A PHILOSOPHICAL EVALUATION OF CONTEMPORARY NIGERIAN POLITICAL ECONOMY FROM THE LENS OF OBAFEMI AWOLOWO'S DEMOCRATIC SOCIALISM

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ABSTRACT
Obafemi Awolowo's ideology of democratic socialism focuses on state development, free education, and social welfare aimed at improving citizens' lives. In this work, an examination is performed of how such an ideology can function in modern Nigerian society with regards to present political and economic transformations. Thus, this work considers policies drawn from Awolowo's ideology vis-a-vis contemporary Nigerian context. Certain challenges such as corruption, external economic factors, and poor leadership bewitch the otherwise effectiveness of Awolowo's social democratic ideologies in the present Nigerian setting. Materials, data for this research work were sourced from articles and journals.The methods of philosophical analysis and historical hermeneutics were used to handle them. The findings in this work suggests that for Awolowo's ideology of democratic socialism to work in modern-dayNigeria (Africa), leaders must undertake a transformation of his ideology into a reality, consolidate structures like capitalism, and have high political will.
Keywords: Democratic Socialism, Nigeria, Obafemi Awolowo, Ideology, Capitalism, Political Will

INTRODUCTION
Looking back at Nigeria over the years, there is the realization that her citizens experience better yesterdays more than better today or futures. The economy keeps diminishing and failing every day, the political structure never gets better, citizens are either suffering or they are exiting the country for greener pastures or many gave up with the conclusion that Nigeria cannot get better. My visit to the Northern part of Nigeria made me to weep. Lots of children on the street begging, parents struggling on how to survive and take care of their children, while the children are suffering from different varieties of sickness and diseases, high level of illiteracy, and so many other deficiencies. Asides from the North, other regions are characterized by availability of few job opportunities, no good healthcare services, high rate of illiteracy and crime, weak leadership and many more deficiencies. Looking at all these deficiencies, the thought about certain ways they could be minimized, stopped or eradicatedbecame indispensable, and that is when the idea of Awolowo"s Democratic Socialism came to mind. Nigeria can be great and Democratic socialism offers a pathway to free education, free healthcare, better minimum wages and many more.

Consequently, this paper explores Awolowo's Democratic Socialism and how impactful it could be if implemented in contemporary Nigerian political economy. Nevertheless, while there are different notable African thinkers discussing the concepts of African Socialism, it is not possible to discuss all of their ideas here, and hence the author selected few thoughts and analyzed them using a thematic structure of literature review. African socialism emerged in the mid-20th century as a political and economic ideological movement aimed at creating an alternative to Western capitalism, imperialism and Soviet communism, one that would be rooted in African values, communal structures, and indigenous traditions. It was of utmost importance during the era of African decolonization, when newly independent nations sought ways to modernize while retaining their cultural identity. Hence major African socialists drew their ideas on the ground that Africa is primarily communal which inherently forms part of their tradition. Below we look at the few thoughts;

Nelson Mandela (1918) used philosophy of Ubuntu as a central theme in his vision of African socialism. He saw Ubuntu, which emphasizes the interconnectedness of individuals within a community, as a foundational value for governance and societal organization. Mandela noted that in traditional Xhosa culture, "leaders were expected to consult widely and seek consensus", a practice he sought to emulate in his political leadership" (Mandela.1994, 219). This however lays emphasis on the idea of communalism and the role of tradition as a theme.

Also Julius Nyerere (1922) sees African socialism as "essentially attitude of the mind which involves a change in personal attitude and a reconciliation of individuals" (Yacouba and Wologueme, 2018).He would go ahead to coin the term "Ujamaa," meaning "familyhood," as the distinct feature of his African socialist society. Nyerere argued that socialism was part of the African way of life, derived from traditional village life in which land and resources were held collectively and used for the benefit of the whole community.He then saw Ujamaa as both a political and moral foundation for building a self-reliant, egalitarian society, free from the exploitation characteristic of capitalist systems.

