

# MARXISM AND DEMOCRACY

**UHEMBE AHAR CLEMENT♦**

Department of Political Science  
Federal University of Lafia, Nasarawa State, Nigeria

## **ABSTRACT**

Marxism and democracy may elicit surprise or even derision in some quarters. Arent the two terms in little mutually contradictory? Is marxist democracy not an oxymoron? This paper argues that marxism represents the highest achievement of democratic thought, whose grand ambition were betrayed. Marxism is irredeemable associated with oppressive conformity and the iron rule of nomenclature. This paper posited that Marxism and democracy have a nexus on justice, fairness, equality and an egalitarian society in which all men are allowed and should be allowed to exercise their franchise. By way of qualitative and quantitative analysis of the basic tenets of modern democracy, predicated on marxist democratic thought, the paper recommends that slovenliness: habitual intellectual uncleanness in Marxism be addressed to remove present marxism as a tool for democracy.

**Keywords:** Democracy, Marxism, Slovenliness

## **ABSTRAIT**

Le marxisme et la démocratie peuvent susciter la surprise ou même la dérision dans certains domaines. Les deux termes ne sont-ils pas mutuellement contradictoires? La démocratie marxiste n'est pas un oxymore. Cet article soutient que le marxisme représente la réalisation la plus élevée de la pensée démocratique, dont la grande ambition a été trahie. Le marxisme est irrémédiable associé à la conformité oppressive et à la règle de fer de la nomenclature. Ce document postulait que le marxisme et la démocratie ont un lien avec la justice, l'équité, l'égalité et une société égalitaire dans laquelle tous les hommes sont autorisés et devraient être autorisés à exercer leur droit de vote. À travers une analyse qualitative et quantitative des tenets de base de la démocratie moderne, fondée sur la pensée démocratique marxiste, le document recommande que la négligence: la malpropreté intellectuelle dans le marxisme soit abordée pour éliminer le marxisme actuel en tant qu'outil pour la démocratie.

**Mots-clés:** Démocratie, marxisme, slovénie

## **INTRODUCTION**

The influence of Karl Marx and Frederick Engels on contemporary world is unquestionable. Engels, Marx's lifelong friend and collaborator, credited Marx with a fundamental intellectual breakthrough in the understanding of human history, the way institutions are formed by class conflict under capitalism, and what the human race eventually could hope to realize.

---

♦Address of Corresponding Author: UhembeAhar Clement, Department of Political Science, Federal University of Lafia, Nasarawa State, Nigeria, Email: [Clemkange@Gmail.Com](mailto:Clemkange@Gmail.Com). Phone Number 08034530439, 08178834714

At Marx's graveside, Engels had said that his friend made two discoveries of unsurpassed importance. These were "the law of development of human history [and] the special law of motion governing present-day capitalist mode of production and the bourgeois society that this mode of production has created."

The first, the materialist conception of history, holds the sensible view that people must satisfy their basic needs for food, shelter, and clothing before they can pursue matters of the mind and spirit. Indeed, the level of economic development "form[s] the foundation upon which state institutions, the legal system, art, and even ideas on religion" are based.

The second discovery was a demonstration of how, within present society, the exploitation of the worker by the capitalist takes place. The materialist interpretation of history, which places heavy emphasis on the primacy of economics, has often been looked upon as a denigration of the human race. Marx has been said to believe that humans are motivated solely by the desire for monetary gain and comforts and have no genuine ethical, moral, or spiritual needs. Indeed, the entire thrust of Marx's criticism of capitalism is based on the perceived violations of minimal morality upon which capitalism rests.

On the contrary, Marx thought highly of the human race. He was certain that with the realization of communism -- which over a long period of time would come to replace capitalism - - humans could be released from their environment and thereby freed to develop their spiritual selves. Marx the historical materialist stood for the ideal of human emancipation in a world of peace and plenty. He believed in the prospect that human beings would one day live in a world that would enable them to achieve their full potential.

But the material world of nature had to be mastered and basic human physical needs satisfied before this potential could be realized. And to attain this goal, society had to organize to produce. Marx held that each level of economic development required a distinct form of economic organization. The advent of machinery that could vastly increase productive work provided the most advanced form of economic organization, capitalism. But capitalism had social and economic consequences. As an economic system, it required, as did every system of production, the division of labour. In capitalism the goad of hunger forced people who did not own the means of production to sell their labour power; workers were thereby alienated from their true selves.

