

Centripetal and Centrifugal Forces, Masses' Endless Quest For Social Justice: A Review of Iná Ràn by Adéşolá

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In every society, there have always been frictions between the owners of means of production and those whose sweats oil the economy of the society in question. Oftentimes, this friction borders on class struggle for economic and political control, leading to chaos or revolution. A perfect specimen to illustrate this scenario is Iná Ràn, a play by veteran scholar and playwright –Adéşolá Ọlátéjú. Literary critics have studied Iná Ràn, albeit with scanty attention given to the concept of social justice. This study therefore highlights the never-ending faceoff between the leader and the led, hinging on the desire for an egalitarian society that thrives on fair distribution of resources to all. Further, it underpins the concept of social justice as propounded by Karl Marx (1818-1883) a foremost political activist cum philosopher who proposes a Theory of Socialism with the aim of finding lasting solutions into this development. In Iná Ràn, Olateju advocates Marx's revolutions as a tool for attaining social justice amid societal imbalance. Data for this study were extrapolated from Iná Ràn. This study adopts qualitative research, with focus on close reading and content analysis methods, to justify Marx's proposition, which, according to him, is pervasive in virtually all societies. In the end, this work reveals the possibility of constant showdowns between the authorities and labour, until the latter eventually prevails, leading into the birth of socialism and then communism.

Keywords: Social justice, Iná Ràn, Socialism, Karl Marx, Revolution.

INTRODUCTION

Social justice is the fair and equitable distribution of resources, opportunities and privileges within a particular society to ensure that all individuals and associations have a stake to basic necessities upon which there is no ceiling to their ability to excel. It opens up windows of opportunities for all, especially the vulnerable. It is anchored on anxieties on a fair distribution of which the goods and the burdens arising from collective life are shared amongst members of society. Social justice includes elements such as social belonging, trust, justice and equality ((Deranty, 2016; Bulut, et al, 2017).

Miller (1976, 20); and Rawls, (1999, 4); underscore a 'just distribution of society' as the fulcrum of social justice, likening it to a scenario in which each individual enjoys adequate repartition of benefits and burdens arising from social cooperation. Once fully maintained, a system of social justice automatically reduces disparities, enhances empowerment of vulnerable communities, as well as fosters an environment where diversity is celebrated. This, ultimately contributes to a more harmonious and stable social order.

Social justice is as old as the beginning of creation. In the Holy Bible, God commissioned Moses and laid in his hands a great task to lead the Israelites out of their slavery in Egypt (Exodus 3; 9-15). This simply means God acknowledged the suffering of Israelites, as well as the need to emancipate them from their oppressors.

Social Justice can be triggered by a number of factors such as political oppression, economic inequality, social and ethnic discrimination, unemployment, and political corruption, among others.

The concept of social justice is universal (Adorno 2006; Arendt 2018; Bottom ore 2003; De Dijn 2020; Sachs, 1992). For instance, there is the American Revolution (wikipedia.org); French Revolution (Youvan, 2025; Milanovic, 2023); National Revolution Movement in the Philippines (Malabed: 2006: 43-45); and Greek Revolution (Arendt, 1977; Brinton; 1938; Kim, 1991), to mention but a few.

Karl Marx and his ally Frederick Engels remain one of the foremost proponents of the Theory of Social Revolutions. Marx and Engel's Theory were propounded between 1818-1833, and 1820-1895, respectively. Marx was a philosopher cum humanist who was deeply hurt by the exploitation the working class experienced under capitalism. Capitalism represents

a mode of production, in which capital in its different forms like money, resources, purchasing power, stocks of good etc. is fundamental for production. Capitalism creates two classes in society- the wealthy class or the **bourgeoisie and labor class or the proletariat (Kulkarm: 2024). Meanwhile, Marx is stoutly opposed to capitalism. His inclination** therefore led him to propose a revolution that would overturn the manipulative economic system, to a rather fluid version which would lead to creation of more human socialist society.

Marx's philosophy is hinged on social and economic freedoms. However, this freedom, argues Marx, does not come on a silver platter. Substantiating Marx's philosophy, Kant (2017); Szell (2025); and Fücks and Manthe (2022, p.10) postulate that freedom though means having the choice between different alternatives, yet does not come for free as it must be won and defended again and again. Marx proposes that under capitalism, workers' existence is as good as the existence of every other commodity. This simply means living is attached a little value just as mere commodity. Jones; 2023: recaptures Marx's thought that in such circumstance, the needs of man and even his animals cease to exist, a development that limits human beings to fulfilling his needs.

Interestingly, from the 15th century that Marx and his protégé Hegel, made this proposition, it has remained potent to date, and Nigeria is no exception. For example, from pre-independence to post-independence Nigeria, there have always been a cat and dog relationship between the authorities and labour. This faceoff has progressively led to the latter being engaged in industrial action, partial or total strike, protests or even a revolution that often get bloody leading to loss of lives and property (Egbunike, 2021; Orojide-Isola, 2008; Ijioma, 2021; Obadare, 2021; Akinyetun, 2021).

Iná Ràn by Adéşolá Qlátéjú comes handy in this discourse. It is the tale of man's inhumanity to man! It is the story of ruthlessness and covetousness of those who hold the levers of power and the exploitation of same against those who work to earn a decent living under same establishment. This situation often leads to altercations between the two parties which Marx christens the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. Marx defines the bourgeoisie as the social class that controls the political and economic circuits, while the proletariat is the social class having no significant ownership of the means of production (factories, mines, building, vehicles) and whose only means of subsistence is to sell their labour for a wage or salary (www.wikipedia.com).