However, African thinkers also heavily pointed out on cultural and intellectual identity which stands as key idea of this movement. Leopold Sedar Senghor's (1906) African socialism was rooted in his philosophy of négritude, which celebrated African identity, heritage, and values. He said that African societies were by nature communal and egalitarian, and thus naturals for socialism. He dreamed of a "third way" in which he would take the best aspects of socialism from Western traditions and those from the African traditions to forge strong bonds of solidarity and mutual assistance (Senghor 1964, 10). Senghor placed a strong emphasis on cultural identity as a foundation for development. Indeed, he argued that cultural independence was as important as political and economic liberation (Senghor 1964, 14).

Furthermore, Senghor believed that there was a need for African societies to revive their

own cultural heritage, which had been suppressed under colonialism, and integrate it into the fabric of modern governance and economic policies. For Senghor, the arts were a part of this renaissance: he supported initiatives that would lead to African literature, music, and visual arts—seeing them as tools with which the people could be unified and inspired toward national pride (Senghor 1964, 18). There is a cultural dimension to African socialism that separates Senghor's vision from the more economically focused approaches of major African leaders like Julius Nyerere and Kwame Nkrumah (Vaillant 1990, 102).

Meanwhile, based on unity and pan-Africanism, Sékou Touré (1922) believed that unity among African nations was not just a political necessity but also a cultural imperative. He argued that colonialism had fragmented African societies by imposing arbitrary borders, and Pan-Africanism was essential for restoring their historical solidarity. Drawing from the communal traditions of Guinea's Mandinka people, Touré emphasized that African socialism must transcend national boundaries, and foster economic and political cooperation (Toure, 1962). He envisioned a continent where unity could be the counter to neocolonialist exploitative forces.

This work is organized into five sections beginning with the abstract, followed by an introduction which is this part. The introduction captures the background followed by a review of related literature by different African philosophers highlighting the role of African socialism as a movement for liberation from capitalist ideologies, colonial ideals and emphasizing the role of socialism in African society. The other sections; three and four go deeper into the analysis of Awolowo's core ideas of Democratic Socialism, beginning from his biography, while discussingthe applicability of the core ideas in contemporary Nigeria cum Africa and thereby providing the areas that render such application implausible. The last section which is the conclusion articulates the relevance of Democratic socialism in modern-day Nigeria with the aim of consolidating capitalist structures.

UNDERSTANDING DEMOCRATIC SOCIALISM

In other to understand his thought on this ideology, it is important to trace his biography and political movements. Obafemi Awolowo was a politician, lawyer and philosopher born in Ikenne, in Remo Division of Ogun State in southwest Nigeria on March 6, 1909. Baptized as Jeremiah, he was the first son of the four surviving children of hisfather; David Sopolu Awolowo and mother, Mary Efunyela (nee Awofeko) whom were among the early converts to Christian faith being evangelized to the indigenes of Ikenne community. As at his birth, Ikenne society was in religious flux, as Christian missionaries and native traditionalists' idol worshippers were determined to overpower each other leading to the community's polarization. Olufemi Ogunsanwo cited that Chief Awo himself described his setting in his autobiography "*My Early Life*" in the following way:

> There was fear of the innumerable gods worshipped by adherents of the traditional religion. When there was smallpox, it was attributed to the anger one of the gods. When the rains failed to fall, it was one of the gods registering its displeasure. Again, there was this fear of the babalawo

(traditional healer) who claimed and was credited with all forms of supernatural and magical powers (Ogunsanwo 2009, 1).

