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Implications of Awolowo's Dialectic Principle on Contemporary Nigeria

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Abstract:

This paper examines the dialectic principle of Nigeria's foremost thinker and sage, Chief Jeremiah Obafemi Awolowo, popularly known as Awo. It diagnoses the essential elements of the principle and examines its implications on contemporary Nigeria. It locates Awolowo's dialectic within the class of discourse which aims at undressing the truth through methodical and well-thought out arguments. It also postulates that, in contemporary Nigeria, the values advocated by Awolowo are as fresh as primrose buds. Awolowo's principle of the dialectic derives from his philosophy of democratic socialism, which purpose is to use democratic methods (legal, constitutional and governmental) for systematically and sustainably building an egalitarian society. The paper posits that Awolowo's penchant for progressively advocating for improvement in the lives of the suffering masses and articulating their interests, relentlessly, unrelentingly and insistent, clearly shows his embrace of democratic socialism. There is also a strong link between his dialectic principle (with its intendment of change and progress) and his philosophy of democratic socialism. As much as Awolowo tries to justify his principle of dialectic, however, his work has been critiqued, mostly, for being equivocal. It is the intention of this paper, therefore, to simultaneously examine how well Awolowo has been able to defend his dialectic principle and the justification of the critique on his postulations. This is with a view to determining whether or not Awolowo's principle of the dialectic has any heuristic value to Nigeria.

Keywords: *Dialectic, metaphysical dialectic, socialism, Fabian socialism, welfare state capitalism, social, political, economic, capitalism, democratic socialism, development, improvement, freedom, governance, prophet, equivocality, heuristic value, triad, spiral, thesis, antithesis, synthesis, solution loop, Universal Mind, metaphysical, aeons, love, injustice, countervailing, aggrandizement, impunity*

1. Introduction

It is interesting but not surprising that Awolowo finds a friend in Hegel and Marx, the earlier proponents of the principle of dialectic, because of his hatred for capitalism. In their variants of the dialectic, both Hegel and Marx see capitalism as an imperfect system that has to be dealt a heavy blow in order to get to perfection. Also, Awolowo, in his thoughts on political and economic freedom, gleaned from several of his speeches, considers the postulates of capitalism as false and a snare. According to Awolowo, the worst of the evils of capitalism is that it is essentially and intrinsically displeasing to the dialectic principle. He acknowledges Plato as the originator of the dialectic and confirms the authenticity of the dialectic process as that of engaging the mind, either inter-personally or intra-personally in an inner dialogue, with a view to discovering the "truth of any matter in issue through questions and answers" (Awolowo 1981b:62-63). The search for the truth also places Awolowo in the category of the truth philosophers like Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, Hegel and Marx. How far he is able to go, in the advocacy of certain values for Africa generally and Nigeria especially, is what this paper is concerned with.

2. The Genesis of the Dialectic and the Thesis-Antithesis-Synthesis Triad

Although Plato was a truth seeker, like Awolowo said, he was not known for originating the principle of dialectic; rather, he was "known for his Dialogues" (Mark, 2009). Plato's student, Aristotle, who had a strong bond with his master, was also engaged in the subject of the truth but he too was not credited with originating dialectic. The erudite German philosopher, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, is popularly believed to be the originator of the principle known as the dialectic (Solomon, 1986:23). Hegel's method of locating the truth differs from Aristotle's in that, unlike Aristotle, he believes that what we see has limitations when we consider the totality of what is to be seen. It is noteworthy that Aristotle's method concentrates on the facts of the case and reaches a conclusion derivable from the observations. Hegel is also believed to be a step above his master and mentor, Kant (Gwin, 2016), who proposed the genesis of the dyad: thesis and antithesis (McFarland, 2002), signifying respectfully, the beginning proposition and a negation of the proposition (Runehov and Oviedo, 2013) without going further.

Johann Fichte has been credited with supplying the third (synthesis), as the reconciliation of Kant's dyad; thereby, becoming the first to use the thesis-antithesis-synthesis triad (Coleridge, 2002:89).

