

The Nature of Class Struggle in Contemporary Nigeria: A Theoretical Interpretation

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ABSTRACT

Although class relations engender social conflict, opposition and antagonism in a social production cum social formation, class struggle becomes inevitable and it is a characteristic feature of every human society. In other words, the conflict, opposition and antagonism arise as a result of the dynamics of production. This article therefore sets out to offer a theoretical interpretation of the nature of class struggle in contemporary Nigeria. It contends that class struggle is a function of political struggle for the purposes of public governance in Nigeria which underscores the need for the promotion of the existential conditions of man and his society in the theory and practice of Marxism. It further argues that politics in Nigeria has now become a lucrative economic venture for the primitive accumulation of the commonwealth of Nigerians due to the pervasive and growing manifestations of several irreconcilable political interests and dialectical maneuverings. This paper, however, concludes that politics in itself is ideally meant for the overall wellbeing of humanity and societal development. Given that it should as a matter of necessity be approached with a high degree of political ethics, ethical rationalism, human conscience, social decorum, internal and external discipline and the adoption of the United States of America's model for political civilization geared towards the achievement and institutionalization of the long-anticipated progressive, prosperous and healthy civil society in Nigeria.

Keywords: *Class Struggle, Contemporary, Nature, Nigeria, Theoretical Interpretation.*

Introduction

Class struggle is one of the basic ideas in understanding Marxism and it has truly continued to feature as an interesting academic discourse in social sciences among political theorists, political economists and sociologists. In itself, this has also increasingly become a telling intellectually-oriented philosophical disputation in the general study of political philosophy. Theoretically, socialism is an intellectual tradition associated with Marxism. Marxism is therefore a political cum social ideology which has to do with the interpretation of human history and social development based on Marx's

theory of social classes and class struggle (Jaja, 2004a). It is also defined as “the scientific ideology of the class, an integral and developing system of philosophical, economic and socio-political views” (Krapivin, 1985, p.300). However, Marxist philosophy is a direct product of the writing of Karl Marx and his close associate, Frederick Engels, which with some later modifications by V. I. Lenin, forms the basis of the modern theory of scientific socialism given the Russian Bolsheviks revolution (Marxism-Leninism) of 1917 (Jaja, 2004a).

In other words, Marxism is a philosophy of history as well as an economic doctrine. It is also a theory of revolution hence the basic explanation for how societies undergo through the process of change. In this context, Marxists, of course, hold the view that they and they alone have the analytical tools in understanding the process of historical change as well as the key in predicting the future. Similarly, in Marx’s view, communism is the riddle of history resolved. For instance, historical materialism is his sociological interpretation of human history as marked by identifiable epochs each punctuated by definite, revolutionary actions and ending in the overthrow of the existing dominant class (Jaja, 2004a). As a result, Marxism can also be understood as a theory of the laws of social movement; laws which are formulated in general by the Marxist conception of history and whereas Marxist economics applies such laws to the age of commodity production. This, by extension, means that Marxism is no doubt the science of society which contends that the mode of production determines the character of the society. And so, capitalism is based on the appropriation of socially produced wealth and also an antagonistic-driven mode of production. Marx therefore contends that the bourgeoisie dominate political power, economy and culture.

According to Marx and Engels (1973, p.32), the history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles. While Nkrumah (1970, p.17) sees it as a fundamental theme of recorded history. Class struggles are inherently political struggles (Gahia, 2007). It is in this context therefore that, Ubani (2022) argued that political leadership struggle has been a fundamental characterization of all human societies cum political communities. Suffice it to say that class struggle is also synonymous with the struggle for political power and political leadership in itself. This emphasizes the central role that politics plays and the quest for political power by members of a political community (Ubani, 2022) Thus, Marxism presumably remains the most solid and formidable methodological framework for a better analysis and appreciation of the dynamics of any social formation. This paper, against this backdrop, seeks to provide a theoretical interpretation of the nature of class struggle and its manifestations in contemporary Nigerian socio-political system.

The paper is divided into four sections. However, the second section provides brief conceptual clarifications, while the third section discusses the main focus of the paper. The fourth and final section has to do with the concluding remarks and the way forward.