Regardless of the struggles and societal norms, Awo's father married another wife though he was among the middle-classed members. This movement however affected the later life of Awo, especially after his father died of smallpox. The death of his father in April 8, 1920 prompted the end of an "orderly and chequered childhood life unceremoniously" (Ogunsanwo 2009, 2). This affected his smooth academic background as he moved from one school to another because of non-payment of fees.He began his academic life smoothly in 1914; this is at the outbreak of the First World War, at St. Savior's Anglican school, in Ikenne. After three years there, he switched to Wesleyan school, Ikenne, a school owned by the rival Methodist Mission, where he became more intelligent and gained admission into the highly rated C.M.S Grammar school in Lagos, in January 1920. He couldn't continue there after his father's death as he sought for stipends to pay his fees. His educational career was in shamble as he moved back and forth from Baptist Boys High school to Salvation Army school, Abeokuta and finally Wesley College, Abeokuta, where he became interested in law. He later decided to take correspondent courses' (distant learning program) in English, Commercial knowledge, Bookkeeping, Business method and Shorthand. He later studied Latin and was engrossed in the essays of one Robert Ingersoll who wrote profusely on anti-biblical literature. Awolowo later became a reporter in 1934 with the Lagos-based Daily Times newspaper, also a public letter-writer and a transport owner. Chief Awolowo got married to an industrious businesswoman, Miss Hannah Idowu Dideolu on December 26, 1937 and she bore for him four (4) children. He later sailed to United Kingdom in 1944, to study law, leaving his family in Nigeria. He studied for two (2) years and bagged the LL.B with Second Class Honors, and was later called to the Bar on November 18, 1946 as a "member of the Honourable Society of the Inner Temple" in London. He published his new book "*Path to Nigerian Freedom*" in London in 1947 before returning to Nigeria(Ogunsanwo 2009, 7)

After his call to the Bar, Awolowo practiced law for five (5) years; handled land cases in Ibadan before delving into politics properly. He was also notable for different patriotic acts such as advocating for federalism in the Middle Belt and Rivers state, forming the cultural group named "Egbe Omo Oduduwa" in his native Yoruba land. He also made his political intensions known through an institution of a party called 'Action Group' in 1951- 1966, which eventually challenged and dethroned the NCNC that reigned before his political campaigns. He handled post as the leader cum premier of Western region, also a member of political party 'UPN' that reigned between 1978 and 1983. He really earned much respect due to his leadership qualities despite the difficult situations he found himself in.

Awolowo wrote few books, articles and political manifestos. Apart from '*A Path to Nigerian Freedom*' written in 1947, he also wrote '*Awo – An authobiography'* in 1960, *'Thoughts on the Nigerian Constitution'* in 1966, *'The People's Republic'* in 1968, '*The Strategy and Tactics of the People's Republic of Nigeria'* in 1970. Chief Obafemi Awolowo died on 9 May 1987, at the age of 78 and was buried at his hometown of Ikenne.

Socialism can be defined as an economic and political movement; the emphasis of socialism lies on the ownership or regulation of property and natural resources by a state or community rather than by private individuals. In socialism, people act as part of that society rather than independent agents of that society. Democracy on the other hand is a form of government in which the people vote directly against or in favor of decisions, policies, laws, etc. It is government by the people especially: rule of the majority.What exactly is the connection between socialism and democracy? Awolowo's Democratic Socialism emphasizes the integration of socialist ideals within a democratic framework. He contended that the state should play a pivotal role in regulating the economy to ensure equitable distribution of resources while upholding individual freedoms and democratic participation. In his seminal work, *The People's Republic*, Awolowo stated: "It is my earnest contention then that all the people of Nigeria should be given the opportunity to enjoy the benefits of our resources through a system that combines the best of socialism and democracy"(Awolowo 1968, 45).