### **The Basic Tenets of Modern Democracy**

According to The Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary, Tenet means: One of the principles or beliefs that a theory or larger sets of beliefs is based on. Indeed, it is the basics, and the central role of a theory or beliefs; and in our case and discussions here: Democracy.

Then the question that follows is: What is Democracy? Democracy according to the above quoted Dictionary, means: 1. A system of government in which all the people of a country can vote to elect their representatives; and 2. Fair and equal treatment of everyone in an organization (or polity) etc. and their right to take part in making decisions.

In all, the word Democracy can be correctly said, to have originated from a Greek (precisely Athenian) word: Demos; which means mob, but which will today mean: Masses. Democracy therefore, in the olden times of the Athenians, mean rule by the mob; and today would rightly mean: Rule by the masses.

Indeed, it was Abraham Lincoln (in his Gettysburg speech) that gave the word Democracy its present universal definition as: "Government of the people, by the people, and for the people". The words to note here are: Of the people, by the people, for the people. He (Lincoln) further

explained that Democracy should mean at all times, a: “Direct self-government over all the people, by all the people, and for all the people”.Furthermore, Webster, defined Democracy as “the people's government, made for the people and answerable to the people” (Please see: “Qualities of a Good Leader”, by: Ejike Osuji, 2002, pp.47-53).

Then, having all these preliminary understandings in our mind, the question that follows is: What are the tenets that must be respected, and indeed be clearly seen to be respected, before democracy can function properly in any polity, organization or social setting. Some tenets highlighted by scholars are list below. We believe that, if they are properly practiced in any given polity, organization or social setting, total peace, progress and prosperity will definitely reign in such environment. The tenets include:

- a) Governance (of any polity, organization or other political, economic and social milieus) should at all times, be of the people, by the people, and of the people.
- b) The freedom of the generality of the people (of any given polity or society) should always be guaranteed in the running of the affairs of their political, economic and social environment.
- c) Transparency and accountability to the people (by those who lead) should be at all times practiced (and must be seen to be practiced at all times).
- d) Opinion of the generality of people should at all times be respected, especially on matters of public importance. Therefore freedom of expression should be guaranteed at all times and in all situations without any kind of infringement.
- e) The right to dissent and effective opposition should be guaranteed in the operation of contemporary governments (politics).
- f) Governments should at all-time respect the key fact that “power belongs to the people”.
- g) Complacency (apathy) on the part of the people does not augur well for a true emplacement of democracy, and therefore leaders must encourage the generality of the people to participate in the governance and administration of their milieus.
- h) All eligible voters must be allowed to vote their representatives and leaders in all elections that leads to their governance; and their votes must be made to count.
- i) Fair and equal treatment of everyone no matter his/her gender, race or intelligence.
- j) Truth and Justice must remain the all-time creed of any democracy and must be seen and felt to be practiced at all times and also entrenched for all times. Indeed, truth and justice, equality and freedom, must always be seen to have been upheld without fear or favour.

These tenets remain the core of Democracy in modern times. If they are totally (repeat: totally) enshrined (mentally and manually), respected and practiced at all time; peace, progress and prosperity (the great three “Ps” needed for development) will surely reign in whatever milieu and polity that so does. Their efficacy-in-practice towards great development (man and materially) are never contestable. Indeed, many of so-called developed societies have entrenched and practiced these tenets for their people, and that is why they seem ahead of others who do not. An emplacement of their precepts and a total commitment to them in practicality surely helps.

## THE NEXUS BETWEEN MARXISM AND DEMOCRACY

My aim in this article is to show that the political writing of Karl Marx is compatible with and, indeed, supportive of an understanding of democracy as a process in which individuals cooperate as free and equal participants in the activity of popular rule. This says nothing of any intention on Marx's part to construct such a democratic theory, or of his concern with the problems of democratic institutions in socialism. It is perhaps the absence of such concerns or their elaboration in Marx's work that has created ambiguities in his political theory and obscured the understanding of Marx as a democratic theorist.'