Conceptual Clarifications

The Concept of Class

Incidentally, there is a missing link in relation to a consensus working definition of the concept of class among the early social scientists. Not even Marx provided a definition for class. Nevertheless, according to V. I. Lenin as cited in Ekekwe (1986), proposes this generally acceptable definition thus:

Classes are large groups of people differing from each other by the place they occupy in a historically determined system of social production, by their relation, (in most cases fixed and formulated in law) to the means of production, by their role in the social organization of labour, and, consequently, by the dimensions of the share of social wealth of which they dispose and the mode of acquiring it. Classes are groups of people one of which can appropriate the labour of another owing to the different places they occupy in a definite system of social economy (p. 6).

Similarly, class definition incorporates criteria other than the economic; these criteria are the political and the ideological, and refer to the importance of political struggles in class definition (Ekekwe, 1986). While the ruling class, according to Nzimiro (1981) as cited in Ifeanchio and Arokoyo, 1997, p. 46) has been identified as those who constitute the controllers of state power. Infact, in the exact words of Nzimiro (1981) as also cited in Ifeanchio and Arokoyo (1997), the ruling class is consisted of:

Those who make decisions on how the economy should be run, how amenities should be shared; who should enjoy this or that privilege; which major government project should be set up and where; what sort of relationship should exist between the government and foreign governments, how the army should be structured; whether the working class, youths and peasants and women should be mobilized or not, or whether mobilization should start from the top or bottom politically and economically; what ideas should be sold to the masses...the ruling class are those in the commanding heights of state power (p.46).

In Nigeria for example, there is the existence of various ethno-religious groups and political parties among the people and the political class. The polarization of such classes could be linked to the Marxist classification of social classes as identified in the "Manifesto of the Communist Party". Above all, Ekekwe (2009, p.63) doubts that not that classes are generally defined in the context of the mode of production (i.e. historically determined system of social production). For him, this is dependent on the common relationship individuals have to the means of production (either as owners or non-owners) along with the attendant (legal and/or moral) obligations and responsibilities which attach to those polar positions. Hence, class relationship in the production process

largely emphasizes on the political and economic factor between the ruling class and the working class. Put in another way, classes are identified based on their social relations to the means of production. In short, a class is nothing more than the sum total of individuals bound together by certain interests which as a class they try to preserve and protect (Nkrumah, 1970).

The Concept of Class Struggle

In Marxist literature, there is a valid argument and assertion that human society is being driven by economy. Thus, economic forces are more complex and pervasive than we think. Whereas, to Marx, economic forces, so to speak, even determine how we think. This further buttresses the fact that consciousness is from the very beginning a social product since Marxists believe that the mode of production in material life determines the general character of social, political and spiritual processes of life (Ake, 1981; Afanasyev, 1963; Ekekwe, 1986; Jaja, 2004a; Jaja, 2004b; Jaja, 2007; Nwaorgu, 1998; Ntete-Nna, 2004; Gahia, 2007). Ntete-Nna (2004) for instance, stated that Marx is of the view that it is not the consciousness of men that determines their existence, but rather, it is their social existence that determines their consciousness.

Furthermore, it must be clearly admitted that society is a product of history given that the interpretation of human history and social development. Hence, the justification of the assertion that “the history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles” (Marx & Engels, 1973, p.32; Ubani, 2022, p.1). The Marxist implication of this is that human society since time immemorial is characterized by the competition between antagonistic economic classes, either as bourgeoisie or proletariat, owners or non-owners, ruling class or working class, lord or serf, freeman or slave, guild-master or journeyman, patrician or plebian, oppressor or oppressed (Ekekwe, 1986; Ekekwe, 2009; Gahia, 2007; Marx & Engels, 1973). Class struggle is the result of the existence of antagonistic classes and it has remained a feature of social evolution since the emergence of class society beginning with the slave owning epoch (Gahia, 2007). This is because it helps in understanding social interactions and conflictive processes that have necessitated the historical transitions of human society from one epoch to another. For instance, Ubani (2007, p.10) reported that Karl Marx is of the view that society can be understood from five historical epochs and they are:

1. Primitive communal mode of production
2. Slave holding mode of production
3. Feudal mode of production
4. Capitalist mode of production
5. Socialist mode of production