The search for objective truth led Hegel to the proposition of the principle of dialectic, which is his contraption for getting to the truth. It is believed that Hegel's method is premised on a tripartite process that sees Fichte's truth (synthesis) being arrived at, through the discord and squabble between Kant's dyad of thesis and antithesis. It has been agreed, in the literature, that the best end result is the synthesis. The thesis-antithesis-synthesis process is also seen as moving in a spiral course, continuously, continually and continuingly, with the synthesis reverting to the thesis again, thereby, resulting in no end to the cycle. At any stage of its movement, however, the final stage of synthesis is the absolute truth. Synonymous with thesis-antithesis-synthesis spiral is the problems-reaction-solution loop.

Another great proponent, coming after Hegel, was Karl Marx. Marx deviates from Hegel's conventional dialectic that ideally sees human experience as contingent upon mind. As opposed to Hegel's "loftier dialectic" (Awolowo, 1981b:63), Marx dialectic, sometimes referred to as "Marxist dialectics" is popularly known as "dialectical materialism" (Thomas, 2008). Thus, to Hegel, dialectic is a product of the mind, with the spirit being very active and God involved; whereas, to Marx, everything is a product of matter with no spiritual connotation, no God and no souls. While Hegel's dialectic is based on idealist observations, Marx's is based on concrete socio-economic interactions with the corollary of socio-political reality. Be that as it may, both Hegel and Marx see capitalism as an imperfect system and advocate for a counter system to destroy the imperfection and bring the desired change.

3. Awolowo's Principle of Dialectic

Awolowo's dialectic is a variant of Hegel and Marx's dialectic. Awolowo's dialectic is, indeed, a combination of Hegel and Marx's dialectic because of his metaphysical belief that the dialectic is a product of the mind or spirit with the involvement of the universal mind (God) in the resolution of socio-politico-economic reality that will eventually see capitalism as shamed. He throws more light on why he detests capitalism by rationalising that it is not in tandem with the principle of dialectic. (Awolowo, 1981b:62).

Awolowo, indeed, makes some concessions in agreement with Hegel and Marx. For example, Awolowo concedes that the principle of dialectic, as propounded by the duo, stands for change and progress from the lower to the highest; from the part to the whole and from the indeterminate to the determinate. He also agrees with Hegel's conception of each stage in the dialectic procession to absolute self-realization, as a THESIS; the counter movement designed to remove the imperfection of each stage as ANTITHESIS and the stage embodying the test, in both THESIS and ANTITHESIS, as the SYNTHESIS.

Although Awolowo agrees with the submission of Hegel and Marx on the progression postulate from imperfection to perfection, his own conception of dialectic is different from theirs. First, he affirms "an *a priori* proposition that the universe is a cosmos not a chaos" (Awolowo, 1981b:64). Second, he talks about an immutable law (synonymous with the universal mind) operating in the physical world, in its dormant and inactive state until it is activated by the thoughts, words and actions of man. Third, he posits that our thoughts will germinate and bear, respectfully, the fruits of goodness or badness, contingent upon our thoughts of good or evil, anytime we put the law in motion. He, thereafter, postulates that:

Like cause always produces like effect...one good deed always produces its kind 'a hundred-fold' Ditto for one evil seed. But whilst the good seed, in spite of even the stiffest obstruction and opposition, proliferates, flourishes and transcends itself in quality, through aeons of time, the bad seed, in spite of the most generous encouragement, tends, through time, though sometimes imperceptibly, to diminish in quantity and degenerate in quality until suddenly it suffers total extinction.

Noting that the good idea will manifest while the evil idea will eventually perish, Awolowo's explanation for his reasoning above is that the delay in the blossoming of any good idea can only be temporary while the promotion of any evil idea cannot be perpetuated. He concludes his treatise on the dialectic by affirming that:

The touchstone of whatever is good, be it thought, or word or action is LOVE. We are to love our neighbours as ourselves. 'That is the law and the prophets'. Anything therefore – any thought or word or action – which falls short of LOVE is evil and holds within itself the germ of its own eventual and inevitable destruction (Awolowo, 1981b:65).

