

OBAFEMI AWOLOWO: FROM HUMAN NATURE TO NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract

This paper interrogates Awolowo's conception of human nature and how it can help in nation building. Nigeria, for example, is in a crisis of underdevelopment. It is plagued by corruption, insecurity, bad leadership, etc. Awolowo analyzed these problems, and attributes them to a lack of proper understanding of human nature. Findings show that the solution which he proffers to these problems rests on his conception of man as a composite of mind, body, soul, and ego, who is both the agent and focus of development, and who flourishes best when educated, under good leadership, in an atmosphere of democratic socialism. In his view, while the soul of man disposes him to love his fellow men, his ego sometimes disposes him to selfishness. This is why Awolowo rejects capitalism, which seems to fuel man's tendency to greed, in favour of socialism, which aims at social regulation of economic forces in order to attain equality of opportunities and abundant life for all. This paper establishes Awolowo's view of man as the agent of change in society. Awolowo uses the method of induction in drawing conclusions from human nature, which creates gaps in some of his conclusions. It contributes to knowledge by providing a coherent work on Awolowo's philosophical anthropology, thereby contributing to literature for teaching Awolowo's philosophy in schools, and for leadership and citizenship training. It recommends the adaptation of Awolowo's socialist ideas in national development.

Keywords: Development, Man, Ontology, Socialism, Transcendence.

Introduction

No nation has ever developed or will ever develop, without the engagement of the philosophy of its thinkers. How many people, for example are aware of the amount of Whitehead, Rawls, Dewey, in the American civilization; or the amount of Russell, Berkeley, Popper, Darwin, Newton in Britain's development, or even the amount of Hegel, Marx, Heidegger in the civilization of Germany or the amount of Descartes, Sartre in the development of France? Hence, if Nigeria

must develop, a critical analysis of the thoughts of our thinkers is imperative. One of such great thinkers is Obafemi Awolowo.

This paper interrogates Awolowo's conception of human nature and how it can help in nation building. Nigeria, for example, is in a crisis of underdevelopment. It is plagued by corruption, insecurity, banditry, kidnapping, armed robbery, terrorism, poor educational and health care delivery, incompetent leadership, and so on. Awolowo analyzed the cause of these problems, and attributes them to a lack of proper understanding of man. In Awolowo's view, a proper understanding of man will lead to the development of society.

But why turn to Awolowo, and not someone else? The reason is not just because Awolowo was a Nigeria politician, nationalist or philosopher, who is generally "treated as an object of supreme regard and exalted almost to the rank of a deity" (Makinde, 2009, p. 17), but because he has a lot to say about human nature, and also, because the solution, which he proffered to Nigeria's problems, yielded phenomenal results when he was Premier in the old Western Region of Nigeria; especially in the area of education, healthcare delivery, agro-industrial and rural development (although it could have been better). That solution is based on his conception of human nature, and can still be adapted in our quest for national development.

Awolowo's Metaphysical Assumptions

Although Awolowo does not seem to have a treatise on metaphysics. However, his philosophical thoughts are predicated on certain metaphysical assumptions about the universe and reality in general. His metaphysics can be deduced from his writings. In *The People's Republic*, Awolowo argues that: "Reality or the universe is an orderly, rational, harmonious and purposeful cosmos, with an immutable law which rules in the physical world of matters and action as well as in the intangible and subjective world of thoughts, ideas, and ideals" (Awolowo, 1968b, p.186).

Awolowo accepts this *a priori* proposition as a basis for his philosophy (1968b, p.186). His metaphysics, which can be deduced from his writings, stands in relation to Plato, Hegel, Marx and Christian view. In Awolowo's view, there are two levels of reality: the material and the spiritual. Thus, Awolowo's

metaphysics is a marriage of idealism and materialism. This is why some refer to him as Neo-Cartesian dualist (Ojo, 1990, p.55). His dualism is different from Plato's. In Plato's dualism, the physical world perceived by the senses is not the real world but a mere imitation or imperfect resemblance of reality. Reality is in the world of ideas, which cannot be perceived by the senses but through contemplation. For Awolowo, both the physical and spiritual phenomena are real; although, like Plato, Awolowo also emphasizes the spiritual.