This narration may appear as if there is an oxymoron, however the nexus between Marxist praxis and democracy are not only compatible but inseparable in interdependent in a symbiotic relation that defined the moment of the time and of our time. The concept of democracy raises perennial divisions among its advocates and critics that may be characterized in the following way:

Defendants see it as a complex of principles and procedures designed to realize certain values—those of liberty, equality, fraternity, justice such that it constitutes a uniquely favored species of political praxis. Critics of democracy, in sharp contrast, tend to see it as nothing more than a set of techniques designed to ensure the rule of the most powerful under the guise of popular consent. Among its critics, there is a further distinction to be made between those who see democracy as a necessarily corrupt form of rule, a political apparatus designed to ensure the rule of special interests (a number of Marxists, Leninists, anarchists, etc.), and those who see the reduction of democracy to such terms as a lamentable departure made necessary by mass politics, the military-industrial complex, etc. (Schumpeter, Bachrach, Pateman, Macpherson, more or less fitting into this category). Far from believing that democracy is corrupt subgenres, these latter critics condemn representative democracy as a departure from the direct democracy of antiquity and reserve hope for a return to a purer, more participatory form.

An examination of Marx's own views on democracy shows that he by no means fits easily into the positions of either the qualified or wholesale critics of democracy and that he shares more in common with classical political philosophers, notably Plato, Aristotle and Hegel, on the subject of politics and democracy than is commonly assumed' Marx's views on democracy call into serious question the (revisionist) Marxist assumptions that democracy represents the political epiphenomenon of a specific economic system and, consequently, constitutes no more than a set of practices or procedures to translate economics into juridical-political terms.

Marx's theory of democracy is a critique of the 'political state' in political philosophy, tied to his conception of the *good society*. Marx's discussion of 'democracy' is faced with two difficulties. Firstly, the notion of 'democracy' is a 'contested terrain' revealing clashing political worldviews underneath its theory. Because of its hegemonic role in the existing 'general consciousness', even authoritarian politics masks itself as 'democratic', as in the recent Imperial promulgation of the *export* of democracy as a packaged set of political conditions *imposed on* the ruled by a dominant alien ruler. In such neo-colonialism disguised as 'democracy' there is a grand inversion of form and content, where *democracy as the self-determination of the societal whole by itself for itself* is presented as being the product of the will of One *over* the communal self of an heteronomous many.

Democracy and Marxism appear as are two schools of thought which have left deep imprints in sociological, political and economic theory. They are usually perceived as opposite, rival approaches. In the field of democracy there is a seemingly insurmountable rift around the question of political versus economic democracy. Liberals emphasize the former, Marxists the latter. Liberals say that economic democracy is too abstract and fuzzy a concept, therefore one should concentrate on the workings of an objective political democracy. Marxists insist that political democracy without economic democracy is insufficient. The article argues that both propositions are valid and not mutually exclusive.

### **MISREADING OF THE MEANING OF MARXISM BY SOME INTELLECTUALS**

Marxism as an approach has not been properly taught in many Universities across the globe with special reference to Universities in Nigeria where it is taught as a course in the social science, thereby making students to lose total interest in the discourse or subject matter. In some institutions of higher learning in Africa it is called the "Theory and Practice of Marxism". The inability of many Teachers of Marxism to explain in clear terms what the concept of Marxism entails and its application make mockery of the interesting discourse.

Also, what Marxism entails have not been properly understood by many intellectuals who hide under the nomenclature called "Marxist" or "Neo-Marxist" to teach the subject matter called "Marxism". This explains why the study of Marxism especially in institutions of higher learning in Nigeria is on the decline and the study of Marxism not considered interesting. Moreover, the lack of interest in the study of Marxism has led to decline in the numbers of Teachers, teaching Marxism in most institutions of higher learning in Nigeria.

One of the most difficult aspects of the study of Marxism is that in contemporary literature on Marxism, there is slovenliness among Neo-Marxian scholars which have made the Marxian storehouse of knowledge a place of confusion. This is evident in Lenin's attack of Kautsky, Stalin's offensive against Trotsky, Khrushchev's movement of de-Stalinisation, Mao's rejection of Khrushchev, Djilas's virulent invectives directed against Stalin, Sartre, Colletti's criticism of Marcuse, dismissal of Althusser's Marx by Della Volpe and so on (Johari, 2005, p 664). These criticisms have created significant confusion on modern literature on Marxism.