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

This study aims to investigate the concept of social justice through the lens of Karl Marx's ideology of class struggle, historical materialism, and critique of capitalism, with a focus on economic inequality and systemic oppression in contemporary society, using *Iná Ràn* as a reference. In light of the foregoing, our objectives are to:

- explore Karl Marx's theoretical framework on class struggle and its appropriateness to modern social justice issues.
- x-ray Marx's proposition as regards the link between capitalism, economic inequality, and social injustice as reflected in *Iná Ràn*.
- Explore Marx's appraisal of exploitation of vulnerable groups in contemporary socio-economic structure using *Iná Ràn* as a specimen.
- Gauge those whose view contrast with Marxist orientation in relation with respect to social justice and recommend possible reconciliations.

Synopsis of *Iná Ràn*

The continued imposition of obnoxious taxes and levies on the dwellers of Òbòdà community are the cause for a showdown between them and government. Òbòdà, comprising mostly peasant farmers have been perennially subjected to a life of servitude by the authorities, and the recent jerk in levies of shops owned by market women as well as farm produce by *Bínúkonú* – the farmers association - became another bone of contention. In the face of their helplessness, the farmers sent two representatives – Aníşééré leader of *Bínúkonú*, and another member - Àjàlá, to Ajélè, head of government, apparently to persuade him to withdraw the twin taxes on account of the prevailing hardship their kinsmen are going through. However, their plea fell on deaf ears.

While the task force officers were torturing some tax defaulters in Òbòdà, one of them – Lamidi, suddenly slumps and dies on the spot, a development that prods the villagers to war. The showdown spirals out of control, with death, injuries and destruction of property recoded by both flanks. Eventually, the farmers association prevails as government settles for a compromise.

Shortly after, Aníşééré marries Mopé, a young and beautiful lady who eventually becomes his third wife and favourite. Mope persuades Aníşééré to relocate from Òbòdà village to town, abandoning his two senior wives. Unknown to him, Mopé is a police officer sent to bait him and reveal his source of metaphysical powers. Aníşééré was soon apprehended through the help of Mope and remanded in prison. After two months in custody, the government announces Aníşééré release, striking out allegations of unlawful gathering and treasons against him. Further, government nullifies new taxes and rates earlier imposed on Òbòdà and the adjoining communities, and also directed certain new infrastructures in Òbòdà in line with the masses' yearning.

METHODOLOGY

This study adopts qualitative research, using close reading and content analysis methods. Close reading is a method of analysing a text by carefully examining its specific details, language and structure to understand its meaning and how it impacts to the larger work of argument Baki (2024); Panjumi and Hartati (2018). On the other hand, content analysis is used to systematically analyse the content of various forms of communication including text, images, or audiovisuals. Content analysis also allows researchers to make inferences about the characteristics of the content, the sender, the receiver, and even the context in which the communication occurs (Ghele and Jacobs, 2017). White and Marsh (2006) consider content analysis method as applicable in qualitative, quantitative, and sometimes mixed modes of research

frameworks as it adopts an array of logical techniques to engender findings which are then placed in proper context for intensive examination.

Data (contents) for this study were gathered from the work being reviewed. However, specific texts were paid strict attention to in order to justify the usage of Marxist Theory. The texts in question were first highlighted in Yoruba and Marx insists the proletariat must undertake ahead of attaining social justice.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Astute disciples of Karl Marx's Theory like Claudwell (1937); have further extended this theory in x-raying literary works simply because of its ability to explain obsession for political and economic powers by the ruling elite, and what the working class must do to wriggle out of their predicament.

As stated earlier, Marx believes that capitalism is a volatile economic system that will suffer a series of ever-worsening crises - recessions and depressions - that will produce greater unemployment, lower wages, and increasing misery among the industrial proletariat. These crises, according to Marx, will convince the proletariat that its interests as a class are implacably opposed to those of the ruling bourgeoisie. Armed with revolutionary class consciousness, the proletariat will seize the major means of production along with the institutions of state power - police, courts, prisons, and so on - and establish a socialist state that Marx called "the revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat. Thus proletariat will rule in its own class interest, as the bourgeoisie did before, so as to prevent a counterrevolution by the displaced bourgeoisie. Once this threat disappears, however, the need for the state will also disappear. Thus, the interim state will wither away and be replaced by a classless communist society (Ball and Dagger: 2025; Jones:2023).

Critics of Marx's Literary Criticism

The trio of Wicksteed (1884); Batra (1978); and Johnson (1988) all flawed Marx's Theory of Social Revolution. For instance, while Johnson argues that Marx's advocacy for cruel rebellions have often resulted in autocratic regimes, he added that Marx's historical materialism is almost completely alien from empirical realities. Batra, in his work, *The Downfall of Capitalism* cited the collapse of the United Soviet Republic (USSR), a once communist regime, to deflate Marx's contention of a communist state. Further, Batra asserts that social evolution is determined by factors such as intellect, capital accumulation and physical prowess contrary to Marx's contention of class struggle. Wicksteed equally contests Marx's theory of value, saying it disregards individual penchants of consumers as well as the fringe utility of good. According to Wicksteed, value is not exclusively determined by labour input but also through market demand.

