**THE NIGERIAN STATE TODAY: ACCUMULATION, EXPLOITATION, INEQUALITY, ANGER, RESISTANCE AND REPRESSION**

**Colonial state, Colonial Exploitation, Resistance and Repression**

Notwithstanding all kinds of attempts to justify colonial rule, it was a result of military conquest covered up, ameliorated and justified, almost every where in time and space via acculturation and propaganda by the conquistadors. Beyond propaganda and the appertaining cultural apparati (religion, education etc), colonialism is, invariably, maintained by raw violence (an armed force, a police force, and other law-enforcement agencies) instituted by the colonial rulers.

Under the foregoing circumstances all the apparatuses of the state are designed to, largely, sustain the class hegemony that disproportionately benefit a few. This situation brews public anger!

It was this colonial state that was handed over to a coalition of Nigerian elites in 1960. In spite of the variegation of this elite, its world view was homogeneous: a world view shaped largely by the liberalism of post-World War II capitalism but considerably radicalized by bourgeoning working class struggles in the colonial metropolises and independence movements (including their revolutionary species in India, Algeria, Viet Nam and, up to a point, Ghana and Congo) in the Asian and African peripheries.

It was this neo-colonial state that has been managed by Nigeria’s ruling elite that seized state power, and state treasuries and sought to assume the economic, social and cultural dominance of the colonial elite using the same coercive powers left by colonialism – police, army, laws and law courts etc., some times as “civilian” dictatorships, some times as direct military dictatorships and sometimes as a hybrid of both.

Under neoliberalism, concretely and programmatically institutionalized in the peripheries (like Nigeria since the early 1980s) as the Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs), the ruling classes started direct looting and indirect looting via the privatization programme. A major casualty of the privatization programme had been the collapse of the public sector (employment, health care, education, utilities, public transport and housing and even, security). The related consequences of exacerbated inequality in our society produced anger, frustration and decline of commitment to public purpose at all levels of society leading to escalation of criminality, insurgencies and increased resort to conflict negotiations on the basis of ethnic, religio-confessional, intra-ethnic and sectional, differences fuelled by the elite!

In this sort of socio-economic situation the ruling class creates laws and law-enforcement agencies that protect its power of accumulation and the political power with which it protects the maintenance and extension of those powers hence, the character of the law-enforcement agencies – regular police, LG Police, Arotekun,“Kill and Go”, SARS, army, etc. etc.

**The paradox of Nigeria’s law-enforcement: A hungry, humiliated and dehumanized face of the state.**

In many situations across our country, the only consistent evidence of governance is the presence and conspiracies visibility of law and lay-enforcement agencies – courts of law, police stations etc. largely ***agencies of control*** that ordinary people ***struggle to avoid.*** This perception arose from the actual tradition of impunity of police authorities on matters of procedure of arrests, definition, treatment of citizens under detention, and bail. ***Both the army and police in Nigeria actually assume two roles of accusers and judges and in the way they treat citizens and most citizens endure the paradigm until they have an opportunity for revenge.***

The paradox is that the bulk of this law-enforcement personnel which protects the policies and priviledges of the ruling class is, itself, highly under priviledged in terms of emoluments, housing, civil rights etc, etc. This condition of power and under priviledge encourages corruption in the police especially making them parasites on the public and turning them into enemies of the public.

**The EndSARS Metaphor**

Many times, civil actions that are often referred to as ***Public Disturbance,*** riots. vandalism, looting, or generally, breach of public peace occur in different polities or among polities at different times. Many times also, these events are specified by very insignificant or rather cryptic events! But most of the time, they are products of sustained build-up of contradictions. The dynamics of the so-called Arab Spring is a typical and recent case.

In many cases, the “disturbances” surprises the ruling or economic and their proxies and agencies. They are quite often referred to as disturbances because the ruling and/ or hegemonic forces consider the systems and conditions they superintend as ***normal*** or even ***natural***. Any actions or attitudes (individual or collective) that interrogate, or seek to interrogate, this ***normal*** are considered ***abnormal***, disruptive, anti-social, etc, etc!

The fact of our current social crisis is that a ***lumpen parasitic bourgeoisie*** willmultiply lumpens on the streets. The parasitic bourgeoisie ***creates*** mercenary law-enforcement agencies to reign in especially the lumpen proletariat. The escalation of directly proportional to the escalation of private resources among the bourgeoisie. It is the cause of insurgency, public anger and frustration.