He, thereafter, makes a far-reaching prediction based on the dialectic principle. It is this:

...as long as greed or naked self-interest remains the prime and main motivation of any social system, that system must always of a necessity generate countervailing greed and naked self-interest in everyone whom its operations affect and in the process of time it will degenerate to perish. This is why I feel confident in predicting that capitalism is doomed to perish and that whilst it lasts it will continue to be a fruitful source of injustice, discontent, strife, moral weakness and degeneracy, and widespread relative poverty and distress (Awolowo, 1981b:66).

Awolowo extends this analogy to capitalism and socialism. He labels capitalism as the bad seed and socialism as the good seed epitomizing LOVE.

4. Critiquing Awolowo's Dialectic

There is no doubt that Awolowo is at home with his principle of the dialectic while sounding rather prophetic in several instances of his postulations. For example, Awolowo's affirmation that our thoughts will germinate and bear, respectfully, the fruits of goodness or badness, depending on whether our thoughts are good or bad, is an age-long known prophetic law of sowing and reaping. While analysing the operation of this law of harvest, Awolowo dwells so much on the metaphysical notion of the dialectic that we see his dialectic, which he christened, "the true dialectic" (Awolowo, 1981b:65), as metaphysical dialectic.

Awolowo is also perfectly correct to predict that like cause, whether good or bad, will always produce like effect. Although the harvest may not necessarily be "a hundred-fold" as Awolowo suggests, his proposition is understandable considering his Christian background which reminds one of Isaac sowing and reaping "a hundred-fold" (Genesis 26:12). We also want to, humbly, submit that Awolowo seems to have taken optimism to an unimaginable level by respectively expecting the good seed (socialism) to blossom, in the face of the "stiffest obstruction and opposition" and the bad seed (capitalism) to diminish, degenerate and die even with the best of encouragement without any "any thought or word or action" different from love.

It is common knowledge that, for a good seed to thrive, not only must it be unobstructed, even if slightly; in addition, it must be on good land; the dug soil must be of a good depth to make the seed go down straight and the seed must be well manured. Within the Nigerian context, alone, the prediction that socialism will blossom, in the face of the stiffest obstruction and opposition, seems to be like a joke taken too far. Even the slightest obstruction, in Nigeria's first republic, of Awolowo's good governance that had the potential of eventually making his dream of democratic socialism translate into reality, has led to socialism's shrivelling, no thanks to "the best of encouragement" given to the impunity associated with Nigeria's capitalist system.

Also, in his analysis of the effects of naked self-interest, the product of capitalism, Awolowo seems prophetic again. This is against the backdrop that naked self-interest, with its accompanying evil and greed, still remains, largely, the motivating factor for most people who dabble into Nigeria's politics today. It is still "the prime and main motivation" of our system. That being so, the system, as Awolowo predicted 47 years back, has recurrently generated equivalent greed and naked self-interest, if we go by the Anglo-Norman French's etymology of "countervailing" (*contrevaloir*), meaning "be equivalent to in value." Indeed, a cursory look at the Nigerian state today will justify Awolowo's assertion largely. For example, today's Nigeria is still bedevilled with greed, avarice and selfishness of the highest order, orchestrated by our model of the capitalist system which throws decorum to the winds and encourages a few individuals to grab as much as they can of our resources without any compassion for the downtrodden. This is also against Awolowo's notion of LOVE, which he believes only socialism can procure.