Rosen (1998), argues that Marx envisage of equal rights and labours collective ownership of means of production following a communist state, is indeed in sharp contrast with the natural inequalities of human being. He further argues that what is generally referred to as exploitation particularly in capitalism is not expressly an exploitation considering the fact that both the ruling class labour have a mutual compromise in which the former applies no force, while the latter has come to accept the bargain rather philosophically.

Although the exploiting classes have special access to the means of violence, exploitation is not generally a matter of the use of force. In capitalism, for example, exploitation flows from the way in which the means of production are owned privately and labour is bought and sold just like any other commodity. That such arrangements are accepted without the need for coercion, reflects the fact that the ruling class exercises a special influence over ideas in society. It controls the ideology accepted by the members of society in general.

Gramsci (1891-1937) in Kulkarni (2024:17), pitches his tent with Rosen by describing the mutual relationship Rosen expressed as merely a blending of force generated by the bourgeoisie class, occasioned by consent and converted to coercion.

Gramsci, one of those who set aside traditional Marxist framework in Europe in the early 20th proposes the concept of hegemony, a strategy which 'uses assumptions, values, and meanings that shape meaning and define reality for the majority of people in a given society.'

In simple terms, political force in the hands of the ruling class bring out the consent of the intellectuals and the consent of the masses and imposes certain rules, regulations, ideas over the society through which it tries to earn the benefits or ensure its rule. Gramsci argues that by using hegemonic strategies, the bourgeoisie actually control the economic base and also superstructure including music, literature, and art.

George Lukacs (1885-1971) another western critics of Marx Theory, came up with the concept of Vulgar Marxism that believes in a one-way relationship between base and superstructure. Lukacs condemned any attempt to separate history and society from literature. His approach of literary analysis stresses that text is a direct replication of social perception which aims to reveal the downside impact of capitalism such as hostility and disintegration.

Marx's Path To Freedom

Adèşànyà (2008:152) re-emphasised the five paths as espoused by Marx which the proletariat must tread to overcome

oppression. They are: self-consciousness, determination, concerted effort; disobedience to authorities, and conflict (Oròjídé-Ìṣòlá, 2008); Madam Èfúnroyè Tinúbú (2023)

(i) Self-Consciousness

The concept of self-realisation was first initiated by Hegel before it was later modified by Marx who defines it as the 'self-realisation' of the proletariat; the very awareness that they are in servitude, and that their predicaments need to be altered for a better, albeit an egalitarian society. And until this is attained, Marx believes the path to self-emancipation might remain an illusion.

After years of undue exploitation by the authorities, reality eventually dawn on the villagers of Ọ̀bòdà, following the introduction of two new taxes and levies imposed on them by the authorities. Representatives of the four settlements in Ọ̀bòdà that made up *Bínúkonú*, the farmers associations, held an emergency meeting supposedly to draw attention to their predicament.

Làìsì: "...Ojú wá ñ rí màbo. Láìpé yí ni ijọba kéde lóríi rédíò pé owó-ori tí lé síí. Báka náà ni wọn ní a ó máa sanwó igbá, sanwó àwo. Kódà wọn fẹ̀ẹ̀ lè sọ pé ká máa sanwó afẹ́fẹ́ tí à ñ mí símú..."

Áámúsà: ... Gégé bí Làìsì ẹ̀ se sọ, pípéjọ wa kí í ẹ̀ se lásán. Tó bá ẹ̀ se pé ká máa sọ nípa tí ị̀sòro o wa ni, mélòó la ó kà nínú eyin Adépèlé?... Bí a kò bá rin méèlì bíi m̀erinsí márùn-ún, a kò lè rí ọ̀kọ̀ wọ̀ wá sí Ìbàdàn. Níbití ọ̀nà wa burú dé, bí oyún kò bá dúró dáadáa níkùn tẹ̀lẹ̀, kíá ni yóò wá sílẹ̀. Ẹ̀sẹ̀ yá ju m̀otò ló ni ọ̀nà ohun...

Àrẹ̀mú: ...Ìyà tí ñ jẹ̀ ọ̀mọ̀ fún ogún ọ̀dún, iyà tí ñ jẹ̀ ọ̀mọ̀ fún ogbò ọ̀sù, bí kò bá pa ọ̀mọ̀, ó ní láti sìn lẹ̀yìn ọ̀mọ̀ ni...Wọn ní kí n tún sọ pe: ọ̀dásá bó ò le gbè mí, ẹ̀mí bó o ẹ̀bá mí. Tí kò bá sí àhfaàní kankan láti ọ̀dọ̀ ijọba, tí kò sí sí irànwọ̀ kankan tí ijọba lè ẹ̀ se fúnni, èwo tún ni ogun akọ̀dà agbàwée-ori tí kò jẹ̀ ká rí imú mí?

(Olátẹ̀jú 2009:29-39.)

Làìsì: We are going through a hell of a time. Not quite long, the government announced on the radio a raise in taxes. Similarly, it introduced all manner of taxes. They are now almost at the point of taxing us for the air we breathe.

Áámúsà: As Làìsì stated earlier, our gathering here is not fort banter. Should we choose to discuss our individual challenges, we will run out of time... If we cannot trek between three to four miles, we will not get to the park where we can get a bus to convey us to Ìbàdàn. The despicable state of the road could make a pregnant woman suffer a miscarriage. The road is no less a death trap.