His view of reality is teleological, in the sense that he believes the universe is rational and purposive. Reality is rationally governed by physical and spiritual laws. These laws are discoverable by man, and when known, become instruments of social transformation and development. Thus knowledge of reality is the only means to genuine human freedom and social development. Awolowo affirms that God is the Universal Mind, whose temple a human being is (Awolowo, 1968b, p.230). Thus, man is the self-projection and realization of the universal mind. He usually refers to this mode of the presence of the Universal Mind in man as 'the God essence' in man (Awolowo, 1981e, p.18). This implies, that human consciousness is the basic factor in historical events.

The Universal Mind

According to Awolowo, nature is governed by an immutable law, which he calls the Universal mind. It is latent, dormant, and inactive until it is set in motion by human thought and action. This is why Awolowo thinks that "man is the only active and dynamic being in the universe" (1968b, p.211). He argues that all elements in the universe are assumed to exist primarily for the realization of human ends. Prior to their contact with man, their use-value only exists potentially. It is therefore, imperative for man to learn how to develop these potentialities to advantage. We may remark that Awolowo's view that man is the sole creative and dynamic being in nature and that everything is for man's beneficial use, is an anthropocentric claim which can only be valid if by the term "dynamic", he means *volitional* dynamism. This is because natural science has shown that nature is in various forms of motion, and therefore dynamic in a general sense. Kinetic theory of matter affirms that matter is made up of particles in constant random motion, and therefore, nature is dynamic irrespective of man's intervention.

In Awolowo's view, the Universal Mind is the "Intelligence behind everything, otherwise, the world will not be orderly" (Makinde, 2009, p.122). Makinde sees

in Awolowo's thoughts, a structure of teleological argument from design (Makinde, 2009, p.122).

With regard to the objection that if this universal Intelligence or cosmic Consciousness had created everything for a purpose, then, why do we still have disorder and evil in the world, and for what purpose, for example did God create mosquitoes? Awolowo responds by saying:

We are still infants in the matter of knowledge of science... We don't know yet; Homo sapiens that asks this question about evil is still an infant. ... Maybe mosquitoes have done us some good...by making man to make use of his brain or what you call scientific intelligence to advance the course of medical knowledge (Makinde, 2009, p.123).

It is therefore clear that Awolowo sees the Universal Mind, or Universal Intelligence as the reason behind the order in the universe and attributes natural evil or disasters to ignorance. Reality is an unfolding of man's consciousness in its interaction with the cosmic Order. This process of interaction, Awolowo calls 'dialectic' (1968b, pp.186-187). Awolowo holds that history, is set in motion by this interplay of the spiritual and material, and that man is the sole agent of that interplay.

Human Nature and Causality

This immutable law, that is, the universal mind, is also the ultimate principle of change and causality in the world. Awolowo believes that "nothing happens without a cause" (Makinde, 2009, p.74). This is why he regards God as the causal principle of the universe (Awolowo, 1968b, p.206). Events and phenomena that we perceive in the physical world are 'effects' of 'causes' that are spiritual in nature. Thus, thought is the cause and matter is an effect (Awolowo, 1968b, p.187). Because thought is spiritual and prior, it follows that the causal principle of the physical world is transcendental, invisible and points to a cause beyond the cosmos itself (1968b, p.187). Thus causality is crucial to explaining human nature and human relations in society. In Awolowo's view, causality is meaningless without reference to man, who is the agent of causes in the world. He is the one who sets in motion the immutable law that governs all things (1968b, p.187).

Human Nature and Scientific Method

Awolowo begins his investigation of human nature with a justification of his methodology. He believes that mankind has reached a stage in its development when it will be inexcusable ignorance, pig-headed stupidity, and unpardonable dishonesty on the part of anyone, society or nation, to adopt an unscientific approach in investigating any of its problems:

Before Bacon put his imprimatur on the method of induction, mankind had depended for everything it did on trial and error and the rule of the thumb. But since his time, the tools of observation, empiricism, analysis, classification, synthesis and generalization have been thoroughly forged and perfected, and can be confidently used in the investigation of any phenomenon, or in the search for a solution to any problem (1968b, p.vii).