He believed that socialism, when implemented democratically, could rectify the socio-economic disparities entrenched by colonialism and capitalism and this is because both (socialism and democracy) are complementary. These disparities entrenched by capitalism in particular includes injustice arising from production, exchange and distribution, that are so deeply-seated and widespread that they cannot be satisfactorily minimized not to talk of being eliminated through capitalism. For instance, scarcity is rewarded whereas abundance is punished. The capitalist system produces lockouts, strikes and other forms of labor dispute as well as lots of friction and rancor between the rulers and the ruled. It also undermines democracy and distributes opportunities and resources unfairly. Suleimmon maintains that “capitalism exposes the people to inescapable economic insecurity, which generates negative emotions like jealousy, anger, hatred, selfishness etc among people”(Suleimmon,2025). This in turn causes starvation, illiteracy, inequality and disparity among individuals in particular vicinity. For capitalism to be eliminated there has to be a socialist system that operates democratically. Now let's look at his principal ideas of discussion;

THE CORE IDEAS OF AWOLOWO'S DEMOCRATIC SOCIALISM

The following principles help to define Awolowo's socio-political philosophy of democratic socialism:

i. Public Ownership and Control of the Means of Production

Awolowo insisted that key sectors of the economy be owned by the public. He was convinced that the state had to be in control of strategic industries and natural resources and thus avoid the exploitation of national wealth by the privileged few. Mining, energy, transportation, and major industries were supposed to be under state management so that the generated wealth would be accruable to all Nigerians without distinction. As he puts it: "The ownership and control of the basic means of production must be vested in the state so that the wealth of the nation could be harnessed for the welfare of all" (Awolowo 1968, 60). He was persuaded that private monopolies would worsen inequality while public ownership would bring about a more balanced economic structure.

ii. Democratic Governance and the Rule of Law

Unlike the authoritarian socialist models, Awolowo's socialism was anchored on democratic principles. He emphasized the need for constitutional governance, respect for the rule of law, and protection of individual freedoms. To Awolowo, Democratic Socialism prescribed a system of government in which the government was responsible to the people, and there was a guarantee for political participation. He reasoned that: "Without democracy, socialism loses its human face and degenerates into tyranny"(Awolowo 1968, 74). Awolowo's ideal political arrangement was one in which free and fair elections, freedom of speech, and freedom of political association were guaranteed to keep socialism in line with respect for human rights.

iii. The Institutional Arrangement for an Extensive Social Welfare System

One central plank of Awolowo's Democratic Socialism was an expansive social welfare system geared at the removal of poverty and raising of the general standard of living of all citizens. He believed that the government was duty-bound to provide basic services such as free and universal education, health, housing, and social security.

The resplendent success stories of his legacy include the introduction of free primary education within the Western Region, for he saw education as a tool at all costs in the liberalization of the masses. He said, "The masses must be freed from ignorance, disease, and poverty through free education, free healthcare, and social welfare programs" (Awolowo, 1981). In Awolowo's opinion, social welfare was an investment in human capital that promoted national development and social cohesion. He reiterated to the commitment of a complete and comprehensive free education during his campaign for Nigerian presidency (i.e. during the 1979 election with UPN). In his own words regarding education, “it is your fundamental human right”, he added that “if he were empowered today, he would declare free education effective nation-wide within hours by executive presidential proclamation”(Ogunsanwo, 191).

iv. Centralized Economic Planning

Awolowo viewed this as a need for rapid development and a fair share of resources; he thus supported centralized economic planning as means through which resources would be allocated, industries invested in, and infrastructural development guided. He supported the idea of Five-Year Development Plans, similar to what was practiced in other socialist-leaning economies but adapted to Nigeria's democratic context. These plans focused on industrialization, agricultural development, education, and healthcare. Awolowo emphasized: "Economic planning is indispensable for a backward country aiming to make rapid progress in industrial and social development"(Awolowo 1970, 144).Through strategic planning, he sought to avoid the pitfalls of unregulated capitalism and ensure balanced economic growth.

v. The Proper Distribution of Wealth

At the heart of Awolowo's Democratic Socialism was the commitment to the fair distribution of wealth and national resources. He recognized that colonial capitalism had

entrenched deep social and economic inequalities, and he sought to correct this by implementing policies that redistributed wealth across society. Awolowo argued that: "The wealth of our country must be equitably shared among all Nigerians, regardless of ethnic, religious, or social backgrounds"(Awolowo, 1947).This statement above implies ensuring an equal distribution of economic resources regardless of the total population of a given region or state, which is seen in instance of two regions A and B respectively, with each region taking an equal share of resources despite having a sixty and forty percent population respectively. He also envisioned progressive taxation, public ownership of key sectors, and welfare programs as mechanisms to reduce wealth disparity and empower the underprivileged.