The greed in the Nigerian system today shows that governance, from the local level to the national level is, largely, about selfish interests and aggrandisement. What makes this circle to continue unchallenged is the tendency of the capitalists, who have consistently smuggled their way to power, to use their entrepreneur partners in crime to siphon the country's resources. It is just a matter of the thief stealing something and giving it to another thief for safekeeping. This also explains why some Nigerian leaders now store money in rooftops, in reservoirs, in coffins and artificial graves, instead of using it for the purpose for which it is meant – to better the lives of millions of people over whom they govern. Some of our leaders also keep money running to billions of dollars in foreign accounts that the law enforcement agents are finding difficult to retrieve to Nigeria. This is tantamount to helping citizens of other countries to appropriate to themselves "LIFE MORE ABUNDANT" which Awolowo (1981a:196) believes every Nigerian should enjoy. Government is run, in Nigeria today, as the government of the thieves, by the thieves and for the thieves. The mere fact that the issues addressed by Awolowo almost fifty years back, are still very fresh in the country today, makes Awolowo a prophet of a kind.

On the attributes of the dialectic, Awolowo does not believe that Hegel's dialectic is an activity of the mind with the aim of exposing contradictions and discovering the truth about an external matter; rather, he sees Hegel's dialectic as "the unfolding of the very soul of the matter itself under the impetus of the Idea" which is complete and absolute (Awolowo, 1981b:63). Nonetheless, Awolowo seems to copy from Hegel's attributes of the dialectic. While the latter's dialectic is premised on "the qualities of freedom, justice, equality, truth and other forms of social ideals and moralities" (Awolowo, 1981b:63), Awolowo's is premised on "the attributes of love, morality, kindness and unselfishness" (Awolowo, 1983:12). According to Awolowo, "all of the ideals of freedom, justice and rule of law...known to ordinary mortals like ourselves are clearly cherished by the avatars, and great religious leaders like Jesus Christ and Mohammed" (Awolowo, 1983:12). All the above attributes, Awolowo insists, constitute the good seed of socialism. He maintains that dialectic endeavours to unfold all these attributes and virtues of mankind and that its process would lead to change and progress.

Most commentators have given Awolowo credit for exhibiting the above attributes through his demonstration of good governance during his reign as premier from 1954 to 1959. Although Awolowo has attributed his very good performance to his practice of democratic socialism during this period, literature has shown that he did not preach socialism until well after

1959 when he had vacated the seat of premier (Zachernuk, 1981:291). I personally consider Awolowo's body-language tilted towards democratic socialism during his premiership but he himself had confessed that he would not be guided by any ideology but would adhere strictly to any "isms (Zachernuk, 1981:286). That is the reason his opponents are quick to point to the equivocality in his preachment of democratic socialism. In fact, Awolowo did not become emphatic on the adoption of democratic socialism until February 20, 1962, during the 8th congress of the Action Group held at the African Games Club, Jos, almost two years after independence. I feel very strongly too that Awolowo's avowal, during the first republic, can be interpreted as a half-hearted approach to democratic socialism in pre-independence Nigeria.

Suffice to say, however, that, during this time, Awolowo initiated and executed programmes that showed his love, kindness and unselfishness to the people over whom he governed. People who benefitted from Awolowo's free education policy, started in 1955; his scholarship scheme; his reformed health programme; his rural integration policy; his industrialisation programme; his promotion of agriculture (especially establishments of plantations for farmers) and his enhanced salary and emoluments for workers (earning 5 shillings, when their counterparts, in the other two regions, were earning 2 shillings and 6 pence) could never forget, in a hurry, his love for the masses. His mantra of "LIFE MORE ABUNDANT; FREEDOM FOR ALL" (Awolowo, 1981a:196), with the actual follow-up to it, could actually be viewed as a subtle way of initiating democratic socialism but his preachment of none of the sanctimoniousness, often associated with this ideology, puts a serious question mark on his preparedness for democratic socialism. He was, thus, seen rhetorically advancing a course different from the one he was pursuing.