He had confidence in the scientific method, to the point of affirming that “all social problems can and should be solved by employing the tools of scientific investigation” (1968b, p.vii). Awolowo holds the scientific method above the margin of error and in solving any problem. This, however, runs contrary to the very nature of induction, which undergirds the scientific method; for by induction, science moves from observation of particular instances to general conclusions; a procedure which is not totally insulated from margins of error, since not all instances of a being or category may be observed at any point in time. Besides, since science is limited by its materialist and empirical circumscription, it cannot claim to interrogate whatever lies beyond its spatio-temporal purview. This universal license, which Awolowo issues to science and the scientific method, is revoked by Battista Mondin:

Who is man? This is an interrogative for which only philosophy can search for and perhaps - find an adequate and exhaustive answer for on the rational level. On this point, the pretext of science for taking the place of philosophy in resolving the human enigma is fallacious...no science has succeeded in even touching on the main interrogatives which regard human existence: man's origin, his destiny, his being (Mondin, 1985, p.2).

Awolowo's Psychological Assumptions

Two basic psychological assumptions are discernible in Awolowo's writings. First, is that man is by nature, motivated by self-interest, which is an expression of an instinctive desire to pursue and defend whatever favours him. He argues

that of all the instincts in man, two are most prominent: "They are: ACQUISITION and COMBAT...Nature compels man to acquire or desire, nature also compels him to fight with all the means at his disposal, if anything should stand between him and the object of his desires" (1981e, p.42). Awolowo argues that the instincts are neither good nor bad in themselves but in the way a person expresses them along with the end which they are directed to achieve (1986b, p.224). He rejects capitalism because of its tendency to give free expression to the selfish instinct in man (1986b, p.161).

The second psychological assumption, discernible in Awolowo's writings, is that man naturally desires pleasure and avoids pain (Awolowo, 1981e, p.94). Awolowo's view on human instincts and the drive for power and self-interest is largely Hobbesian. Hobbes believes that human nature is egoistic, always longing for his desires, which causes conflicts. Thus, by virtue of human nature, man has the tendency to acquire power to satisfy his desires. Awolowo holds that of all human desires in man, "the desire for power is the strongest" (1981e, p.42). Besides, Awolowo believes that "human nature cannot attune itself to a state of affairs in which it is permanently excluded from the exercise of power" (1981e, p.94). Again, in *Path to Nigerian Freedom*, Awolowo claims that "it is not the nature of man to put up with subjection for too long" (1947, p.31).

Awolowo's Methodology

As important as Awolowo's socialist orientation is, it is also important to understand the method by which he arrives at his postulates. As a systematic procedure for moving from one point to another, Awolowo's method is to study man in all possible dimensions, from which he tries to make socio-political inferences. In his *The People's Republic*, he describes this method as "summative method of induction" (Awolowo, 1968b, p.91). Thus Awolowo adopts the method of induction in his reasoning. Ojo (1990, p.107) argues that Awolowo's adoption of the inductive method of reasoning, is to allow him lay claim to scientific objectivity in a way that makes his conclusions valid generalizations.

Human Nature as Composite: Ambiguities and gaps in Awolowo's Anthropology:

Awolowo holds that man is composed of mind, body and soul. He analyses the mind as an essential part of man because it is the thinking faculty in man, and the only faculty that is subject to instruction. In his view, "the power to think clearly correctly and scientifically, is the greatest of all the powers that a man can possess" (1981e, 36). In the *Voice of Wisdom*, Awolowo argues that "the only part

of man that can be the object of instruction is the MIND” (1981e, p.13). He clarifies the nature of the mind by analyzing its manifold attributes and functions. He divides the mind into two broad phases: The Conscious and the Subconscious (Awolowo, 1981e, p.13).

Awolowo believes that in order for the mind to function maximally, these phases of the mind must be nurtured to be in harmony in a healthy body. In clarifying the nature of the human mind, Awolowo turns to physiology and psychology, adding that the mind controls our thinking, perception, sensory and motor activities (Awolowo, 1981e, p.13). As Awolowo argues in the *Voice of Wisdom*, the conscious mind, in turn, is divided into the objective mind and the subjective mind (1981e, p.13). The objective mind is the faculty of the mind that controls the senses. The subjective mind is the seat of thinking and reasoning *par excellence* (1981e, p.15). Each of these phases of the mind is liable to defective functioning which may be the result of disease, or physical deformity (Awolowo, 1981e, pp.13-14).