vi. Industrialization and Economic Self Reliance

Awolowo understood the role of industrialization in attaining economic independence and growth for Nigeria. He encouraged the establishment of industries that would process Nigeria's raw materials locally, thereby reducing dependence on foreign imports and creating employment. He believed strongly in economic self-reliance and indigenous industrial development and encouraged investment in manufacturing, textiles, and agro-allied industries. "Industrialization is the engine of economic growth, and without it, we cannot achieve true independence"(Awolowo, 1968). Awolowo's policies sought to diversify Nigeria's economy from sole dependence on agriculture and the export of raw materials.

vii. Agricultural Development and Cooperative Farming

Agriculture was another cornerstone of Awolowo's economic strategy. He encouraged the formation of agricultural cooperatives to enhance productivity and empower rural farmers. Through cooperative farming, farmers could pool resources, access credit, and apply modern farming techniques to increase output. He believed that modernizing agriculture was essential for achieving food security and providing raw materials for industries. "The modernization of agriculture is the foundation upon which our industrial development must stand"(Awolowo 1968, 95).This approach was intended to reduce rural poverty and bridge the urban-rural development gap.

viii. Promotion of National Unity and Integration

Awolowo understood the challenges posed by Nigeria's ethnic and regional diversity. His Democratic Socialism sought to promote national unity through equitable resource distribution and inclusive governance. He opposed ethnic favoritism and advocated for policies that fostered national integration. He argued that "No nation can achieve greatness if it is divided along ethnic and religious lines. Unity is essential for progress"(Awolowo, 1981). His policies aimed to ensure that all Nigerians, regardless of ethnicity or region, benefitted from national development.

ix. Moral and Ethical Governance

Awolowo's Democratic Socialism was also rooted in moral and ethical governance. He believed that leadership must be accountable, transparent, and driven by a commitment to the public good. This implies that leadership must be guided by service and not self-interest

and hence corruption, nepotism, and waste were antithetical to his vision of a just society. He famously stated: "The disease of corruption is the greatest enemy of progress, and it must be uprooted for socialism to thrive."(Awolowo, 1981).Awolowo's emphasis on ethical leadership was integral to his belief that public resources should be managed responsibly for the collective benefit.

Free and Universal Education: Suleimmon stated that "the extent of the progress made can be measured by the fact the area formerly known as the Western Region is the most developed part of Nigeria today, especially educationally"(Suleimmon, 2025) Free education was one of the cardinal programs of the Action Group, a political party led by Awolowo. His introduction of free primary education significantly increased literacy rates and educational opportunities in the region(Awolowo 1981, 76). Also not only did he provide free education for his citizens, he made sure that loans weren't given and housing subsidies were removed; and Ogunsanwo (2009) added that:

> Awolowo ensured that gifted students from all fields were given scholarships to study abroad... He didn't approve loans because he felt education ought to be a birthright..., democracy for him will benefit all if the bulk of the citizens who were the electors are literate.

Education was important bedrock of development and progress for him and following these statements, he went on to showcase it when he instituted the "Universal Primary School Education (UPE) program in 1952"(Ogunsanwo 2009, 26-27). People like M.K.O Abiola and many others benefited from such implementations. Although it posed a huge problem financially but he managed to draft good ideas and methods alongside his colleagues on how the project will materialize, and the project became a success for the people in the Western region.

