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**The Metamorphosis of Bourgeoisie Politics in a Modern
Nigerian Capitalist State**

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Abstract

The Nigerian military class turned into Bourgeoisie class has credibility problems in the Nigerian state and politics. The paper interrogates their metamorphosis and masquerading character as ploy to delay the people-oriented revolution. The just-concluded PDP party primaries and secondary elections are evidence that demands a verdict. By way of qualitative analysis of relevant secondary sources, predicated on the Marxian political approach, the paper posits that the capitalist palliatives to block the Nigerian people from freeing themselves from the shackles of poverty will soon be a

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thing of the past. It is our argument that this situation left unchecked would create problem for Nigeria's nascent democracy which is not allowed to go through normal party polity and electoral process. The argument of this paper is that the on-going recycling of the Nigerian military class into a bourgeois class as messiahs has a huge possibility for revolution. The paper recommends that a more holistic approach to governing the Nigerian state should be contemplated. This paper, though descriptive survey, highlighted some of the dangerous manoeuvres of People's Democratic Party (PDP) in the last 16 years, especially under President Jonathan who failed to take decisive steps where and when he needed to.

Key words: Bourgeois class, masquerading, credibility, revolution

Introduction

According to Ochereome N. (2015), the PDP was formed by the remnants of the political forces that were thrashed by General Muhammadu Buhari after he seized power in 1984. They had gathered to save Nigeria's democracy from Abacha, who had intended to transmute into a civilian life President and become another Omar Al Bashir of Sudan or Hosni Mubarak of Egypt. In Nigeria they included Dr. Alex Ekwueme, Chief Solomon Lar, Alhaji Abubakar Rimi, Alhaji Sule Lamido, Chief Bola Ige and others. Unfortunately, the military and the Northern political establishment decided to impose General Olusegun Obasanjo, who was in jail, on the party in order to assuage the hurt they inflicted on the Yoruba over their annulment of the June 12, 1993 Presidential election.

The failure to understand (nor care about) the mission and vision of the political movement; the ideals, manifestoes and programmes were also not institutionalized. It became an avenue for achieving political power for the military class in politics. The destruction of the bourgeois opposition party such as the All Peoples Party (APP) and the Alliance for Democracy (AD) never survived let alone thrived.

The paper argues that Obasanjo, with his military cohorts, including General Ibrahim Babangida, sent moles such as the late Admiral Augustus Aikhomu and later on, Chief Don Etiebet, to emerge as National Chairmen of the APP, to destroy these opposition parties and return to PDP. The paper argued that Alhaji Mahmood Waziri of the Great Nigerian Peoples Party (GNPP) was enticed into what he called the "Government of National Unity" (GNU) in 1999, and the party became rudderless. Later, the same was done to late Chief Edwin Ume-Ezeoke, former National Chairman and later, running mate of General Buhari of the All Nigerian People's Party (ANPP). These were the methods he used to weaken the main opposition, ANPP. These are the views of most analysts (*Vanguard Newspaper* 16th April, 2015, p.19).

The study also shows that other opposition parties and alliance partners of the APP, the Alliance for Democracy (AD), was not spared. Obasanjo, in his so-called

1999 GNU, invited Ige to become his Minister of Justice and Attorney General. But in December 2001, just when the political atmosphere towards 2003 was beginning to warm up and Ige was getting ready to revive AD, he (Ige) was brutally murdered in the presence of his security details. Till date, the killers have never been identified and brought to book. It was one of the celebrated political murders of the Obasanjo era that he has yet to account for.

The capitalist bourgeois military class, through Obasanjo, also infiltrated the ranks of the rather gullible leadership of the Yoruba Afenifere. He convinced them to support him and give the home base he needed to assert this leadership in his party. Afenifere fell for this bait, campaigned for Obasanjo and the PDP won the South West states in 2003, except Lagos, where Governor Ahmed Bola Tinubu, who refused to go along with the plot, held sway. The AD and its Afenifere socio-cultural guardian later collapsed. Tinubu, a very astute and visionary politician, formed a new political party, the Action Congress (AC), which later became the Action Congress of Nigeria (ACN), which, in turn, became the locomotive or lead facilitator of today's victorious All Progressive Congress (APC) (*Tell Magazine* February 13th 2015, vol. 6, p.12).