Awolowo also argues that the human mind, by its very nature is in need of instruction and education. It has the ability to learn and improve in its functions. Indeed, the subjective mind, as Awolowo points out, is the sole object of instruction. Thus, for Awolowo, a man succeeds or fails to the extent that he develops his mind. In other words, the quality of thinking that goes on in a man’s mind determines the extent of the person’s success or failure in life. It is also the quality of thinking that determines the development of any nation. Thus Awolowo insists that the human mind must be cultivated and developed to think critically and creatively. It is only in this way that man is empowered to impact on his society. “To think constructively, rigorously, scientifically and morally on objects and subjects which are, in every aspect beneficial both to himself and to others. This is to say all the functional attributes of the subjective mind must be developed with the aim of employing them not for self-regarding ends alone, but for ends that are certain to benefit the thinker and others as well” (1981e, p.17). From the foregoing, it is obvious that the task which confronts an education-policy maker is by no means an easy one: it is indeed difficult and perplexing. It is a task of the formulation of a sound and utilitarian education policy, the implementation of which will produce well-integrated individual personality possessing, in harmonious measure, a sound mind in a sound body.

The mind functions in the body. Awolowo conceives of the body as the external form through which man is revealed and identifiable; that is, “the window of man to the world” (Ogunmodede, 1986, p.57). Awolowo conceives of the body as being extended in space and time, making it possible for man to relate with the

physical world. Thus, through the body, man feels, feeds, reproduces, communicates, associates, and relates to others. It is also through the body that man explores, develops and conquers the world. This is why Awolowo, in the *Voice of Courage*, advocates a healthy mind in a healthy body. By an intelligent and purposive application of the exertions of his body and mind, man can exploit natural resources to produce goods and services for immediate consumption, and for capital outlay. Therefore, other things being equal, the healthier his body and the more educated his mind, the greater will be his morale and the more efficient and economical he becomes as a producer and consumer (Awolowo, 1981d, pp.69-70). Thus, it is with the aid of his body that man subdues nature to his personal and social advantage. Awolowo argues that the cells which form the organs of the human body are always growing, multiplying and wearing out from the usage and activities of man. Therefore, the body must be maintained in a healthy state, since it is subject to limitations and disease (1968b, p.212). This is why Awolowo advocates free education and health care for citizen: "On these grounds, his body must be made as sound and suitable as adequate food, shelter, and clothing, as well as health care, can make it; and his mind must be nurtured and polished by his being educated to the full extent of his capacity" (Awolowo, 1981e, p.173).

Equality of Men and Human Rights

Awolowo believes that human beings, irrespective of their family, ethnic, racial, social or economic background are equal, on account of their human nature. In other words, human nature is uniform across board in all the nations of the world (Awolowo, 1960, p.269). All citizens, because of their common humanity, share in the same measure, an intrinsic, ontological and moral worth and should, therefore, have equal opportunity to develop their unique and individual personalities as they wish and are able. Awolowo believes that since democracy considers the dignity and equality of men to be sacred and inviolable, it is best suited to human nature. Thus every law and policy must be framed so as to give equal opportunity to all (Awolowo, 1960, p.269).

Awolowo believes that human dignity, expressed in fundamental human rights, such as right to life, self-determination, opinion, movement, education, employment, association and property are inalienable, and should be guaranteed in a nation's constitution, save in consequence of the sentence or order of a court

or an emergency. For Awolowo, human nature requires that the central principles of government should be based on democracy, and that human beings are ruled by consultation and consent of the vast majority of the people, and the recognition of the basic rights and freedom to dissent and hold contrary views by the minority.