Consequently, the above is akin to historical or dialectical materialism. Dialectical materialism, therefore, is a philosophical and political ideology credited mainly to Marx which emphasizes the primacy of “Mater” especially economic conditions to social existence. For Marx, in every epoch there is class war or class struggle. For example, in the slave epoch (slave master and slave servant), in the feudal epoch (feudal lord and

feudal tenant), while in the capitalist epoch (exploiter and exploited) or (oppressor and oppressed). And for this to stop, Marx advocated for socialist state that will gradually metamorphose into a communist state, that is, the highest stage of society and it will be classless in nature. That, according to Marx, can only be achieved through a revolutionary action whereby the working class will dethrone the ruling class (i.e. capitalism) and enthrone their own government (i.e. socialism or the dictatorship of the proletariat). The proletariat having instituted the socialist state where they will be at the helms of affair shall expropriate or confiscate the properties of the dethroned ruling class and redistribute them. Whereas, the inherent contradictions in each mode of production will lead to another through a class struggle or class warfare; Marx literally maintained that the struggle will take revolutionary actions which in turn will end in the overthrow of existing dominant class; also, for a new economic system of production to emerge. According to Nkrumah (1970):

Class struggle is a fundamental theme of recorded history. In every non-socialist society there are two main categories of class, the ruling class or classes, and the subject class or classes. The ruling class possesses the major instruments of economic production and distribution, and the means of establishing its political dominance, while the subject class serves the interests of the ruling class, and is politically, economically and socially dominated by it. There is conflict between the ruling and the exploited class. The nature and cause of the conflict is influenced by the development of productive forces. That is, in any given class formation, whether it be feudalism, capitalism, or any other type of society, the institutions and ideas associated with it rise from the level of productive forces and the mode of production (p.17).

This is a clear indication of the existence of antagonistic sociopolitical and socioeconomic classes in contemporary Nigerian society. Infact, class struggle is a direct consequence of political struggles. Perhaps, this is the reason why (Gahia, 2007) contended that such struggles occur between exploiter classes trying to maintain the status quo of economic and political dominance while the exploited classes struggle seriously to liberate themselves from that dominance. He went on to also argue that the classes are involved in relations and agitations for power which ultimately connect with questions of political power. In other words, social classes are said to be struggling and competing in essence for control of the state, since in Marxist interpretation, the class that controls the mode of production also controls the state. For in the final analysis, economic power begets political power and vice versa. Due to the fact that the ruling class does not easily relinquish power to working class or any class and as such class war becomes imminent. According to Nwankwo (1998, p.48), another important impact of colonialism in Africa was the emergence and institutionalization of classes and class struggle in the socio-economic and political life of the people. It would appear that

Nigeria is not exempted hence the political economy of class struggles cannot be overemphasized.

The Theoretical Interpretation of the Nature of Class Struggle in Contemporary Nigeria

Historically, it is worthy of note that in contemporary times, the state still performs the traditional role assigned to it by Karl Marx and Engels, being that of protecting the interest of the ruling class, and as instruments of suppressing other classes in any social formation (Jaja, 2007). However, the contemporary Nigerian state cannot be an exception. This is obviously because both the colonial state and the post-colonial in Nigeria have remained veritable and potent instruments of oppression in the hands of the ruling class hence the Nigerian state has been characterized by conflict of sociopolitical and socioeconomic interests. Given that conflict is an inevitable aspect of human existence and the near ubiquity of conflict emphasizes that it is an integral part of human nature in any given social interaction (Mpigi, 2019). Therefore, the nature of class struggle in contemporary Nigerian society has no doubt manifested in different dimensions and forms. Its manifestations in other words are too numerous. For example, it has as a matter of fact assumed the form of ethnic struggles especially by the three dominant ethnic groups (i.e. Igbo, Hausa and Yoruba), for the control of state power and the authoritative allocation of national wealth otherwise called “National Cake”, more especially, from the oil proceeds of the Niger Delta region of Nigeria. For instance, Ezeani (2013) clearly reported that:

January 15, 1966 was a major turning point in the political history of Nigeria. This was the beginning of a failed revolution that abruptly put an end to the First Republic, the rule by politicians, and ushered in the period of military leadership. Led by Major Emmanuel Ifeajuna and Major Chukwuma Kaduna Nzeogwu, both Igbo, the coup has been designated by some authors and politicians. So perceived, the coup has had lasting political and democratic implications for Nigeria. While such perception has aided in ossifying ethnic cleavages, it has also increased the feeling of marginalization of some sections of the Nigerian polity, especially amongst the Igbo who feel they deserve from Nigeria unreserved fraternal apology for visiting an unjust and sustained capital political punishment on the entire Igbo nation, vis-à-vis their constitutional right to exercise executive power as president of our country. Uwechie solicits explanation for branding Nzeogwu’s coup an “Igbo” coup, for which the entire Igbo people must pay a heavy and recurrent political price while Major Gideon Orkah’s coup of April 1990 was not seen as a “Tiv” coup (p.21).