We saw the collapse and possible demise of the People's Democratic Party in the just concluded General Elections of 2015 as a dominant political party. The APC has won the election to operate the federal government for the next four years. It must be allowed so to do. It can then take the accolades and blames for its performance or non-performance. The paper posits that the APC Federal Government will be doing Nigeria a great disservice if it adopts the "monkey come chop banana" tricks Obasanjo used to emasculate the opposition between 1999 and 2007, and PDP will be the greater fools if they fall for the trick. They will rob themselves of the bounce-back impetus if they yield to "long-Throat".

Theoretical and Conceptual Framework

Since the emergence of the advanced capitalist nations of the West, with its concomitant emergence of liberal democracy is often a metamorphosis of class or groups, both civil or military into new political formations, often involved in the bargaining and dialogue of power sharing at the centre. In Britain, France and the United States, no matter the ideological leaning of the political parties involved, either to the Left or to the Right, these political parties are often arrangements of bourgeois politics, owners of capital or private property, as to how power can be shared between the collective whole by those who dictate the private sector.

In the United States of America for instance, Andrew Gamble (1981) showed that the emergence of the Republican Party as well as the Democratic Party, despite their ideological leanings, all parties had their ideologies deeply rooted in the preservation of the bourgeois capitalist state. The principal aim and objective of

state politics is not to dismantle capitalism but rather to promote the greater dominance and dictatorship of the private sector, and to consolidate on the gains of private sector dictatorship. In whatever direction the American people will vote, it is always a vote for the preservation of private capitals. The political class whether civil or military are the same in goal of politics which is the preservation of the bourgeoisie interest.

In Britain, there is no doubt as to the ideological difference between the Labour Party and the Conservative Party. Despite their differences, these parties all strive for the preservation and greater supremacy of private sector driven development. In other words, it is typical bourgeoisie democracy either to the Left or to the Right.

Nigeria, as from 1960 to 1965 entered the political history of the modern world as a Westminster Liberal Democracy. From the Northern People Congress, a typical feudalist party of the Hausa-Fulani aristocrats, to the Action Group Party of the Oduduwa Yoruba led group, despite their ideological leanings, all parties were fundamentally bourgeoisie and capitalist oriented. Chief Obafemi Awolowo, the leader of the Action Group, is alleged to say that he was going to make himself formidable and to acquire for himself status and wealth that his brain could afford him. If this assertion of Awolowo was true, then, it was a manifestation of private capital bourgeoisie democratic thought and thinking. After all, Chief Awolowo, at no time, appeared to the communist or socialist in his thinking or philosophy. Although, Awolowo believed in the welfare state and social security, like labour and democrats in the West, Awolowo remained typically bourgeoisie in his party thinking and orientation.

In Nigeria, after independence, the military and civil class emerged who became partners and collaborators in the bargaining and share of political power. Claude Ake's (1985) *A Political Economy of Africa* illustrates this by pointing out that what existed was a marriage of political convenience between the military and the civil political class. Richard Joseph (1981) in *Democracy and Prebendal Politics* reaffirmed this fact of the marriage between two strange bed fellows, the military and the civil class, all in the pursuit for the capture of state power with the intent to share the vast material resources of the state. Richard argued that the goal of politics, in a prebendal state provide the theoretical foundation for understanding the politics of the Nigeria state in both the First and Second Republic of 1960-1965 and 1979-1983 respectively. The theoretical foundation of Richard Joseph can be stretched to cover the analysis of politics and bourgeoisie metamorphosis in the dispensation as from 1999 to the present. According to Richard, the military and the civil class represent one political party. There is always a sharing arrangement in which power rotates between the two political classes. The Hausa/Fulani ruling political class in the North understand this principle in the power sharing process in Nigeria politics. This has been

the theoretical foundation of Nigeria political experience, of bourgeoisie metamorphosis, from independence up to date.