Healthcare Services: just like in the area of free education, he saw health as a public good and that no individual should be denied medical care because of poverty. For him, a healthy nation is a wealthy nation and that no society can function effectively when the people are under the shackles of disease(Awolowo, 1981). To ensure such provisions, he introduced the free Healthcare Scheme which aimed at targeting children under the age of 18 and pregnant women respectively. He also constructed numerous blocks and healthcare facilities across the rural and urban centers for an easy access to medical services, trained nurses/doctors and the expansion of medical schools to produce more health care professionals. He also made sure that essential drugs and medical services were provided freely to the targeted groups and individuals. However, this access to medical services and drugs had a huge impact as there was decline in child and maternal deaths, immunization and health education which improved the general health outcomes. Also, the rural communities weren't left behind as they gained access to free healthcare.

AWOLOWO'S DEMOCRATIC SOCIALISM AND NIGERIA

Nigeria is widely known for her unification of different ethnic regions, economic and political practices that influence its lifestyles. Some of their belief systems emanated from

their ethnic communal life, cultural norms etc, and subsequently colonialism and imperialism playing a huge role in their advancement of ideologies and practices. As a result of capitalist movement and its exploitative features as brought by colonialism, Chief Awolowo embarked on a rigorous journey for an ideology called Democratic Socialism to eliminate the troubles of capitalism and imperialism.

As discussed previously, Democratic socialism combines element of democracy with a concern for social equity, public ownership of certain leading sectors of the economy, and robust welfare systems. This has an effect with indigenous lifestyle and post-colonial yearnings for social justice. Despite the yearnings for social justice, it still faces some unique challenges in implementation because of the contemporary political, economic, and historic environment.

It stresses on the need for income equality of which the distribution of resources must be made justly. Also, it advocates for state ownership in the essential sectors of the economy such as health, education and utility, while the state ensures that healthcare services, education and shelter are offered to her citizens freely. It also provides adequate channel for citizens' voice in policy formulation and implementation. However, when Awolowo's concept of democratic socialism is brought down to Africa, it becomes a complex task because Africa is molded by diverse colonial experiences such as the British indirect rule system, the French principle of assimilation and association etc. we also look at diverse ethnic groups and economies at various stages of development in Africa. Many countries also experience extreme poverty, corruption, and general political instability despite richness in natural resources and hence these factors make it more complex to adapt fully to socialist principles.
Meanwhile for Awolowo;

> Man is a composite of mind, body, soul, ego, who is both the agent and focus of development, and who flourishes best when educated under good leadership, in an atmosphere of democratic socialism. while the soul of man disposes him to love his fellow men, his ego sometimes disposes him to selfishness and thus a rejection of capitalism which seems to fuel man's tendency to greed(Oriyomi, 2022).

This implies that these modifications and changes are what constitute human nature from Awolowo's perspective, and only man decides his faith in the society. Hence such faith leading to socialism can be achieved through proper education and an understanding of capitalism as constitute of the ego in man. Following the previous discussions, we understand that Awolowo's socialism emphasizes social welfare, federalism and regional autonomy, economic planning and public ownership etc. but how then does it currently align with values, belief systems and patterns of Nigeria (Africa)? Let's look at the following.

The Applicability of Awolowo's Democratic Socialism to Modern-Day Nigeria

This ideology remains essentially relevant for tackling the eternal problems that have

bedeviled Nigeria: poverty, inequality, unemployment, institutional fragility, and governance failure. His ideals of social welfare, economic self-sufficiency, federalism, and moral leadership have served as examples for sustainable development therefore we look at them.

(a) Social Welfare: Lessening Inequality

Awolowo was of the opinion that free access to housing, health, and education held the key to development.Awolowo's focus on social welfare is to remind Nigerian government that they should invest in people along with fighting corruption and searching for new sources of income (Falola and Heaton 2008, 102). This ideology aligns with the modern-day Nigeria especially in education where programmes, investments and solid foundations are made available to individuals and institutions for instance the Nigerian Education Loan Fund (NELFUND) grant loans to privileged few so they could have access to equal opportunity and education.

