutionary interests of Nigeria as a whole is clearly the great step toward a transformation of the country. While it is the privileged classes that hold political and even economic power in the inherited colonial order, it is the under privileged groups who must assume political and economic power if the country is to pull itself out of its present inter ethnic quagmire, and out of the root of its socio-economic underdevelopment. Even though class exists in every society, whether capitalist or socialist, there are differences.

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