The January 1966, military coup led by Major Chukwuma Kaduna Nzeogwu and his band of idealistic Army Majors, which overthrew the late Prime Minister, Abubakar Tafawa Bewa led civilian government and ushered in the late Major General Johnson Thomas U. Aguiyi-Ironsi's regime, was actually not an ethnic coup despite the death of some prominent politicians of northern extraction, of the likes of Balewa, Sir Ahmadu Bello (Premier of the Northern Region) and others. Since the coup has also been adjudged to be the most patriotic and nationalistic coup ever had in Nigeria shortly after independence in 1960. Despite also the failure of the coup plotters to kill Major General Aguiyi-Ironsi, the General Officer Commanding (GOC) of the Nigerian Army, and Dr. Michael Okpara, the Premier of the Eastern Region who were both Igbo (Ezeani, 2013). Besides, it must be admitted that the Nigerian civil war of 1967 (also popularly referred to as the Nigeria/Biafran civil war) could be overtly or covertly validly interpreted from the Marxist point of view as a class struggle or class conflict between General Yakubu Gowon led Nigerian government and Lt. Colonel Chukwuemeka Ojukwu led Biafran government. Put in another sense, it was a war between the Eastern political hegemony and the Northern political hegemony or better still between the Igbos and Hausa/Fulanis for the sole purpose of controlling political power as well as allocating Nigeria's national wealth. No wonder, in the words of Okoko (1995), politics is said to have been defined at its highest level as "the competitive struggle for political power for the allocation of the scarce resources of the entire state or society" (Jaja, 2001, p.1; Ubani, 2022, p.92). This is therefore the whole essence of all political leadership struggles throughout human history or perhaps since time immemorial.

It is no doubt an incontrovertible fact that all political struggles are deeply rooted in the understanding of Marxist analysis of class and class struggle. However, in the immediate post-independence era in Nigeria, crises such as the Western Nigerian Emergency of 1962, the National Census Controversy of 1962, the Federal Election Crisis of 1964 and the Western Nigerian Elections of 1965 were all political fallouts. The aftermath of the federal election of 1964 enabled the Northern region to strengthen its political domination of Nigeria (Ikejiani-Clark, 2009). It is also interesting to recall that in the colonial Nigeria and prior to political independence in 1960, the formation of political parties was regionally driven and ethnically based. This is so because the three dominant ethnic groups in Nigeria had various socio-political cum socio-cultural groups which eventually metamorphosed into distinct political parties cutting across the regional political and governmental arrangement.

According to Ishiaki (2000, p.65), party politics in Nigeria during the first and second republic moved in the direction of the concept of TRIAD. In other words, party politics in itself since independence has been shaped by the tripartite political interests of the Igbos, the Yorubas and the Hausas, as the dominant ethnic nationalities in the country. This obviously explains why political party in Nigeria is pursued on narrow and selfish interest rather than national interests (Ishiaki, 2000). This has over the years culminated in an unhealthy competition for the control of state power and the allocation and utilization of state resources by the political actors of these ethnic groups for their

respective personal aggrandizement and ethnic considerations. Thus, throughout the first republic, party politics to a large extent was that of “bitterness” and deep rooted ethnicity as well as regionalization (Ishiaki, 2000, p.66). Quite unfortunately, this trend has continued till date and even worse. The regionalization of the formation of political parties is such that gave credence to the existence of the National Council of Nigeria and the Cameroon (NCNC), the Action Group (AG) and the Northern People’s Congress (NPC) that all featured prominently in the first republic politics of Nigeria. In order to demonstrate their sphere of influence in the respective regions. For example, NCNC took control of Eastern region, NPC took control of Northern region, while the AG took control of the Western region, hence, the leaderships of these parties were also ethnically and regionally based (Ishiaki, 2000). It is in this context that Ishiaki (2000) aptly noted that:

In addition, their electoral success was predominantly in the regions they were based. No wonder the period 1960-66 witnessed the greatest rate of political instability culminating into the 1964 General Crisis and the 1965 Western Region Crisis that ushered in election frauds, corruption and deep ethnic cleavages which the military used as excuses to topple the civilian government on January 15, 1966 (p. 66-67).