As we try to show subsequently, the dominant social classes whose economic and social policies create poverty, frustration and hopelessness among the masses of the people simply don’t understand

We apprehend this paradigm also in international relations between the dominant nation states and the subaltern states. President George Bush did not understand that marginalized nations and peoples of the world are frustrated and angry about their marginalization. Following the 9/11 attack on the Twin Towers in 2001, Bush wondered, “why do ***they*** hate ***us*** so much…?” (my emphasis).

**Public Resources, Jobs, Securities: Partisanship and Nepotism**

Fake jobs (774,000), Trader Moni, Farmer Moni (Buhari on Oct.1, 2020); ***jobs already divided***  among big people in Abuja and the state capitals.

***Obas, traditional rulers donate their children and relatives for vacant or new public offices.***  Sons of Bola Ige, Lam Adesina, Segun Osoba appointed commissioners in their states. First ladies’ offices fully funded by the Government (s).

Politics, politicking as a profession: from state to federal legislature; from House of Reps to Senate; from Governor’s Office to Senate or Ministerial Offices! The Buhari concept of juicy federal appointments.

***Access to power, public resources*** even when they are denigrating public enterprise; and even after they have ceased to be public officers.

***Sources of the wealth of Politicians and why political contests are matters of life-and-death***

1. Statutory, allowances and other emoluments.

2. Wealth conferred by influence and political power

3. What they call constituency projects – Tarring of roads, construction of drainages, “gifts” to traditional rulers and religious leaders (CAN chairman, Chief Imam in Ogbomoso).

**Understanding Why: Ode t’ o’ Peran**

It is important for the ruling circles, their friends and supporters and those who call themselves community leaders, leaders of faith-based organizations and the so called opinion leaders to understand why public anger bursts open again and again. It is not always that these categories make genuine efforts to understand.

These categories, and even segments of the victims of unjust public policies, don’t seek to understand. This is partly because ***understanding often prescribes solutions or new policy directions that reduce the powers, priviledges and private material benefits which dominant policies confer on policy makers and their cases***.

**Exploiting the people and dispossesing them and dividing them**

Rising inequality across Nigeria, unpaid salaries, unpaid pensions, unemployment. Unkept towns, atomised citizens; “you are your own” public policies, promotion of divisions inside towns, between towns and villages (Obas, Chiefs), tribal, religious etc.; even, and often especially, among the elites who are allegedly highly educated.

And these inequalities are enforced directly and indirectly through law enforcement structures, culture (religion, educational processes and structure).

Structures and boundaries of urban housing and media (newspapers, radio programmes etc.) and traditional relationship trappings (palaces, state funds, outriders etc.)

**#End SARS Memo**

**Saturday October 17, 2020 today**

A certain post on social media by someone whose identity I cannot recall had the following to say about the “Youth” that organized the #End SARS” protests:

I always say this thing is not spontaneous…

Read the following:

**NIGERIA ON MY MIND**

“So I have a 21 years old Nigerian – American boy based in Atlanta in his last year in university ***decided to get involved with the youth protest in Nigeria*** … WITHIN ONE HOUR, the chap and his goal. That is $10,000 folks!!!”

**“MORE THAN THE SWIPE OF AN APP…**

Please take the agitations of the Nigeria Youth seriously… They are organized like regulated militia… They sum tribe and religion… They are proving to be among the most resilient, educated, articulate, detribalized, collaborative, digitally savvy, patriotic, artistically talented, and most law-abiding generation of Nigerians.

…They have become “self employed”. Their current employment are simply those protests on the streets”

“The government blocked the cash app by which the protests were being funded. The youths instantly switched to crypto currency (bitcoin)…”

In Ogbomoso (following the killings of 10 – 11 October 2020) and various locations in Nigeria where young Nigerians hit the streets in frustration over ruling-class callousness, ineptitude and violence, ***segments of the media and the Nigerian elites including traditional rulers embarked on a narrative of blanket criminalization of the protesters.*** They were characterized as criminals***, hoodlums, thugs, vandals miscreants etc***.

It was indeed a pleasant surprise when the Soun of Ogbomoso requested Governor Seyi Makinde of Oyo State to utilize N90m of the N100m promised towards renovating the Aafin Soun to empower the youth of Ogbomoso. The gesture, inspite of the general contempt for public anger among the people, confirms that a significant number of well-placed citizens know that public anger arises economic deprivation and frustration!