Jha, (1975, p 35) provided us with a useful conception of Marxism in his response to the new leftists that:

If a Marxist means that there can be no revolution without the working class, without the iron march of the proletarian battalions, they are not Marxists. If Marxism means changing to the conventional tenets of Marxian dogma, then they are not Marxists. If Marxist means acceptance of communism as a historical necessity, they cannot be considered as Marxists. If Marxism is regarded as a concept of institutional rather than intellectual contest they are not Marxists. If Marxism is identified with a specific world view whose contents are defined, surely they are not Marxists. If however, Marxism means a model rather than a theory, then they are Marxists. If standing on the side of the oppressed against the oppressors, on the side of wretched against the privileged, on the side of the persecuted against the persecutors is Marxism, then they are Marxist. Above all, if radical orientation, secular view of the world, distrust of all closed doctrines and systems, striving for open-mindedness and vision of a new man and a new world free from hunger, diseases, pettiness and exploitation are signs of Marxism, then they are certainly Marxists.

From the foregoing conception of Marxism, we can say that Marxism is a model and an ideology that stands on the side of or advanced the interest of the oppressed against the oppressors, wretched against the privileged, persecuted against the persecutors. Marxism also entails a radical

orientation about a secular view of the world, distrust of all closed doctrines and systems, striving for open-mindedness and vision of a new man and a new world free from hunger, diseases, pettiness and exploitation. Therefore, a Marxist is one who believes in all the core tenets of Marxism and practices it.

Over the years, various strands of Marxism have evolved but having common denominator which is the emancipation of human being from oppression and exploitation. Some of the variants of Marxism include: Class theory associated with Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels; Theory of revolutionary social change associated with Dahrendorf, Lockwood and C. Wright Mills; Conflict theory of revolutionary social change associated with Karl Marx and Engels; Theory of revolution associated with V.I. Lenin, Mao Zedong, Fidel Castrol, CheGuevera etc; Dependency theory associated with Andre Gunder Frank, Fernandro Cardoso, T. Dos Santops and others; Theories of imperialism associated with John Hobson, Joseph A. Schumpeter, Vladimir Lenin, Rosa Lumburg, Samir Amin, and Clause Ake (Biereenu-Nnabugwu, 2010, p. 89); and Critical Theory associated with the Frankfurt theorists which blend Marxist political economy, Hegelian Philosophy and Freudian Psychology. Frankfurt theorists include Theodor Adorno, Max Horkheimer, Herbert Marcuse and Jurgen Habermas.

It also important to note that scholars who have sworn to adhere to the thinking of traditional Marxism have accused some Neo-Marxists scholars of “negative radicalism” (Fernbach, 1969, p.63) which is often use to show their subtle approach in the movement relations to the social milieu that basically settles and adjust itself to the existing status quo and its institutional rules and procedures as a framework that will bring about the desired reforms, through negotiation with the existing order and eventually loses its revolutionary ability and thus create a wide gap between theory and practice of Marxism (Therborn, 1970. p. 94).

Similarly, traditional Marxists have also accused some Neo-Marxists of abandoning the outstanding fact that it is the capitalist system that ensures that the oppressors and the oppressed or the exploiter and the exploited make mockery of the human race by refusing to disconnect itself from the existing institutions that entrenched monopoly of capitalist power which they “unconsciously act” as a “safety valve” and as “the whipping boys of capitalism” (Johari, 2005, p. 659).

## **ESSENTIALS OF MARXISM AS A TOOL FOR SOCIAL SCIENCE ANALYSIS**

In 1917, Lenin observed: “There are decades when nothing happens, and there are weeks when decades happen.” Almost a century later, the Soviet communist leader’s words are as fresh as ever.

In this section, our effort is to debunk in its entire ramification that Marxism as an ideology, approach and theory is dead and there is call for it funeral. Marxism is still alive and will continue to be relevant as long as human society exist. First, Marxism as an ideology, approach and theory is product of human experience in capitalist society in Europe, rather it foundational bases was experimental and practical after a rigorous investigation into the nature and causes of inequality that led to the division of human society into classes. As we have argued earlier, Marxism had it root from practice life experience will not die as experience from human history shows that ideas do not die, so it cannot be easily buried, so calling for the funeral of Marxism will amount to venturing into an impossible venture.