Metamorphosis of Bourgeois Politics in Nigeria

The emergence of the People Democratic Party, the All Peoples Party, and later the all Nigeria Peoples Party, as well as Action Congress of Nigeria, were all creation of the bourgeoisie political class in Nigeria, both civil and military. When Chief Olusegun Obasanjo became President of Nigeria as from 1999-2007 he attempted to destroy all opposition parties by making PDP a one party state. This was to consolidate bourgeoisie political hold and control of Nigeria politics and economy.

Having destroyed the opposition, this class through Obasanjo, not having the benefit of the political tutoring of the original founding fathers of the PDP, could not build a party based on anything. There was no PDP way of running the economy, the social services, and infrastructural development; in short no PDP way of governing. PDP became relevant only as the most viable party to contest and win elections. Those who lost elections in PDP went to other smaller parties to try their luck. Whether they succeeded or failed, they ultimately returned to the PDP. That was the ignominious fate that characterised ambitious politicians like Alhaji Atiku Abubakar.

The PDP having failed to deliver on the dividends of democracy had to metamorphose into the All Progressive Congress. The APC was a merger of opposition parties together with some factions of the PDP. The emergence of the APC in 2014 became the party where people could run to and win elections, unlike before when there were no other alternatives. Certain factors led to the APC being seen as the new preferred party in Northern Nigeria. Invariably, former President Olusegun Obasanjo had a BIG hand in it! He did it by employing the chicken's strategy. Our people say: "*ihe okuko na erigh, ya abosaa*" – whatever the chicken does not eat, it will scatter.

Former President, Obasanjo, as we can see, used the People's Democratic Party (PDP) to rule Nigeria for eight years. As soon as he assumed office in 1999, he made up his mind to reduce Nigeria to a one-party system for which he canvassed vigorously while Nigeria conducted its transition to civil rule programmes (Osaghae, 2002).

The first part of this serial chronicled how he shrivelled the opposition parties and made the PDP into a colossus that dominated the political landscape. Eventually, most leading lights in the opposition parties decamped to the PDP; as we can see some decamping to the APC in 2015. By 2007 when Obasanjo was constitutionally forced out of power, PDP was at the zenith of its power and glory. It had 26 out of 36 governors, 260 out of 360 members of the House of Representatives, 85 out of the 109 Senators and an emphatic command of the majority in the state legislatures and the 774 local councils. It was at this point that the party started priding itself as "the largest

party in Africa”, and some of its chieftains boasted that the PDP would rule Nigeria for “sixty years”.

Table 1: Graphic Emphatic Command of PDP

	PDP	Other Parties	Total
Command of States	26	10	36
House of Representatives	260	16	369
Senate	85	24	105
LGA	562	212	774

Source: Uhembe 2015

Table 1 shows how effective the PDP was in control of Nigeria politics. The size of the party was largely as a result of the bourgeois military capitalist repression of the opposition parties, which became unattractive for politicians to contest for power. The party was so powerful that Obasanjo suddenly developed an ambition to grab extra terms of office for himself when he was nearing the end of his constitutional two terms. To succeed, he nullified the membership of the party and ensured that all party members were re-registered. This, of course, ensured that those Obasanjo did not want in the party were weeded. These included former vice President Atiku Abubakar and former Governor of Abia State, Chief Orji KAlu (*Daily Trust Newspaper*, March 23rd 2014, p.6).

Ochereome N. (2015) discussing on how Obasanjo destroyed PDP, said when their tenure elongation plans failed, they put his Plan “B” into effect and opted to unilaterally install their successor into office. They chose a terminally ailing Governor Umaru Yar’ Adua of Katsina State for President and paired him with a quiet, self-efficacy Governor of Bayelsa State, Dr. Goodluck Ebele Jonathan as Vice President. They also planted their cronies as governors of the various states. They even planted them in opposition parties.