As it were, party politics in Nigeria has been a characterization of brazen conflict proclivities as well as a serious subject of controversies among the various ethnic political leaders in the country largely due to its attendant political economy dimension of state power. Indeed, it has remained so problematic in its entirety. However, the commencement of the second republic in 1979 witnessed a similar electoral cum political narrative for the country after thirteen years of military interregnum. As Ishiaki (2000) would say, despite the introduction of executive presidential system, the new democratic experiment of the second republic from 1979 to 1983 was a rehash of the ethnic politics of the first republic. Though, five political parties were officially registered. The National Party of Nigeria (NPN), the Nigerian People’s Party (NPP) and the Unity Party of Nigeria (UPN). Corroborating the ethnic backgrounds of political parties in the first and second republics in Nigeria, Ishiaki (2000) equally observed that “the defunct parties of the first republic reemerged under the cloaks. The National Party of Nigeria (NPN), for instance, was a reincarnation of the NPC while NCNC reemerged as the Nigerian People’s Party (NPP). The Unity Party of Nigeria (UPN), was a resurrected AG” (p.67). While Ekekwe (1986) noted that in Nigeria’s First Republic those who achieved power did not want to lose it and opposition parties had little hope of achieving power constitutionally. The implication of this is that party politics in that political dispensation became a “do or die” affair among Nigerian politicians for their egotistic interest. Since the politicians and their various political parties did everything humanly possible to maintain, consolidate and keep themselves in power. Of course, they became so power drunk which created room for unhealthy political rivalry and also constituted a serious threat to democratic consolidation in that era. In the words of Ekekwe (1986):

It is in the competition for control of and/or access to the state that a second component of the ideology of development comes in. This component is ethnicity. Conflict between ethnic groups can be manifestations of class struggle and competitions. In the Nigerian situation this appears to have been the case; explanations of ethnic conflict there would be incomplete without references to the situation. As Amilcar Cabral pointed out, it is usually those persons who are detribalized and well off – such as those who comprise the governing class – who resort to an appeal to ethnicity. There exists a certain dialectic between ethnicity and class that has to be appreciated in the search to understand politics in many post-colonial societies. This dynamic has been expressed in relationship to the Nigerian situation in Nnoli's *Ethnic Politics in Nigeria* (p.109).

As Ubani (2022) has also pointed out:

The idea of political leadership in Nigeria seems to be synonymous with the quest for political power struggle. However, the authoritative allocation of state resources is usually the whole essence of dialectical quarrel among members of the Nigerian political class, for the satisfaction of their personal aggrandizement through the instrumentalities of ethnicity and religion (p.88).

The inextricable relationship between ethnicity and religion in class analysis in the Nigerian context of party politics is widely appreciated. This is because the potent instruments of ethnicity and religion have greatly influenced the dynamics of party politics in Nigeria since independence. Specifically, ethnicity has remained the most basic source of social differentiation and conflict in the second republic, and its associated cleavages prominently feature during electioneering campaigns as well as in the internal dynamics of the political parties (Ishiaki, 2000). For example, in Nigeria, politicians belong to the rich class and once they get voted into power or nominated into political offices, they have always portrayed themselves as looters of the national cake (Ishiaki, 2000). Consequently, Alapiki (2011) has argued that the perception in the Southern geo-political zones is that the Hausa-Fulani of the North will always sacrifice democratization in order to maintain themselves in power. This is indicative of the over politicization of ethnicity and religion in Nigeria between the North and the South political dichotomy. Cognizant of the ethno-religious analysis of the outcome of the 2022 National Convention for the presidential primary election of the People's Democratic Party (PDP) in Abuja, where former Governor Aminu Tambuwal of Sokoto State (the headquarters of the Hausa-Fulani Caliphate) publicly stepped down as a presidential aspirant of the party and directed his supporters (delegates) to cast their votes for Alhaji Atiku Abubakar, his fellow Fulani and Muslim brother from Adamawa State, also from

the North; this eventually paved way for Atiku to out rightly defeat former Governor Nyesom Wike of Rivers State, a Christian from a minority ethnic nationality of Ikwerre of the Southern extraction of Nigeria (Ubani, 2022, p. 100).