It is pertinent to state it clearly at this point that the collapse of the Socialism in Russia and Eastern Europe does not mean the end of Marxism as an ideology. In fact, Heywood, (2007) argued that the collapse of communism at the end of the twentieth century need not betoken, it may give

Marxism as a political ideology; indeed, it may give Marxism, now divorced from the vestiges of Leninism and Stalinism a fresh lease of life” (Heywood, 2007, p.55).

Before the end of the cold war Marxism had proven to be one of the most productive and effective ideology in Soviet Union and Eastern European countries. Its collapse became eminent as leaders like Josef Stalin and to some extent Nikita Khrushchev deviated from the expected tenets of Marxism and abandoned the humanistic ideas that propelled Marxism from the onset by its founding fathers Karl Marx and Fredrick Engels by replacing socialist democracy also known as proletarian democracy in some literature with features that negates the tenets of Marxism like intolerant to oppositions, seat-tight leadership, control of party structure, among other features of totalitarianism in order to ensure their survival in power.

Traditional Marxists have also accused some Neo-Marxists of abandoning the outstanding fact that it is the capitalist system that ensures that the oppressors and the oppressed or the exploiter and the exploited make mockery of the human race. Beginning from 1998, the paradigm shift in Latin American countries has shown the re-emergence of socialism. The tide towards socialism began to gain momentum in Venezuela under the leadership of Hugo Chavez when he adopted a policy which he called “Bolivarian Revolution” named after the nineteenth century anti-colonial leader Simon Bolivar. President Hugo Chavez adopted the practice and adopted the socialist ideology in Venezuela in which he rejected Venezuela former Presidents policy of “fetishist free-market discourse” in favour of what he called the “twenty-first-century socialism”. President Hugo Chavez ensures that the state has total control over its oil industry on the basis that he sees the state oil as the wealth of all Venezuelans and should be used for the benefit of all. In addition, President Hugo Chavez instituted a programme that will ensure that there is provision of subsidized food and medical care in the poorest areas of the very poor in Venezuela.

In Bolivia, President Evo Morales followed similar pattern of reversing to socialism as President Hugo Chavez of Venezuela did by nationalizing its oil and gas industry. In Ecuador, President Rafael Correa have been advocating for President Hugo Chavez “twenty-first-century socialism”. As at January 2006, the Argentina government has been able to pay her foreign debt of \$93 billion to the IMF as it adopted the “twenty-first-century socialism”. All the examples cited above shows clearly the imperative of the Marxism in contemporary time. It has also provided the basis for scholars and policy makers to challenge the current international economic order and envisage that there is genuine alternative framework to the present international liberal economic consensus that put poor countries in a disadvantage position.

Besides, the study of Marxism is important today and should be studied because one of its arguments is that capitalism enriches few minorities at the detriment of the large majority of human beings in any capitalist society have remained undisputed by Liberal scholars till date. Rather what we have witness globally have been alarming rate of marginalization, pauperization and alienation of large numbers of people. This explains why Marxism remains the official philosophy of one-third of human race and the influence of Marxism is on the increase on a daily basis (Mahajan, 2008, p.36).

As pointed out by Biereenu-Nnabugwu (2003, p. 64); Marxist political theories are not only theories for understanding and explaining the world but also offer analytical tool or framework for changing the system fundamentally. Similarly, Mahajan, (2008) rightly observe that in order to have a complete picture of contemporary society, a study of Marxism is important as it is playing a significant role in the lives of millions of peoples across the globe.