A case in point was in Imo, where they ordered the PDP to withdraw from the governorship race and support Chief Ikedi Ohakim, who had decamped from PDP when he failed to get the ticket at the primaries and ran on the ticket of the Progressive People’s Alliance (PPA) (Oseni, T. 2013, 21st November). Their ambition, at this juncture, was to make one of their own, the Life Leader of the PDP, such that he could wield great political influence and lord it over the occupants of Aso Villa. The plan ran into storms.

When Yar’ Adua assumed power, he refused to dance to their tunes. They were determined to leave a legacy for themselves. Obasanjo was not given any space to manoeuvre. But unfortunately, Yar’ Adua became seriously sick and died in 2010. Obasanjo jumped out of his political doghouse and started prompting Jonathan to run

on his own terms in 2011, even though many northern leaders preferred that he allowed one of theirs to replace him. Soon, they found out he had lost his place in the PDP even under Jonathan. It was so bad he was almost ignominiously booted out of his Board of Trustees Chairman post. In the middle of 2013, he resigned from the post. President Jonathan was later on to describe Obasanjo as “a goat seller who, after selling his goat, refuses to release the rope”. The Ota –born chicken farmer went home and started the war that led, ultimately, to the end of PDP’s reign in the general election of 2015.

In January 2014, he published one of his series of scandalous open letters to President Jonathan, accusing him of every abominable sin under the sun, including training snipers to kill his political opponents. A man under whose watch many prominent people were murdered was accusing a President who never recorded a single such incident in his five years as President! Between April and May 2014, Obasanjo went round many states of the North and persuaded some of the governors he planted in power to run for President to replace Jonathan. Some of these were Governor Sule Lamido of Jigawa, RAbiu Kwankwaso of Kano, Magatakarda Wamamko of Sokoto and Babangida Aliyu of Niger. Some of these OBJ-made governors were at the forefront of rebellion against Jonathan.

The tipping point came when five of the rebel governors decamped from the PDP and joined the newly amalgamated All Progressive Congress (APC) which was put together by Asiwaju Bola Ahmed Tinubu and General Muhammadu Buhari. This position was conversed by Omotola (2007) and Saliu and et al (2008). From that point on, the rapid emaciation of the PDP could no longer be stopped. Obasanjo was relentless in his attacks on Jonathan. Apart from writing public letters, he also nudged some of his out-of-work former ministers, such as Oby Ezekwesili, Nasir el Rufai and lately Charles Soludo, to slam the Jonathan administration each time they got the chance to go public. Obasanjo climaxed his choreography with the public tearing of his PDP membership card a couple of months to the Presidential election.

Of course, PDP’s fall from power under the watch of President Jonathan further helped the President’s failure to take decisive steps when and where he needed to. This made him subject to blackmail. Jonathan surrounded himself with people who posed as his lovers but were actually deceivers. They took whatever they could from him and abandoned him when he needed them most. Matters were not helped by his sloppy handling of the Boko Haram insurgency, which grew from a small pox on the nose to a plague that wracked the whole nation. These and many more factors led to the collapse of PDP.

Conclusion

The emergence of the APC is nothing fundamentally new, in terms of ideological construct, as well as the preservation of the bourgeoisie interest in Nigeria

politics. It is a clear manifestation of old wine in new wine bottles. It is only on arrangement of how power can be shared between the conflicting bourgeoisie classes in Nigeria. The Messianic appeal of President Muhammadu Buhari, aim at reforming the polity, are mere bourgeoisie palliatives. The messianic approach cannot deliver in bringing about a fundamental revolution into Nigeria politics. Nigerians will see less, although some change may occur, as we journey from 2015-2019. What will remain paramount and unchanging shall be the dictatorship of private capital in the control of the Nigerian economy.

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