

ABSTRACT

One of the fundamental issues of most socio-political debate in recent years is ALIENATION, which means “estrangement”. This essay will elucidate the doctrine of alienation in its origin until the era of Karl Marx. Much attention will be focused on the way Marx conceived alienation, its causes, types and effects. Attempt will be made to use this doctrine to explicate the circumstances of the majority of Nigerians, who are predominantly poor.

The approach will be a theoretical exposition of K. Marx theory of alienation. An attempt will be made to juxtapose the arguments for and against the Marxist doctrine of alienation, and how it tallies with the Nigerian society. This will aim at correcting the defective systems of the Nigerian society. Here it will be explained, whether the suffering and the inhuman conditions that most Nigerians pass through can be termed, “alienation” following Marx theory. If this doctrine is applied to the Nigerian society, the question will then be; how does the Nigerian system alienate its citizens? The purpose of this essay, is to show whether there is any connections between the Marxist doctrine of alienation and the condition of the average Nigerian worker. Here, I will examine the solution proffered by Karl Marx. I will also show that though his alienation doctrine seems to elucidate the conditions of many Nigerians, the causes and solution proffered by Marx cannot be adapted to the Nigerian society. To put it precisely, the solution proffered by Karl Marx is not workable nor attainable in the Nigerian system. Finally, I shall propose that alienation can only be mitigated within the context of solidarity.

CHAPTER ONE INTRODUCTION

1. BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

It has become increasingly common to hear life in the present age characterized in terms of alienation. ¹ The concept of alienation has become an almost obsessive concern in areas of socio-political philosophy, as a condition of man in this modern age. The subject matter has become the isolated individual. The individual is estranged from other people, the fruit of his labour, and himself. The alienating condition of modern man shows that we are confronted by the symptoms of a morbid and acute social sickness.

In this present Nigerian society, there has been lamentations of oppressions exploitation and dehumanization. Nigerians are exploited by fellow Nigerians, hence, M. I. Akimbo exclaimed, “we have done very estimable evil to ourselves in this land”.² Thus, a lot of thinkers now term Nigerian workers as alienated beings. The question, which seems to be cropping up, is whether some Nigerians are really alienated and marginalized?

1. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

¹ The greatest ontological evil that can happen to *being* in its essence, existence and

expression is alienation.³ There has been various attempts to interpret the conditions of the Nigerian workers following the basic tenets of the Marxist doctrine of alienation, over the years. The worst part, is the attempt to proffer solutions to the alienating conditions of Nigerian workers following the pattern of Karl Marx's-revolution.

The problems created by alienation are multifarious. There is a problem of man's inhumanity to man dehumanization, as exemplified in the way the rich treat the poor in Nigeria. There is also the estrangement of some Nigerians; from the fruits of their labour, from friends and from family. Added to the above is the exploitation of the resources in the Niger Delta to develop the northern region of Nigeria. This exploitation is in all regions; employers exploiting employees, the rulers exploiting the ruled, the clergy men exploiting their members, some lecturers in the university exploiting their students and so on. How do we reconcile alienation with global call for freedom and human dignity? How can man exercise himself fully in a society that is characterized with all forms of alienation.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

¹The aim of this research among others is to assess the doctrine of alienation and the applications of the solutions proffered with reference to Karl Marx, and why this solutions cannot be applied to the Nigerian society. An attempt will be made to give an elucidation of a workable solution to address the alienating conditions in Nigeria.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

¹The significance of this research work is bipolar, firstly, it will serve as assessment of the much esteemed doctrine of alienation enunciated by Karl Marx, secondly it will serve as awareness to many Nigerians that there is a workable solution to this alienating condition which characterize their society.

It will also create the awareness that the solutions to the problems of alienation in Nigeria cannot be located in the solutions proffered by Karl Marx.

SCOPE OF THE STUDY

¹This project shall be limited to the doctrine of alienation and its solutions as enunciated by Karl Marx. This is not to neglect what other theorists have said about the concept of alienation. This work will also attend to alienation of Nigerian workers and the workable solutions to these alienations or estrangement. The role of the labour unions' strikes will be examined to see if it is justified. The reactions of the Nigerian government to the conditions of the labour class will not be neglected.

Also, the applicability or non-applicability of the solutions proffered by Karl Mark will be examined critically to show how workable it is in the Nigerian context.

METHODOLOGY

¹My approach to this research work will be critical and analytical (a method where the issue at stake will be dissected and evaluated to show its good and had qualities.

To this end, therefore, materials to execute the research will be gotten from the library. This is

not to undermine the importance of relevant books gotten from friends, relevant class notes and interviews.

a critical assessment on Karl Marx concept of alienation and its impact on Nigeria

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