Àrẹ̀mú: when a man has suffered for years amid perseverance, one day he will come out of it unscathed. I was also asked to say (to the authorities) that if they cannot improve our lot, they should simply allow us be. If there is nothing we are profiting from government, and yet the authorities had looked the other way as regards our plight, why imposing tax collectors that are now making life harder for us?

(ii) Determination

Marx postulates that the self-consciousness of the proletariats is the tonic that would spur them into determination. Graham in Adesanya 2008: 134-135) hypothesises Marx's assertion that for a society to transit from serfdom to freedom, there must be certain precondition one of which is a determined working class which would automatically spur their courage to challenge the status quo.

Làìsì: A kò lè sọ̀pé torí ká má baà pé, ká padà lónà. Bí apá kò bá ẹ̀ se é sánmọ̀, a kí í wá ká a lérí? Mo sọ̀ tẹ̀lẹ̀ níjọ̀- níhín-ín pé ká fà á já. Taa ni Ajẹ̀lẹ̀ ọ̀hun? Kí ọ̀jò pa bàtà toun tìjanwọ̀janwọ̀n etí ẹ̀. Kẹ̀wọ̀n ó já, kẹ̀wọ̀n ó so, ká wo ẹ̀ni egele máa gbé. Àní ká jẹ̀ kọ̀jò ó pa ewé kókò. Bó bá lè ya kó ya. Àbí ẹ̀rù ijà ñ bà yín ní? (o.i.59).

Áámúsà: Ẹ̀ru ijà wẹ̀? Tó bá dọ̀rọ̀ ijà tán, iwájú lẹ̀ ó bá èmi ọ̀mọ̀ Amú-bii-kán-un. Àdùrà tẹ̀mi ní pé iná tí ijọba ñ dá báyii, Ọ̀lọrun yóò jẹ̀ kí o ràn. Mo fẹ̀ kẹ̀sù taposí i ká lè ríran wò (o.i.59).

Làìsì: Kín-ni alága ñ wí tí kò dùn yí? Bí a wí eyí – sùúrù. Bí a wí tọ̀hún - sùúrù. Bí èyàn tilẹ̀ ñ jẹ̀ Súàrà, Súràájú, iwọn ni yóò ẹ̀ se sùèsùè mọ̀. Bí tàlùbọ̀ bá fẹ̀ kó sí èyàn lójú, èyàn a máa gbójú ọ̀hún sá díè. Pàá lẹ̀kíníni, pàá lẹ̀kẹ̀jì, bí ojú náà kò bá fọ̀, ràbàràbà yóò bá a (o.i.60).

Làìsì: We must not act foolish over a matter that requires some urgency. If we cannot reach a compromise, let's seek violence instead. I suggested the other day that we should go tough. Who is this Ajele of a man? Let him and his lieutenants rot in hell. Let's spark the fire and see who blinks first. I suggest we approach this matter with utmost violence. Or are you all afraid to go to war?

Áámúsà: Afraid of war? When it comes to battle, I will be happy to lead, I, scion of Amú-bii-káun-un. My wish is that this trouble being instigated by government turns out a raging fire. I personally want the crisis to spiral out of control.

Làìsì: Why is alága sounding in this manner? We brought this idea, you suggested caution. We brought another, yet same response. Even if we have chosen restraint, that should not make us look foolish. One must try to nip an imminent crisis in the bud. A consistent attacks on one's eye could leave the victim partially or totally blind.

(iii) Concerted Effort

With an already determined workers, Marx proposes a concerted effort among them to be able to succeed. Nevertheless, he suggests such a planned uprising must be methodical and strategic, as the ruling class is imbued with enough resources for counterattack, ultimately to prevent the birth of socialism.

In the work under review, the farmers of Qbòdà all agreed to put a stop to the capitalist structure of the authorities by coming out enmasse. While set for battle, they also sought how members could fortify themselves via metaphysical means.

Làisi: *È gbò, ká tó máa ló. Èyàn tí kò ní òkígbé kílẹ̀ ẹ̀ àyà tànhi sí aláàá. Èni tí kò ní àyíndomi àti aatòtadànù kílẹ̀ fojú di ibò nílà. Ohunkohun tí ẹ̀ bá ní, ẹ̀ fún ara a yín. È fúnra a yín lókiígbé, ẹ̀ fúnra a yín ní àlùwó, ayeta àti àfẹ̀fẹ̀rì. Kí ẹ̀ fi agbára kún agbára (o.i.68-69)*

Aníṣẹ̀fẹ̀rẹ̀: *È gba obi yíi, ẹ̀gẹ̀ e wélewẹ̀lẹ̀, kí ẹ̀ fúnra a yín. Àfẹ̀fẹ̀rì nù-un, ẹ̀ tójú ẹ̀. Bí ẹ̀ bá fẹ̀ ẹ̀ ló ó, ẹ̀ o fi há ẹ̀nu yín, ẹ̀ ó sì ká ẹ̀sẹ̀ kanrò. Bí òru bí òru ní ẹ̀ aláṣòdúdú, sùgbòntí ẹ̀ bá tí ká ẹ̀sẹ̀ sílẹ̀, dandan ní kí wọn ríi yín. (o.i.69)*

Àníṣẹ̀fẹ̀rẹ̀ ...*Iwájú ní n ó wà. Àwọn ọ̀mọ-ogun ó tẹ̀lẹ̀ mi. Kí Làisi wà lapa ọ̀tún. Kí Àmúsà wà ní tòsi. Àwọn onílù yòò wà lẹ̀yìn. Kí Àjàlá àti Àrẹ̀mú dúrò tí wọn níbẹ̀ (o.i.69)*

Làisi: Listen, before we proceed, a warrior without protective charms does not dare an armed enemy. Those of you who have not yet fortified yourselves to prevent gun from clicking or gunshots from penetrating you, dare not confront trigger-happy opponents. Whatever (charm) you feel you can share with fellow fighters, please do; the one that can repel knife from penetrating, make enemies slump in battle, repel bullets, or make you to suddenly disappear before your attackers. You all need to be fortified.