There is no doubting the fact that Awolowo detested greed and demonstrated selflessness and love to the people. There are, however, three issues that are unclear in his discussion on greed or naked self-interest. The first is the reference, on his submission on the effect of self-interest and greed, to "everyone whom its operations affect." As he has not clearly operationalized this phrase, it is not really clear who "everyone" refers to. Does it refer to everyone who is associated with and, therefore, influenced by, the corrupt elements in the society (i.e. the cabal and ginger group who help the men and women in power to steal our money)? Or does it refer to everyone who bear the brunt of the evils perpetrated (i.e. the hapless and helpless downtrodden who continue to wallow in abject poverty)? If it is the former, then, the reference of Awolowo to capitalism as generating countervailing greed and naked self-interest in everyone whom its operations affect, may be true, at least in Nigeria. We will, therefore take the word "affect" to mean "influence." However, if the corollary of "naked self-interest in everyone whom its operations affect" refers to the latter, that is, if Awolowo sees the system as operating to the exclusion of nobody affected by it, including the hapless, helpless, innocent suffering masses, which we strongly feel is his intention, then, it will amount to hasty generalization to say that everybody affected will become greedy and selfish.

The second unclear issue has to do with Awolowo's confidence that the process of time will make capitalism, in a general global sense, to degenerate and perish without any concerted effort to halt it. First, I want to believe that Awolowo's vituperations are directed to the several evils of capitalism, as practised in Nigeria, and not necessarily to capitalism as a system. This makes one to wonder why Awolowo does not restrict his wish for the demise of capitalism to Nigeria; after all, his recommendation, to the exclusion of developed countries, is that "every underdeveloped country will be wise resolutely to avoid the capitalist system" (Awolowo, 1981b:68). Even if it is so directed to Nigeria or any underdeveloped country, for that matter, one will still want to ask: what gives Awolowo the confidence that these evils, arising from Nigeria's brand of capitalism, will degenerate and perish with the process of time when there is no concerted effort being made to remove them, bearing in mind the lack of specificity in Awolowo's "aeons of time?" Moreover, Awolowo's rationalisation that the process is over "aeons of time" for capitalism to degenerate is escapist because the aeons of time may translate to eternity.

Besides, one may wish to ask: what will make capitalism to die in Nigeria when it is being given the best encouragement? Let me give a quick example. The present Buhari government is always quick to point out the atrocities perpetrated by the outgone government of Goodluck Jonathan. There is no doubt that the reference is apt; the PDP under Jonathan virtually finished Nigeria. What is strange, however, is that Buhari himself, who was voted into power with high expectations that he would clear the debris of the past PDP government, has proved, beyond reasonable doubt, that the confidence reposed in him is unjustified. With Buhari's abysmal performance, one cannot but conclude that Awolowo's prediction has come to reality that making greed or naked self-interest to take the prime place in our social system in Nigeria, will have a spiral effect of breeding countervailing greed and naked self-interest. Nonetheless, Awolowo's conclusion that a stop will be put to the mess with the "process of time" is groundless and unjustifiable. Perhaps, it is Awolowo's incurable optimism that has led him to this absurd conclusion, despite his awareness that corruption has a way of fighting back hard. It is simply naïve to think that process of time, rather than definite action, can automatically stop the impunity in the system, especially when that "process of time" to Awolowo is synonymous with "aeons of time" signifying eternity.

I want to submit that wisdom or mere rhetoric does not tie logs of wood together; it is the rope that does. As long as we fold our arms doing nothing to stem the tide; as long as nobody can, meaningfully, challenge the impunity in the system and as long as those voted into power with very high expectations turn out to be worse than those voted out; so long will injustice and the attendant evils continue. No confidence will make evils to degenerate and perish. Awolowo confesses, himself, that a war of attrition is inevitable in the process of removing the imperfection in capitalism and that an explosion is anticipated in both the thesis (capitalism) and antithesis (socialism) (Awolowo, 1981b:63). He, however does not want to hear about conflict, even when the dictionary defines "attrition" as: "a process in which you steadily reduce the strength of an enemy by continually attacking them (Sinclair, 2003:79). It is even inconceivable that Awolowo would be talking of "figurative explosion"