Marxian framework for analysis remain one of the most popular approaches to the study of human society and the process of socio-political and economic changes in many Universities in

Africa. Besides, the Marxian framework of analysis have been used and considered useful for explaining the role of class and social changes in human society. Scholar like Karl Marx, Fredrick Engels, Vladimir Lenin, Mao Zedong, Antonio Gramsci, Ralph Miliband, Nicholas Polantz, Fidel Castro, Kim Il Sung, Leon Trotsky, Kwame Nkrumah, Julius Nyerere, Andre Gunder Frank, Samir Amin, Herbert Marcuse, Eduard Bernstein, Leszek Kolakowski, S. Stojanovic, Mengistu Haile, Jean – Paul Sartre, J. Garaudy, Theodore Adorno, and Ernest Bloch and most recently Claude Ake, Okwudibia Nnoli, Edwin Madunagu, Bala Usman, Julius Ihonvbere, A.M. Babu, Attahiru Jega, Abubakar Momoh, Samuel Gabriel Egwu, Dung Pam Sha, Hassan. A. Saliu, and Victor A.O Adetula had at one point or the other employed the Marxian framework of analysis in their studies.

Capitalism enhanced the power of the bourgeoisie, the class that possessed the means of production, over the proletariat, the class that had to sell its labour power to meet physical needs. Capitalists owned tools while labourers possessed only their own labour power. Labourers were forced to sell their services to tool owners on unfavourable terms. The inequality in power between those who owned the means of production and those who did not marked the distinction between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat.

Inequality of economic condition meant inequality of political and social condition. Values and beliefs in society justified unequal economic relations; the bourgeoisie dominated by right every aspect of social life. What was probably most important about this fact for Marx was that exploitative relationships degraded and dehumanized people, making them selfish and cruel. One's fundamental capacity to be productive and to perceive oneself as a creative being was corrupted by the division of people into owners of the tools of creation and those who must sell their creative capacity.

Yet Marx eulogized capitalism. He argued that capitalism was the only system that could produce the tools of production necessary to set humankind free. Only this system, feeding on the greed of the capitalist, could provide the resources necessary to meet human needs so that an economy of abundance could arise. Only with the potential of the productive means developed by capitalism could men and women become fully human. The ever-increasing suffering of the proletariat under capitalism had a purpose. Suffering served as the precondition of ultimate freedom. The capitalist means of production are essential to the arrival of socialism. Suffering prepares the stage for revolution.

The bourgeoisie mistook their temporary and transient role in the great plan of history for an ideal and everlasting social order. They accepted as natural the class system and its supporting institutions. They looked upon the existing organization of state, law, religion, and family as divinely inspired. Marx held that these institutional forms merely reflected the underlying economic system and tried to show that they were ephemeral. Capitalism was the last and most important phase in the continuous evolution of history toward communism.

In Marx's view the bourgeoisie, like all previous owner classes, developed ideologies to support and justify class position. The bourgeoisie, supported by such ideology, used the power of the state to resist change. Eventually the proletariat, spurred by their own suffering and tutored by revolutionary intellectuals, would correctly see the world as it really was and seize power. They would usher in the ideal social order and eventually achieve the goals toward which all history pointed.

While Marx believed that the eventual revolt of the proletariat was a step built into history, he also believed that theoretical understanding of history should be used to guide action. Marx believed that it was possible to know the real world only by acting upon it and that, by acting, one changed it. Once one understood history, one should act upon that theoretical grasp.

Marx's theory of history was evolutionary and optimistic. He did not subscribe to a conspiracy theory. His system required no scapegoats. Capitalist and labourer alike were locked together in a symbiotic relationship, playing out their respective roles in creating ever-increasing wealth at the cost of ever-increasing misery for the working class. Ultimately, out of the contradictory dialectical conflict in which the capitalist and proletariat performed their roles, there was to arise a new organization of production -- a society that was without classes because it was no longer based on exploitation. All would create, not because they were forced to it by the human condition, but because they were motivated to contribute to the human family.

Engels's claim that Marx had discovered "the laws of human history" meant that Marx's socialism was "scientific" in contrast to the "utopian" socialism of such predecessors and contemporaries of his as Owen, Saint-Simon, Proudhon, Weitling, and others. Engels wrote that all these men saw socialism as "the expression of absolute truth, reason, and justice, [which] has only to be discovered to conquer all the world by virtue of its own power." Marx's scientific socialism, which sought to discover the causes and cures of social misery and strife, required an analysis of the events of economic history.

Marxism was scientific, wrote Engels, because it tried to utilize a model of capitalist development derived from a study of the "real" world. Marx believed that "utopians" could only cry out against the world, not change it. Utopians believed that they could mentally construct ideal social systems and that men of reason and goodwill would, enlightened by persuasive argument, effectuate them. Marx endeavoured to organize the latent power of the working class for political action.