The political history of Nigeria also recorded that in 2015 Christians in Lagos State decided to take the bull by the horn in demanding for a Christian governor given that since the inception of the fourth republic in 1999, no Christian had been governor of the state; both Senator Bola Tinubu and Mr. Babatunde Fashola that governed the state for sixteen (16) consecutive years between 1999 and 2015 are Muslims (Ubani, 2022). For Ubani (2022), there was so much tension, from the political stakeholders and enlightened Lagos electorate, on the political leadership question for Lagos State to have a Christian as its governor, which also formed part of the political expediency that eventually led to the emergence of Mr. Akinwunmi Ambode, a Christian in the first instance in 2015. The choice of Ambode as the candidate of the All Progressives Congress (APC) in Lagos State, as some political analysts have said, was to accommodate the religious interest due to the heightened political tension and also to enhance the electoral fortunes of the APC in the 2015 gubernatorial election in the state (Ubani, 2022).

Similarly, in 2015, Rivers State had its own challenges of political leadership struggle. This is so because in the politics of Rivers State, ethnic factor heightened political agitations and tensions by political gladiators and other ethnic nationalities in the state, on which ethnic group ought to have produced the state governor in the 2015 and 2019 governorship elections respectively. This trend did not change even in the political agitations and scheming for the 2023 governorship election in the state. This was based on the argument that since 1999, those referred to as the “uplanders” had consecutively occupied the office of governor for twenty-four (24) years. This negated the conception of Upland/Riverine dichotomy in the old Rivers State by the political class especially in the second republic for the sole purpose of gaining political power in the state (Ubani, 2022). This therefore implies that there seem to be a political understanding between the political elites in the state to rotate the office of governor among the two political blocs. The uplanders have the privilege of occupying the said office since the beginning of the fourth republic, while the Rivers Ijaws comprising the Kalabaris, Okrikas, Ibanis (Bonny and Opobo), Obolos (Andoni) and so on, seriously agitated that it was their turn to produce governor (Ubani, 2022). On the other hand, the Ogonis, also of the upland extraction had over the years agitated for the governorship position of the state, whereby they obviously argued that their ethnic nationality happens to be the most marginalized in terms of political positions in the state such as Governor, Deputy Governor, Speaker of the State House of Assembly as well as the Chief Judge of the state (Ubani, 2022). Above all, in 2023 the agitations of the Ijaws came to limelight and materialization with the election of Sir Siminialayi Fubara as governor of the state.

Another prominent example of class struggle in Nigeria could be understood from the buildup of party politics in the 2015 general elections. Come to think of it, political parties, according to Marxist analysis, are the contending factions and fractions of the

bourgeoisie for the appropriation of socially produced wealth. For instance, the dialectical political quarrels in the PDP over whether “President Goodluck Jonathan should run for the 2015 presidential election and the case of the then National Chairman of the party Alhaji Bamanga Tukur, must go or resign his position” were obviously not about the party’s ideology but over the accumulation, allocation and control of the national wealth thereby giving credence to the political economy perspective of partisan politics and class struggle in the contemporary multi-ethnic cum multi-religious Nigerian state. However, government in Nigeria as indeed other developing countries has tended to be pre-occupied with power and its material prerequisites (Nwokah, 2005). This is perhaps a justification for materialism towards the acquisition and control of state power. No wonder, the madness of political defection in Nigeria from one political party to another in recent times. This is also in tandem with Marx’s theory of capital accumulation for individual Nigerian politicians which is certainly not in the interest of the masses. For example, the defection of the five PDP governors in 2014 to APC as against the seven of them initially was for the satisfaction of their personal political interest and not for the masses as they claimed. Besides, the trading of abusive words between the PDP as the then ruling party and the APC as an opposition party equally explained the idea of class antagonism geared towards the struggle for political power in the country.