Human nature and Instinct for Power

In Awolowo's view, the desire for power over one's fellow men is the strongest instinct in man (1981e, p.42), and except this is checked, man tends to arrogate absolute power to himself. Democracy, is therefore, ideal in taking care of this savage instinct and desire for absolute power in man. Plato was aware of this problem of man's crave for power, and hence proposed a philosopher-king for his *Republic*. Hobbes also invented a *Leviathan* which would reconcile the conflicting interests of the solitary, poor, brutish and nasty men of his state of nature. But such solutions are, in Awolowo's view, inadequate and ineffective. For no such creatures ever existed and will never exist, who will be so absolutely free of favoritism to his family, and love all his subjects equally. So, the danger of tyranny still exists. In the *Voice of Courage*, Awolowo says the solution to the problem of power intoxication is in separation of powers (1981d, p.172).

Central to the idea of separation of powers is the independence of the Judiciary, as an arm of government. The judiciary is the vital nexus in the uneasy but necessary relations between law and politics and precisely between the executive and the legislature. When there arises political crisis, what will solve the problem is the rule of law. This is why Awolowo strongly advocates that the judiciary be detached completely from politics to avoid unnecessary influences from all quarters. Also, judges should be highly educated and morally upright persons and be chosen and promoted strictly on merit. It is the fountain from which the preservation of law and order flows (1981d, p.173). It is the citizen's last resort against oppression. Thus, in the absence of judicial autonomy, there can only be dictatorship (1981d, p.174).

On the Centrality of Labour and Economy

Awolowo holds that the need for food and shelter along with the imperative of labour, is inscribed in human nature. In other words, it is the nature of man to desire to subdue nature so as to satisfy human needs. In *The Problems of Africa*,

Awolowo argues that: "The central problem of man is economic, while all other problems are ancillary" (Awolowo, 1977, p.54). This implies that if a man can fix his economic problems, he can resolve other challenges facing him. Awolowo upholds this view in the *Voice of Courage*: "The causes of our national maladies are essentially economic. It is important, therefore, for us to bear it in mind that if we fail to find the right solutions for our economic problems, we would not succeed in solving our political and social problems" (Awolowo, 1981d, p.131). In other words, in Awolowo's view, no matter how committed a nation appears to be in matters of national security, and territorial defence, no matter the strength of its army or the vast number of its security agencies and their coercive means of maintaining law and order, as long as there exists wide spread ignorance, poverty, and endemic social injustice, the force of peaceful cohesion of that nation will surely give way. In *The People's Republic*, Awolowo argues that "The more prosperous a State is, and the more equitably distributed its wealth is, the less liable it is to the danger of internal disorder, and the more liable it is to discourage external aggression" (1968b, p.113).

Awolowo argues that man's first loyalty is to his economic interests and his secondary loyalty will be to any organization or institution which serves to promote his economic interests. He holds that the most fundamental need of man is food; and he has to work to get it. Thus, to work is a fundamental demand of human nature. This is why Awolowo argues the means of production should be vested in the State, in order to guarantee social justice:

All the means of production should be vested in the State. In the case of those who already own the means of production, they should be made to surrender them in return for a *fair* compensation...In so far, however, as any means of production remains in private control, the State should set a statutory maximum limit to the income to which anyone of those in control shall be legally entitled (Awolowo, 1968b, pp.194-195).

To those who raise objection that he deprives the individual of his economic freedom, Awolowo argues that it is for the good of the individual that his freedom is limited by the state. This is not a denial of individual right, rather, it is a guarantee of the common good:

If a man is not free to commit suicide, if he is not free to possess and consume any drug of his choice, whether poisonous or not; if he is not

free to commit the nuisance of making noise to the annoyance of his neighbors, then, he has no right to complain if his freedom in regard to certain classes of consumption is denied. If the one does not amount to a denial of personal freedom, the other definitely cannot (1968b, p.198)

Thus, the state has the duty to legislate against anything that is injurious to the individual and society at large. There should also be a maximum standard which no one is allowed to exceed (1968b, p.194). Awolowo compares the State to the family. In a family, the father does not allow a member of the family to do whatever he likes that will bring injury and disrepute to the family. In the same way, it is the duty of the state to do to every citizen what the *paterfamilias* does in this regard to every member of the family:

In a family, the *paterfamilias* does not allow every member to consume just what he likes...This is a duty which nature lays on him, that each member consumes only what enhances his health...He strictly forbids him to consume anything that is poisonous and injurious...If he allows these things to happen, the health of the family would be weakened, and its cohesion, peace and tranquility would be impaired. It is the duty of the state to do to every citizen what the *paterfamilias* does in this regard to every member of the family (1968b, pp.197-198).