Marx taught that self-directed "interests" compelled human actions. While the utopians looked inward to their own thought for solutions to social problems, Marx studied society. His discovery of the objective laws of social change elevated the study of society from useless speculation to science. Marx held in high contempt what he considered the fruitless daydreams of do-gooders and romantic revolutionaries. He condemned the economists J.B. Say and Thomas Malthus -- the first for his groundless optimism about the economy's capacity to regulate itself, the second for his libel of the human race in maintaining that it could destroy itself through overpopulation.

In this study I am concerned with two aspects of the story of Marxism. First is the Marxist System as a whole: How do its parts relate to one another? Second is the Marxist System in historical perspective: Marx was one of the last of the great speculative philosophers to attempt to show the connection of all things in the universe to one another. He was a Renaissance man who took all knowledge as his province, who sought to understand and interpret the flow, purposes, and direction of history. He was a child of the Enlightenment in that he believed that human destiny lay in the hands of people rather than being determined by a benevolent deity.

Faith in the promise of science had grown enormously since the sixteenth century, when Francis Bacon and his successors suggested the possibility that the secrets of the universe were extractable by scientific investigation. Marx believed that scientific principles also governed human affairs. To Marx it seemed wholly plausible that once the secrets of nature were clearly seen, as they would be when historical conditions were right, all problems would be solved.

## CONCLUSION

I discuss the Marxist System mostly in Marx's language. Some of the text is quoted nearly verbatim. The citations are from the original texts. The speculative discussion of the future of Marxism is, of course, my own. Marxism connects everything that happens on the face of the

planet with Marx's view that economic factors determine the course of history. Marx assumed that all social institutions can be understood from the premises of economic analysis and its handmaiden, class analysis. Armed with that understanding, society can reorder itself to suit its purposes.

The state is the tool of the ruling economic class. It protects private property and keeps social peace. This means that all gains by workers merely represent strategic retreats by rulers concerned to protect their own long-term interests. Schools and churches are instruments of education and comfort. The former function to inculcate reverence for the society as it is and at the same time to train the workforce; the latter give comfort to the hopeless, the losers who are consolingly assured that losing is only in this life. It follows from this analysis that love of country is no more than love of one's oppressor. Nationalism is a hoax in the service of capitalism. People must therefore reconsider their loyalties. Workers, exploited in every country, must unite with one another against common oppressors.

Theory must be joined with practice. What is theory good for if it is not a guide to action? Marx's central ideas, historical materialism and the theory that labour alone creates value, derive from the philosopher Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel and the English economist David Ricardo. These two major concepts, converted by Marx for his own purposes, provide the theoretical underpinning for the conclusion that people have been duped and raped for private profit. And, predictably, this critical view of capitalism had resonance for depressed peoples everywhere. Socialism, which according to Marx was to emerge from the class struggle in the twilight of capitalism, has most often arisen in Third World settings that were more feudal than capitalist.

Prophetic Marxism foresaw that the contradictions inherent in capitalism would cause it to annihilate itself. As it is now, capitalism has flourished. The societies that in Marx's time were capitalist political democracies have survived as such. The appeal of Marxism has not been to the industrial proletariat in the developed world but to disappointed intellectuals, politicians, and inhabitants of woefully poor, underdeveloped countries. Often educated in the West, some in Marxist-dominated universities, members of the elite found a reason for their country's backwardness in capitalist exploitation. For them Marxism provided both an explanation and a program. A direct route to socialism, so they thought, would avoid the misery of a capitalist-dominated industrial revolution.

Modern Marxists in the West, particularly sociologists and anthropologists, believe they can explain much of human history by use of Marxist analysis. A smaller group of economists find Marxist explanations compelling. But Western intellectuals who are Marxists have separated theory and practice. It is no longer widely held that a theory necessarily implies a policy.

Marxist and non-Marxist critics of contemporary Western society need not look far for examples of the low quality of so many lives even in rich countries. For the former, Marxism provides an answer. Inequality of condition is often unmitigated by equality of opportunity. Social and cultural differences, often accompanied by ethnic and colour prejudices, seem to frustrate even non Marxists with good intentions. In a market society, almost all who would prosper must succeed in the market. Many, by temperament or through lack of skills, find themselves excluded from the rewards of a market society.