(b) Economic Self-Reliance: Becoming Independent

He believed that Nigeria could reduce foreign aid and raw material exports dependence by:

i. **Agri-development:** with the right materials, funding and consistency, Nigeria is bound for huge agricultural produce rather than reliance on foreign aides. Hence if the right material, resources and manpower are given to the target farmers, agricultural products would be massive and there would be a reduction in high rate of poverty cum scarcity of commodities. This ideology however favors the current society because of the government's emphasis on agriculture and actualization by means of grants.

ii. **Industrialization:** Nigeria needs to add value to all raw products, not just export raw materials. African Continental Free Trade Agreement (AfCFTA) is encouraging trade and sympathetic to local industries and this will definitely help the country in the long run.

iii. **Preventing foreign dependence**: central to Nigerian underdevelopment is over-dependency on foreign assistance based on loans, grants and hence Awo's ideology limits this deficiency. He advocated for improved debt management and depending less on foreign and more on internal resources. Less dependence on foreign aides will amount to taxation on citizens or improvement on raw materials. This tax reform favors Awolowo's ideological nuances, and not only does it espouse socialist ideals but its implementations work towards generating revenue which assists in the accomplishment of set goals by the government. It is important to note that Awolowo generated revenues from tax implementations to actualize his aim for a better Yorubaland. Also since taxes were paid, used for accomplishment of a targeted goal, there was higher trust and dependence on the government, hence unity existed in his region which promotes socialism. The footprint of socialism was seen in the national anthem used during Awolowo's leadership, and consequently same national anthem was introduced currently which hence supports Awolowo's ideals.

(c) Federalism: Improved Governance

Awolowo felt federalism, in which regions self-govern was greatly needed. During his time

in Nigeria, he designed federal system to balance national unity and regional autonomy. Nigeria's federalism is currently over-centralized, with the federal government having sole control over resources like oil. His framework dictates decentralization of authority to the states (Falola and Heaton 2008, 108). This federal system introduced by him towards his people also brought about inclusivity which is an aspect of democratic and socialist governance. Therefore, this current system supports Awolowo's ideals by means of creating more ministerial positions with the portfolio designates coming from different regions in Nigeria despite being centralized.

(d) Ethical Leadership: Countering Corruption

He considered service and integrity to be the driver of leadership which is greatly lacking in most parts of the country starting from the apex. Nevertheless, systemic reforms like transparency need to be in place to enforce moral leadership. However, when his ideologies are applied in contemporary Nigeria, are we sure of a positive outcome? What are the factors that can impede the actualization of this ideology? Hence, we articulate its problems.

CRITIQUES OF OBAFEMI AWOLOWO'S DEMOCRATIC SOCIALISM

i.*Feasibility in a capitalist global order*: One of the most forceful criticisms of Awolowo's democratic socialism is that it finds no room in today's global capitalist order and this is because capitalism has gained more ground to the extent that its total removal is difficult in this current Nigeria. For instance, taking a good look at the global economic landscape, there cements neoliberal economic policies as the universal world standard of reference in the post-Cold War period. The International Monetary Fund and the World Bank actively advocate market liberalization, privatization, and limited state intervention. Such policies are in direct opposition to the essence of Awolowo's planned state economics and social provision. The majority of African nations become heavily immersed in the global economy and therefore is compelled to adopt neoliberal reforms so they are able to effectively attract foreign investment and aid.

ii. *Obstacles of ethnic and political fragmentation*:Awolowo dreamt of a united society whereby people could be mobilized towards the realization of commonly believed goals. Invariably, ethnic, cultural, and political diversities in Nigeria currently often work against such unity. For instance in the area of ethnic tensions such as ethnic divides arriving from different nations now, many separatist agitations etc make the search for inclusive policies even more complex. Also Awolowo succeeded more because his leadership was on his region i.e. native Yoruba nation though he faced stiff opponents and made tough decisions for the accomplishment of his ideology.

iii. *State Inefficiencies and Corruption:*Awolowo's democratic socialism places a heavy reliance on state intervention, the government is surrounded by inefficiencies and corruption impeding the effectiveness of state-driven development. Corruption remains one of the major barriers to state-led development in Nigeria: Funds meant for social welfare schemes or infrastructural development is usually diverted to serve personal ends. In other words, public confidence is lost which lessens the efficiency of policies inspired by the dictates of Awolowo.

iv. *Overemphasis on Redistribution without Wealth Creation:* Awolowo's democratic socialism places the emphasis on the redistribution of wealth through social welfare programs. As much as this is crucial to address inequality, it can be argued that it does little to stress the creation of wealth as a principle toward meaningful development. Also policies of this nature run the risk of making citizens dependent on redistribution at the expense of their active involvement in economic activities.