Aníṣẹ̀fẹ̀rẹ̀: Take this kolanut, split into tiny bits and share. It is capable of making you disappear in battle. Whenever its need arises, simply hold it in between your lips, and raise one of your legs. Whatever is tucked in the dark remains invincible, but once your raised leg touches the ground, you become noticeable again.

Aníṣẹ̀fẹ̀rẹ̀: I will lead the battle. The soldiers right behind me. Làisi should be positioned to my right. Àmúsà to the left. The drummers should stay at the rear. Àjàlá and Àrẹ̀mú should keep their company.

(IV) Disobedience to Authorities

This is the fourth step Marx proposes. In contemporary Nigeria, trade unions organisations carry out protest in defiance to government warning. This may come in form of work-to-rule, sit at home, or total paralysis of activities Adesanya (2008:159; Àkànmú 2018). In the work under review, the farmers registered their grievances through protest songs that showed openly a disobedience to the authorities.

(i) *Àwa ò sanwó orí mọ̀
À ò sanwó orí mọ̀
Bí ò gba kùmò, yòò gba kóndó
A ò sanwó orí mọ̀*

(ii) *A ó sọra wa lóògùn
A ó sọra wa lóògùn
Ká tóó lè gbara wa ló ọ̀ yín
A ósọra wa lóògùn (o.i.71)*

We are no more not paying taxes
We shall no longer pay taxes
We are ready for war or confrontation
We shall no longer pat taxes

We will attack ourselves with charms

We will attack ourselves with charms
Before we secure our freedom off your grip
We will attack ourselves with charms

(v) Conflict

This is the last lap which results in confrontations between the capitalists and labour. Something noteworthy about this is the fact that the hostility usually turns bloody, culminating into injury, loss of lives and sometimes personal effect. Lenin in Adesanya (2008:160) recalls the Great Patriotic War' of the community party of the former Soviet Union, capturing the scenario thus:

...oppressor and the oppressed, stood in constant opposition to one another, carried on an uninterrupted, now hidden, now open fight, a fight that each time ended either in a revolutionary reconstitution of the society at large, or in a common ruin of the contending classes.

In *Iná Ràn*, it was the death of Lamidi in the hands of government's appointed tax collectors (pp: 53-54) that drew the first blood. Afterwards, the sudden arrest and incarceration of some members of the farmers association in Qbòdà (pp:65-66), on the instruction of government, was the last straw that broke the camel's back. Irked by the authorities' action, members of Bínúkonú regrouped for war. They took their protest to the seat of government in Agodi, only to be confronted by a team of mobile police, led by their leader who engaged Aníṣẹ̀fẹ̀rẹ̀ in a clash but died in the process. Eventually, the protesters then forced their way into the prison and released their members.

Aníṣẹ̀fẹ̀rẹ̀: ...*A fẹ̀rì àwọn èyàn wa tí ẹ̀ timólé. A fẹ̀ ẹ̀ tú wọn sílẹ̀ (o.i.76).*

Ọ̀gá Ọ̀lọ̀páá: *Wọn kò sí níbí. Tí ẹ̀ kò bá fẹ̀ wàhálà, ẹ̀ padà sí ibi tí ẹ̀ tí n bọ̀ wọ̀rọ̀wọ̀ (o.i.77).*

Àmúsà: *Ogbà ẹ̀wọn kò pé méjì ní lbadàn yíi. Agodi yíi ní kànni (o.i.77)*

Ọgá Ọlópàá: *Şé iwò ní Aníşééré? Ìwo ló n da igboro rú? Àwa kò bá ti ijà wá. Ààbò èmí àwọn ará ilú la wà fún. Àwọn èyàn tó kú ní Mápó ti tó, a kò fẹ́ irú è mọ́ (o.i.77).*

Làisi: *È o fẹ́ kinni mọ? Gbogbo wa pata la şetan iku bi ẹ ko ba tu awọn eeyan wa silẹ. (o.i. 77)*

Aníşééré: ...We want to see our detained colleagues. We want them freed.

Commissioner of Police: They are not here. If you don't want trouble, kindly leave.

Áámúsà: We don't have two prison facilities in this Ìbàdàn. Agodi prison is the only one.

Commissioner of Police: Are you not Aníşééré? The notorious one causing trouble all over the place? We are not here for trouble but security of lives. We have lost many innocent souls in Mápó. Enough is enough.

Làisi: You say that again! We are all ready to lay down our lives unless you let go our colleagues.