Marxist and non-Marxist critics of capitalist civilization have different views of the causes of the misery of the underclass. Marxists stigmatize all those who accept inequalities in income, power, and status characteristic of capitalist societies, as apologists for the inhumanities of capitalism. They view reformers who would ameliorate the suffering of the working class by means of social programs as not understanding that, under capitalism, power is structural and

intransigent; misery is inherent. For the ameliorates, the civilizing influence of art, music, and literature can be a source of immediate enrichment for all. To the Marxist, the masses need real economic power before they can be in a position to enjoy better things.

For the ameliorates, education can inculcate proper values and curb the inordinate hunger of the bourgeoisie for money and status. For the Marxist, the system itself creates greed and corruption. Marxism appeals because it is the bearer of good tidings. Hegel's philosophy points not simply to a brighter but to an ideal future. And it is a secular theory promising salvation not in heaven but in the world. Suffering is not in vain; freedom and a release from pain will surely come when and where they are needed -- here on earth, now. The bourgeois state emancipates serfs by law only to place them in thrall to their capitalist masters. Marxism promises true freedom in a classless society.

True to Enlightenment doctrine, Marx believes that people have their destinies in their own hands. They need not accept misery as an inevitable component of life. Human beings can change things; history is on their side. Marx said what millions of people want to hear. His appeal, then, was one of hope.

The Marxist mode of thought has explanatory power. What is social science for, if not to analyse, interpret, explain, and predict? For many, Marxism seems able to explain war, poverty, unequal education, racism, colonialism, and the bankruptcy of culture. A great attraction of Marxism is the ease with which world events can be fitted into its system of assumptions. The theory of classes that explains that owners (the bourgeoisie) have a strong self-interest in perpetuating their wealth and power against the proletariat goes a great distance in explaining the behaviour of governments.

There is verisimilitude in Marxism. It provides an insight into events that goes beyond the platitudes usually provided as explanations by apologists for capitalism. Look again at education. The Marxist urges: It is heavily supported by the public and by corporations. Yet it is widely held that education enhances democracy and provides equality of opportunity for the least privileged. But thoughtful people, the Marxist suggests, may not view education as a touching example of our society's generosity to the younger generation. They may ask whether the quality of education is not closely related to the social class of the students. They may perceive that the children of the bourgeoisie benefit most and that children of the poor get just enough education to provide a supply of semiskilled and docile workers. This widely observed phenomenon is a central component of Marxist social analysis.

Today, however, the central appeal of Marxism seems to be on the wane. The appeal for a program of action, implied rather than stated by Marx, has lost many adherents, while Marxist programs embodied in the governmental policies of the Soviet Union, Eastern Europe, and Third World countries face disintegration. On the other hand, Marxism still seems able to explain existing policy in capitalist countries.

## REFERENCES

- Claude Ake (1981). *A political economy of Africa*. Longman Nigeria Plc.
- Biereenu-Nnabugwu, M. (2003). *Political theory. An introduction framework*. Enugu: Quintagon Publisher.
- Bierenu-Nnabugwu, M. (2010). *Methodology of political inquiry: Issues and techniques of research methods in political science*. Enugu; Quintagon Publisher
- Fernbach, E. (1969). *New left Review* No. 56, July-August P: 63
- Heywood, A. (2007). *Politics. 3rd edition*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan
- Jha, B.K. (1976). Un-Marxian development of Marxism. *Indian Journal of Political Science* Volume XXXVII No.4, 35
- Johari, J.C. (2005). *Contemporary political theory: New dimensions, basic concepts and major trends*. Second Revised and Enlarged Edition New Delhi: Sterling Publishers' Private Limited
- Therborn, G. (1970). *The Frankfurt school: New left review*. London, No.60 March- April P: 94
- Uhembe, C. A. (2015). The Metamorphosis of bourgeoisie politics in modern Nigerian capitalist State. *An International Journal of Art and Humanities IJAH*,
- Uhembe C.A. (2019). Slovenliness: Hibitualintellectual uncleanliness in Marxism: *MAJASS* 18.