which will make the synthesis appear (Awolowo, 1983:13-14) when there had been actual physical explosions, in which his name featured prominently in Nigeria. In fact, Awolowo too has been accused of being a trouble maker, despite his often-quoted non-violent approach to resolving the war of attrition between the thesis and the antithesis. For example, Ayeni-Akeke (1981:488-489) states that Awolowo's name featured prominently in the 1953 "Kano riots, the intra-Action Group wranglings which culminated in the *wet e* violence and ultimately the civil war, and even the post 1983 election violence in some states...the acrimonious controversies, like the dispute which wrecked the Nigerian Youth Movement, the treasonable felony trials, Coker Commission of inquiry" Even after the demise of Awolowo, the violence that attended the annulment of the June 12 election, believed to have been won by Bashorun MKO Abiola, which eventually brought the present synthesis (still imperfect as it may be), seems to point out that not confidence or love can resolve the war between the thesis and antithesis but action of some sort.

The third thing that is unclear about Awolowo's postulation is his view that capitalism (and not the spirit of impunity associated with it in Nigeria) will continue to breed "injustice, discontent, strife, moral weakness and degeneracy, and widespread relative poverty and distress." Let us begin by observing that Awolowo's prediction is correct only to the extent that the impunity associated with capitalism in Nigeria will continue to be a fruitful source of these evils. Although there has never seemed to be barefaced injustice in Nigeria, from independence till now, I have never seen injustice, under a democratic government, so widely embraced, institutionalised and defended as we have in Nigeria today. For example, it is still very strange that several people who have been granted bail for upward of 2 years now, like Col. Sambo Dasuki (Rtd.), Sheikh Ibrahim El-Zakzaky and Mrs Zainab El-Zakzaky, are still languishing in jail, reminiscent of the military regime. It is also laughable that a CCT judge who had been twice given a clean bill of health by the EFCC over a N10 million bribery allegation, when they thought his body language was suggestive of a support for nailing Olusola Saraki, the Senate President, is freshly being charged, after his body language turned out, apparently, to be a deceptive façade. I learnt the Attorney General and Minister of Justice has queried Magu, the EFCC boss, to justify his action over the fresh charges against this judge. But what is the legal justification for an agency of government to institute a criminal charge, in the first instance, without a nod from the Attorney General? It is also in Nigeria that you find Justices compromising their integrity and oath of office by taking bribes to influence judgement.

What about discontent? It has not been this bad in Nigeria. Nigeria is now so polarised that every tribe wants to go on its own. There is now a daily suggestion for restructuring, with the extremists even suggesting they would like to leave the geographical contraction called Nigeria. This is even made worse by the strife occurring on a daily basis between the Fulani Herdsmen and farmers. The Fulani herdsmen have now gone haywire, killing, maiming and raping, almost every day, without the president (their tribesman) having a clue as to how to arrest the situation.

What about moral weakness and degeneracy? Can anyone forget, in a hurry that Nigeria's immediate president could not apparently understand that stealing is synonymous with corruption. To him, stealing is different from corruption. His utterance is even morally moderate when compared with that of Madam Philomena Chieshe, the lady who had the temerity to tell us that snakes had swallowed thirty-six million naira put in her care.