Social Revolution – Africa as a Case in Point

In Africa, incidences of pseudo-Marxist political parties are not alien. Through the length and breadth of pre-independence Africa, associations geared towards freedom and social justice sprang, apparently to agitate independence and the sovereignty of their society. For instance, the earliest attempts at forming what could be considered Marxist parties in pre-independence Nigeria were in 1945. These were the Talakawa Party by Amanke Okafor and the Nigerian National Socialist Party of Fọlá Arógundádé (Aye and Mayer, 2024: 5).

According to Aye and Mayer (2024:97) the records of what could be considered the first organisation known to have had an interest in trade union activities in the country began in that period, and launching an industrial dispute with the colonial masters. Quoting one of the existing newspaper tabloids at the time - *Lagos Times* - of 8 August 1883, Ayer and Mayer state thus:

The 9-1 August 1897 strike of artisan workmen in the Public Works Department in Lagos is the first recorded industrial action by salaried workers. The department's workers stood firm against the autocratic disposition of the governor, Mr. McCallum, even with the threat of dismissal, resisting arbitrary changes in working time. They won; the government was forced to negotiate.

In Congo-Brazzaville, a social revolution by workers led to the ouster of its first president Fulbert Youlou, culminating in the establishment of a second republic that soon adopted a programme of 'scientific socialism'. Until the independence of Angola in 1975, Congo remained the only socialist regime in Central Africa region, a rare reputation that made its 850,000 population at the time a rallying point for several African liberation movements. (Kiriakou and Swagler, 2024: 158).

Similarly, in the pre-independence Senegal, various left-wing movements made creativity a key instrument of political awareness-raising and mobilisation, particularly in the fields of art and literature, against the establishment. Bianchini et al, (2024:22) reflected on the aftermath of the Second World War, which, by then, had rocked the country's foundations of the colonial edifice, and giving rise to agitations for freedom, social justice, and international sovereignty. Works of Guinean KeitaFodéba, a schoolteacher who was also obsessed with music and writing of plays became a confluence between political action and artistic creation. Eventually, messages contained in his *Théâtre africain*, which echoed his convictions as a member of the Rassemblement démocratique africain (RDA, African Democratic Rally), irked the colonial administration, which promptly prohibited the performance of his play *Aube africaine* ('African Dawn') throughout the French West African territory. In similar fashion, ThiernoBâ, another young Senegalese, political activist, playwright and a members of the Union démocratiquesénégalaise (Senegalese Democratic Union), the Bloc populairesénégalais (Senegalese Popular Bloc) and later the Parti du regroupementafricain-Sénégal (PRASénégal, African Regroupment Party-Senegal), who advocated immediate independence in 1958, also had his works banned. His poem: *Moomsaréew*, a call to fight for independence written during this period, was adopted by the Parti africain de l'indépendance (PAI, African Independence Party) a Marxist political party created in 1957, and used as the lyrics of its anthem.

Social Revolution in Yorùbá Society

In Şaworo Idẹ, Lápitẹ́, though a blue blood, worked his way to becoming the king of Jogbo by circumventing the agelong ritual that only allows his predecessors to live a modest life at the expense of the fortune Jogbo kingdom enjoys.

His knack for greed and desperation for quick riches soon pitched him against the masses who suddenly realised the prosperous life they once enjoyed is being supplanted by the ostentatious life of Lápitẹ́ and some of his palace chiefs led by Balogun and Séríkí, with whom they hijacked the gains of the forestry merchandise which was a major economic bulwark of the Jogbo kingdom. This scenario later triggered a social revolution by Àgékù and Emáyà, both leaders of two youths associations in Jogbo that invaded the palace and made away with the traditional *Adé Idẹ* - the beaded crown.

Afraid of the dire repercussion Adé Idẹ could have on him, if not returned to the palace within fifteen days, Lápitẹ́ sought the services of Làgàtà, a mercenary and retired military officer to help him retrieve the beaded crown before the deadline. Unknown to Lápitẹ́, Làgàtà had an ulterior motive

Làgàtà eventually retrieved Adé-Idẹ to the excitement of Lápitẹ́who had organised a grand reception where he would don the crown in the open as a symbol of authority of the Oníjogbo. To Lápitẹ́'s shock, Làgàtà commanded him to put the beaded crown on his head. Lápitẹ́ stoutly declines! Pandemonium eruptsand in the process,Làgàtà shoots Lápitẹ́ dead, taking his positionas the new Oníjogbo.

Meanwhile, Àgékù and Emáyà continued their guerillawar. Nemesis soon caught up with Lagata who announced his intention to don the Adé-Idẹ without engaging in the traditional ritual that connects the beaded crown, talking drum

(Şaworo-Idę), and the throne of Jogbo. On the said day, Lągąta audaciously wears the Adę-Idę but the sudden sound of Şaworo-Idę brought untold pain into the head of Lągąta who immediately slumps and freezes to death. The youths who had surreptitiously merged into the crowd unleashed their weapon in a final revolution that led to an abrupt end of Lągąta's reign, as well as the enthronement of a new king, albeit for a new dispensation.

In *Líšábí - The Uprising*, the people of Ęgbá are frustrated of the constant abuse and exploitation of the Ìlári - a paramilitary body that collects *Íşákólẹ* (farm produce and valuables) on behalf of the Alaafin of Ọyó. So powerful and ruthless are the Ìlári that they often take laws into their hands, raping, and exploiting their subjects at will. Líşábí, a young successful farmer of Ęgbá extraction is buoyed to challenge the excesses of the Ìlóri following the murder of his bosom friend - Şókẹnú - and the abuse of his (Şókẹnú) new bride -Àbẹbí on their wedding day by Şąngódẹyí, the head of the Ìlóri. Armed with metaphysical powers, Líşábí mobilises young farmers like him, leading them to war against the Ìlári as a means of putting paid to the almost endless abuse by their captors. In the end, Şąngódẹyí is killed alongside many of his lieutenants who either got killed or fled.