Closely related to this, is the case of the G5 governors of the PDP led by former governor Nyesom Wike of Rivers State who decided to support the candidate of the APC (Bola Tinubu) in the 2023 presidential elections due to obvious reasons of political interest and disagreement in their party being adduced by them. Indeed, they finally worked against their party’s interest and the candidacy of Atiku Abubabar in that election, especially as they became vehemently opposed to the continued leadership of Dr. Iyorchia Ayu as the National Chairman of the PDP being a northerner, hence, they consistently demanded for his resignation or removal and replacement with a southerner for the purposes of justice, fairness and equity in the PDP. Also, the ongoing political feud in Rivers State between the incumbent governor Sir Siminialayi Fubara, former governor Nyesom Wike and the Martin Amaewhule led Rivers State House of Assembly is another replica of class struggle and polarization of political interests particularly in the Rivers State chapter of the PDP and the state at large. This has created a scenario whereby the former governor publicly warned his successor not to tamper with his political structure hence he should be prepared to face the attendant consequences that might result from such. Obviously, governor Fubara now has a political structure known as “the Simplified Movement” galvanizing organic support for him which has become detrimental to his master’s political structure otherwise known as “the Grassroot Development Initiative (GDI) Worldwide.

For Gahia (2007), it is true that class struggle takes the forms of conflict between classes as they pursue their interests which range from lock-outs and workers’ strikes to their engagements in direct political action, including political rallies, and making of political demands that affect their interests. Therefore, the five months nationwide strike

organized by the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) in late 2013 and early 2014 under the leadership of Dr. Nasir Fagge was a clear case of conflict of interest between them and the then federal government of Nigeria so as to press home their demands. The trajectory of national strikes in Nigeria has been a subject of serious concern in this regard. The Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC) and the Trade Union Congress (TUC) have been in the forefront of organizing several strike actions in the country over the new minimum wage for Nigerian workers and other attendant issues.

It is also worthy of note that the 2014 National Conference initiated by former President Goodluck Jonathan's administration was intended to address the numerous political issues and public governance crises in the country hence the sacrosanctity of the indivisibility and indissolubility of the Nigerian state. In addition to this, the continued corporate existence of the country was not in anyway negotiable alongside with other terms of reference that were spelt out for the conference by the federal government but not limited to the country's national sovereignty. To further buttress this fact from the Marxist point of view, the conference was to serve certain class interests, perhaps those of the governing elite and ruling class, and not necessarily in the interest of the ordinary Nigerian citizens. This became evident in the selection and composition of the membership of the said conference and the non-implementation of the report by successive governments in the country for the benefit and protection of the interest of the Nigerian political or governing class. The delegates to the conference were, by implication, pro-federal government, ethnic champions and stooges of those who nominated them for such important national assignment. This is a clear pointer to Prof. Dudley's view that politics is about the control of men and resources while Prof. Nnoli associated politics in Nigeria with the inter-regional struggle for federal resources (Njoku, 1998, p.18).

Again, the developments that unfolded during the conference in question were more or less manifestations of class struggle in a polyglot Nigerian federation. For example, the heated controversy that characterized the voting modality on fundamental issues and decisions to be taken thereof. This in fact constituted a very serious problem until delegates eventually agreed on a 70% voting formula. Similarly, a section of the Northern delegates had equally threatened to walk out of the conference in 2014 and possibly secede to the Republic of Cameroon. The primary motive behind all of these shenanigans was geared towards the pursuance of their selfish class and sectional interests at the expense of a genuine national development strategy for Nigeria.

Concluding Remarks and the Way Forward

Conclusively, it is my theoretical interpretation that the nature of class struggle in contemporary Nigeria has better enhanced the understanding of Karl Marx's dialectical materialism in the study of political philosophy. Obviously, it is identified and analyzed in this article that class struggle which is synonymous with political struggle has manifested in various dimensions - ethnic, religious, economic, social and political group interests for the control and appropriation of state resources in the country. Furthermore,

the pervasive and growing manifestations of political interests and dialectical maneuverings have no doubt made politics in today's Nigeria a lucrative economic venture for the primitive accumulation of the commonwealth of the Nigerian people.

The essence of political philosophy is to reconcile the state and the individual (i.e. the citizen). Consequently, politics in itself is ideally meant for the overall wellbeing of humanity and societal development. Given that it should as a matter of necessity be approached with a high degree of political ethics, ethical rationalism, human conscience, social decorum, internal and external discipline and the adoption of the United States of America's model for political civilization geared towards the achievement and institutionalization of the long-anticipated progressive, prosperous and healthy civil society in Nigeria.

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