With the several examples of lawlessness that we have in Nigeria today, I believe Awolowo would have been absolutely correct to predict that the spirit of impunity, perpetrated by capitalism, will continue to breed injustice and the associated negative tendencies whilst it lasts and not necessarily capitalism itself. After all, Awolowo himself agrees that capitalism can co-exist with democratic socialism. For example, his support for restricted public ownership and delimited central planning in government has been focused (Olson and Shadle, 1996). Zachernuk (1988:276) also states that Awolowo's "rejection of public corporations and renewed defence of private enterprise must make one wonder in which direction he was growing." Moreover, Zachernuk (1988:277) quoting Sklar, points out that Awolowo was vacillating between "Fabian socialism and welfare state capitalism." Awolowo was, therefore, half way between capitalism and socialism. He even practised his own brand of democratic socialism successfully, alongside, capitalism, in the old Western region. I think what is of paramount importance is that, the true democratic socialist government, which in Awolowo's view, will bring the desired change, in such situation, will be able to curb the excesses of capitalism through legislation. I agree that the several tendencies of impunity in capitalism (corruption, oppression, injustice, etc) can ultimately serve as conditions for the emergence of socialism; yet, such emergence will, at best, be seen as operating side-by-side with reformed capitalism as practised in the Scandinavian countries. Lastly, I don't see why Awolowo wants capitalism to degenerate and perish with the process of time although I share his sentiment that democratic socialism is better than capitalism. I am sure he would have been overwhelmed by the evils perpetrated by capitalism in Africa and especially in our country Nigeria. Otherwise, one will be tempted to ask: why must capitalism, being practised by Britain, America, Australia, West Germany and several other countries, high on the Human Development Index (HDI), Commitment to Development Index (CDI) and Research and Development Index (R & D) perish? Why must the system that enhances technological innovation and development, faster than any other economic system, perish? Your guess is as good as mine.

5. Conclusion

There is no doubt that Awolowo meant well for the people of Nigeria. He was, therefore, prepared to articulate before the broad public what he felt would boost their happiness and prosperity. He came up with the principle of the dialectic as a part of his philosophy of democratic socialism; brought capitalism and socialism side by side and concluded that capitalism

was a snare. This paper has shown that, indeed, capitalism has been abused and debased in Nigeria because it has been manipulated and turned to a potent weapon for oppressing, suppressing and marginalizing the poor. It has also been seen as a way by which some of Nigeria's conscienceless and unconscionable leaders, in succession, siphon the government money, meant for caring for the helpless, oppressed and poor people, through their allies. This continuous trend, in our polity, seems to confirm Awolowo's prediction that, as long as greed or naked self-interest continues to be the main motivation of our system, so long will there be a continuous generation of countervailing greed and naked self-interest. Besides, the injustice, the disaffection, the bitter disagreements over fundamental issues, the moral laxity and the corruption, all resulting from the pervasive greed, envisaged and talked about by Awolowo, almost 50 years back, tend to confirm him as a prophet of a kind.

Nonetheless, Awolowo's treatment of the dialectic principle seems to be muddled, jumbled and scrambled. What he labels the "true dialectic" may not be true, after all, considering the unresolved issues is his theoretical postulations. For example, while Awolowo agrees that a war of attrition between capitalism and socialism is bound to occur, one is not comfortable with his suggestion that LOVE will solve the problem, more so that Awolowo recognises love as the touchstone of what is good only. One is bound to ask: Is love also the touchstone of what is bad, especially all the bad things in our body polity that Awolowo has identified? The law of love that Awolowo quotes from Matthew 22:40 applies only to religion and not to socio-politico-economic issues like capitalism and socialism. What the Gospel of Matthew is saying, here, is that true religion commences and ends in love to God and man. Besides, Awolowo's reliance on the "aeons of time" to bring a synthesis is evading.

Be that as it may, Awolowo's formulation of the dialectic principle is tantamount to meddling where angels fear to tread. Credit should be given to Awolowo for his worthy attempt at co-championing the principle of the dialectic with strong and tested philosophers like Kant, Fichte, Hegel and Marx. Furthermore, his predisposition for continuously advocating for changing the lives of the poor for better and fighting for their interests, intensely, clearly shows his adoption of democratic socialism. Besides, there is also a correlation between the aim of his dialectic principle for positive change and his philosophy of democratic socialism. It is submitted, in conclusion, that although Awolowo is incoherent in specifying how best the war of attrition between the thesis (capitalism) and antithesis (socialism) can be fought and when the synthesis can finally be achieved, most of Awolowo's observations, in his dialectic, should heuristically challenge and encourage us, as a nation, to learn, discover, understand and solve our common problems.

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