In Funmilayo Ransome-Kúti, it is the introduction of flat tax, a raise in water rate, as well as the payment of salaries of the Pàràkòyí - a paramilitary body that collects taxes on behalf of the Aláké of Ęgbáland, that triggered an uprising by the Egba market women.

Having returned from the United Kingdom after her education, Fúnmiláyọ Ransome-Kúti sees the exploitation of her kinsmen. She tried to mediate by visiting Mr Dundee who superintends the District Colonial Office on behalf of the Queen of England. Nonetheless, her appeal was rebuffed. Even her visit to the palace of the Aláké of Ęgbáland could achieve little to nothing having understood that the British operates indirect rule, while taxes are being collected through the Aláké's palace. Eventually, she summons a meeting of Abẹòkúta Ladies Club comprising socialites and educated ladies in Abẹòkúta. She enjoins them to dissolve the body in lieu of Abẹòkúta Women Union, a new body that would accommodate more female locals across Abẹòkúta and its adjoining towns.

Like an army, Abẹòkúta Women Union, storms Aláké's palace singing protest songs and waving placards and tree branches. Even the invasion of their protest by Ọgbóni cult (which was a taboo for women to see) could not deter the protesters who also neutralised them by the presence of the bare-chested matriarchs.

Despite many of the protesters being molested and detained by the Pàràkòyí on the order of Aláké, the demonstrators stand their ground. Led by Ransome-Kúti, the protesters regrouped in large number, stormed the palace, seized Aláké's crown and staff of office and forced the monarch and his chiefs out of the palace. Eventually, the Abẹòkúta Women Union won the war and Fúnmiláyọ Ransome-Kuti, alongside three others were reconstituted into Abẹòkúta Native Council- the highest decision-making body for the people of Egba.

Social Revolution as Planned or Spontaneous

Social revolution could either be planned or spontaneous. Examples of planned social unrest are in *Líšábí Agbòngbò Àkàlà* and *Madam Ẹfúnróyẹ Tinúbú* where the oppressed clandestinely mapped out strategies before launching them. Spontaneous social revolution, as its name goes, is suddenly triggered by certain sociological and psychological reactions. Example was the #EndSARS protest in the late 2020, elicited by the anger of Nigerian youths against police brutality by the Special Anti-Robbery Squad - a unit of the Nigerian police accused of extrajudicial killings, intimidation and human rights abuses. Majority of aggrieved youths that featured in the protest never met themselves prior to the revolution; but were able to leverage on the power of social media to aggregate their demands (Egbunike, 2021; Ijioma, 2021; Ọbádàré, 2021; Akínyẹtun, 2021)

Songs as a Vehicle for Social Mobilisation

Macmillan English Dictionary for Advanced Learners (2002/2009) defines song as "a piece of music with words that you sing". Similarly, Akanmu (2018) defines song as a "universal phenomenon and significant aspect of Yorùbá literature usually constructed systematically using words that reflect either negative or positive linguistic connotation."

Many Yoruba scholars have adduced various definition to songs. They include: Beier (1950); Ọlátúnjí (1984); Ọgúnlọlá (2025); Olúkojú (1994); Akínládé (1985); Àlábí (2007); Owólábí (1988), Onádípẹ (2020); and Adégúnlẹ, (2021). They postulate to the power of songs as a universal phenomenon on one hand, as well as an expression of thoughts, emotions, and ideas among culture, nationality and age groups, on the other.

Ọgúnlọlá, (2013), Adélabú and Ayọ-Ọbíremí; (2024) assert that song is an aspect of the Yorùbá oral literature, very easy to master, spread and remember. It is hereditary and we come across it in all our daily activities. Some other scholars are of the view that song is self-creative, ingenious, melodious, and belong to a subcategory of oral Yorùbá poetry distinguished by its musical mode of rendition different from the recitative mode, and can be used for national development (Bólárinwá 2016; Ọláníyan 2004; Ajíbádé 2011; Ẹésúolá 2012 and Orímóògúnjẹ 2014).

PROTEST SONGS AS ADVOCACY TOOL OF REVOLUTION

Clough, in his article: "Introduction: Cultures of Protest in American Music" asserts that music and protest are like a Siamese twins. He says:

Music in its broadest sense has served, across centuries and cultures and in a recurrent manner, as a source of revolutionary inspiration; as an expression of self-identity and collective power, especially for culturally, politically, and racially marginalised groups; as an insistent voice of resistance against dominant narratives and agendas. Music has been a vital vehicle in the pursuit of positive social change, of expression for the disenfranchised, of resistance or self-determination in the face of forces of oppression or assimilation.

Protest song is not synonymous to Yoruba people alone, they are universal and evolve where governance is inviolable, but maladministration prevails (Oròjídé-Ìṣòlá, 2008: 67-68;70; 185-186;192. Fátùróti, 2007, 20-21; 61; 98-99).