Critics argue that Awolowo's model relies less on the private sector as an engine of growth. In today's globalized world, innovation and entrepreneurial spirit from the private sector are important to economic development with instance of the famous investors and business tycoons in Nigeria like Aliko Dangote and several others.Also, there is lack of a substantial tax base is a limitation for most governments in funding redistribution programs in many nations. High levels of informal economic activities and weak systems of tax administration translate into high difficulties in raising revenues for many governments.

In the final analysis, these factors impede the actualization of a socialist democracy but however there is need for Nigeria to reiterate on the relevance of this ideology in the modern time. Through proper education and sensitization, there is the need for human nature to call itself back to memory, assess this ideology while applying it in modern time to suit everyone.

SUMMARY

Awolowo's ideological model foresees a society in which social welfare, medical care, and comforts of life become accessible for all citizens, regardless of socioeconomic background. With modern Nigerian society struggling with a variety of concerns such as unemployment, inequality, and destitution, poor infrastructure, and tenuous social structures, balanced application of Awolowo's ideals holds a key to enduring development and social cohesion.

A characteristic of Awolowo's model of democratic socialism is its blending of socialist collectivist values with individual liberty and democratic politics. By assigning a high value to equitable distribution of wealth, Awolowo's ideology promotes a level field, with no group of citizens forced to live in shadows in national development processes. In current-day Nigerian society, with its pre-existing challenge of incomes inequality, democratic socialism can become a strong weapon for producing shared wealth for all citizens. For instance, social welfare programs in Awolowo's model such as free access to social welfare, cheap housing, and cheap medical care can level out systemic inequalities and raise society's most disadvantaged groups.

Education as one of Awolowo's cardinal tenets is most applicable in such a way. Nigeria's youth bulge both poses a challenge and an opportunity for development. Consistent investments in free, compulsory, and high-class training, such as Awolowo dreamed, will make youth with capabilities and information actively contribute to an economic development froman increasingly interconnected environment. In a similar way, medical care programs with subsidies can drive productivity through reduced financial burden for medical care for family budgets and a healthy workforce.

Although certain challenges like the elements of colonialism and total reliance on the West for development, man's nature of dominance, greed, and environment, ethnic and racial disparities pose a huge problem, Nigerian realities, however, demand an integration of capitalist and Awolowo's model of democratic socialist ideals. Capitalism, with its values of competition, private sector drive, andinnovation, proves effective in producing wealth, attracting investments, and generating jobs. Capitalism generates wealth, attracts investments, creation of jobs but also brings aboutinequality and deepens social inequality, excluding a significant part of society in its fruits of development.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the harmonious integration of capitalist and democratic socialist values can produce a balanced model for Nigerian economies. There can be growth-inspired policies and introductions of powerful social welfare programs in a manner to make fruits of development accessible to all in an equitable distribution form. For example, such sectors like medical care, schools, and housing can be actively run by the state, but private companies can dominate such sectors like technology, industries, and trading. In such a way, both social welfare and growth aims can be achieved at one and the same time, enhancing a long term and futuristic relationship between regions. Also, Awolowo's idea of state-owned key industries can function in such sectors like transportation, energy, and natural resources, for example. Nigeria can have a mixed model of state and private investors together working in such sectors for effective administration and for distributing such sectors' fruits shared in an equitable form between society and investors. For example, such sectors' earnings can go towards social welfare programs, creating a development and equity circle.

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