In this part of the world, protest songs are ubiquitous among trade unions, pressure and religious groups, and civil societies. Such songs are often deployed by workers to register their grievances as regards certain loathsome policies from the authorities that affect their members. This sentiment is equally in sync with Dillane, Power, Haynes, and Devereux (2018) that songs of social protest seek to draw attention to an issue that needs redress, which ultimately challenges the status quo' (2018:3). Olaniyan (2004: 5-6) argues that protest song has potentiality for developing consciousness among the oppressed group of a particular country, while on the other hand, for the group indomance, it is an extra tool for concretising hegemony. Nonetheless, Àkànmú (2018:18) warns that certain protest song are not corrective measures as they fail to express concerns of the individual or groups but are dangerous and susceptible to disruption of peace and stability of any society, especially those imbued with negative use of language that is tantamount to hate expression..."

For instance, in *Réré Rún* the song – *Èrò tí ñ rÒjéje...*(p.200), was sung by miserable workers to draw attention to the untold hardship and oppression by Onímògún the head of Onímògún authorities and his cohorts (Òkédijí 1973:200).

Similarly in *Şaworoide*, protesters comprising majorly youth resorted to protest songs to express misgovernance by Lápitẹ and subsequently Làgàta, two ruthless leaders whose greed pauperised the kingdom of Jogbo (Oròjídé-Ìṣòlá, 2008: 67-68; 72-73;185-186; 192)

In *Ina Ran* Bínúkonú - farmers association were the victims who launched into protest songs in a bid to tell the authority that enough is enough.

Ohun tógbà la ó fun un

Ohún tógbà la ó fun un

Àwaiṣewèrè

Ẹ máfòbọ̀ lówá

Ohún tógbà la ó fun un

We shall give it whatever it takes

We shall give it whatever it takes

We are not foolish

Don't take us for granted

We shall give it whatever it takes(aaOlateju, 2009:67)

Key Characters

(i) Aníṣẹ́rẹ the Liberator.

He is the leader of Bínúkonú – the farmers association in Òbòdà and its environs. He led the war on unbearable tax regime against the authorities. Unable to match his strength, government eventually invited him for negotiations on behalf of his association (p:87). In the end, a beautiful police officer was used to subdue him. In today world, Ànìṣẹ́rẹ represents a legion of human right fighters who often face persecution and even death, in their bid to rescue their people from oppression.

(ii) Mopé, the Bait

Mopé is Aníṣẹ́rẹ third and youngest wife whom he married shortly after he had led the farmers association to negotiate with government. Naively to Aníṣẹ́rẹ, Mope, a secret police officer was the trap with which government neutralized Aníṣẹ́rẹ's metaphysical powers before handing him to the authorities. In today's world, Mopé emblematises the fifth columnist, a mole clandestinely planted among protesters to ostensibly divulge their schemes to the opposition.

(iii) Ajélẹ, Head of the Bourgeoisie Class

Ajélẹ was the head of government who symbolises the leadership of the bourgeoisie class that had consistently subjected farmers and market women in Òbòdà to endless taxes and levies. In modern day Africa, Ajélẹ represents neo-colonialism which tends to re-enslave their subjects for the purpose of looting their commonwealth.

(iv) Ámúdà and Yésúfù, Tax Collectors

The pair represent officials who either directly execute collection of levies or enforce order on behalf of the government (pp. 51-54). In the process of doing this, many of them oftentimes, become overzealous, taking law into their hands. At other times, they fraudulently circumvent the system in order to defraud government (Líṣàbí, The Uprising, 2024)). A case in point is that of Ámúdà who perfected the art of fraudulently duplicating government invoices with which he also used in collecting taxes thereby siphoning what should have been channeled into government coffers (pp:23-25). In present Nigeria, Amuda and Yésúfù are a counterfoil of the security and paramilitary agencies, as well as other officials charged with revenue collection.

(v) Làmídì the Martyr

Lámídì (pp.52-53) was one of those poor, helpless and defaulting members of the proletariat who died while being

tortured. His death eventually sparked a showdown between the masses and the authorities. Lamidi's death represents legions of innocent souls that innocently sacrificed their lives either in the course of suffering or struggle for freedom from oppressors.

(vi) Dàání, Comic Relief

Dàání (pp. 6-11; 20-21) role was to simply condense an otherwise heated atmosphere. The character featured first at a time Bankole, a fellow villager in Ọbòdà just suffered an avoidable death owing to dearth of modern amenities in Ọbòdà community. The second time, Amuda hanged out with fellow villagers at a palm wine joint where they suddenly heard over the radio the announcement of a soar in taxes and introduction of new levies by the authorities. As the only 'literate' villager in Ọbòdà, Dàání punctured the seriousness in the atmosphere with his jaw breaking grammar. In Shakespeare's *Tragedy of Macbeth*, we saw the Porter (p:96-97) who is the gatekeeper to the Macbeth's castle adding humour by announcing himself as the keeper to the 'Gate of Hell' amid fresh murder of King Duncan. Also in *Seven Doors* (2024), Afeez Oyètòrò aka Saka, played *Àgbà akin* whose role was thoroughly humorous despite very weighty themes built around the storyline.

CONCLUSION

Although, it has been reviewed over the years, Marx and Hegel's Theory of Socialism has become a recipe for social liberation globally. The work that was reviewed in this study also bears testimony to this fact. Most importantly, Marx's proposal concludes that it will only take a united workforce to resist slavery and servitude, and thereafter metamorphose the ruling power to another realm where every individual becomes a stakeholder in the resources of their society.

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