Human Nature and Private Property

Human beings can only be fulfilled when their endowments, faculties and talents are productively engaged. In other words, human nature requires a man to be in an environment that helps him to engage his endowments to the best of his ability (Awolowo, 1981e, p.25). Thus, man is ridiculed in any situation that renders him unemployed. Without employment, human dignity suffers and citizens are traumatized by low self-esteem. This is why equal opportunity (and employment for citizens) is a priority on Awolowo's socialist agenda:

The individual should have the opportunity to produce enough for his necessities and comforts, and if possible, for a little bit of luxury as well. In other words, he should be fully and gainfully employed either by himself, or by another person or institution. Whenever and wherever he is denied this opportunity, he is automatically denied the purchasing

power or income essential to his well-being. Hence, he becomes destitute, forlorn, and threatened with loss of dignity and self-respect (Awolowo, 1981e, p.25).

In Awolowo's view, besides creating opportunities to produce enough to guarantee his economic well-being, the state should also create the enabling environment for the citizens to be healthy; since only healthy citizens can engage in economic activities. Awolowo argues that, as a matter of social justice, the individual must be rewarded in accordance with his labour:

For an agent to get more than its due and relative share, is exploitation; and for it to get less, is deprivation. It follows that, in order to ensure justice and equity in the distribution of the wealth of the nation among all those who have participated in its production, the forces of supply and demand must be controlled and regulated, at all times (Awolowo, 1981e, p.26).

Thus, Awolowo does not subsume the individual under the anonymity of the state. Rather, man deserves his wages; except that there must be social control of the means of production and distribution of a nation's wealth in order to ensure social justice and dissuade individuals from oppressing each other through personal aggrandizement. In fact, Awolowo's socialist orientation goes as far as protecting the less privileged in order to ensure that they are not at any social disadvantage in the society:

Since the economic well-being of the individual is our objective, it is imperative that arrangements should be made whereby those who, because of their youth, old age, pupilage, or infirmity, are unable to produce should be provided for from contributions deducted from the incomes of those individuals who have actively and effectively participated in production. In this connection, we must refuse to consider those individuals who are able but unwilling to work. The rule which Paul laid down for the Thessalonians should apply to this class of people, namely: 'The man who will not work shall not eat' (Awolowo, 1981e, p.26).

In the *Voice of Wisdom*, Awolowo translates the above into nine concrete national objectives, stressing the necessity for their implementation as a means to national development:

1. *There must be full employment for all.* Anything short of this cannot assure enough purchasing power, and hence economic well-being, for every Nigerian citizen who is able and willing to work.

As long as there are only four bones for 6 dogs, there cannot be peace inside the kennel.

2. *Every citizen, other than self-employed persons, should be guaranteed a national minimum wage compatible with decent living or economic well-being.* It would put an end to exploitation on the part of employers, and would positively raise the morale of the workers for increased productivity.
3. *Every Nigerian citizen must be educated at public expense to the limit of his natural ability to enable him to be in the fittest possible state to produce the utmost that he is capable of.* An arrangement under which some are educated and some are not is inhuman, unjust, and, in the long run, anti-social. It gives the educated an unfair advantage in economic, political, and other social activities over their uneducated fellow-citizens, even though the latter might have greater inborn and latent talents than the former. Inequality there may be among individuals, but the inequality must be such as inevitably from natural and hereditary limitations, not one that is imposed by an unfair denial of opportunity.
4. *Preventative and curative health services must be provided at public expense to all citizens to enable them enjoy physical, mental and spiritual health.* The healthier a man is, the more productive he will be.
5. *Agriculture must be modernized and mechanized.* This can only be achieved by the abandonment of the present method of tilling the land, and the introduction of modern methods of cultivation, including the use of fertilizer, the planting of higher yielding seeds and grains, storage, marketing, pest control, and mechanization.
6. *Rapid industrialization.* This is essential in order that we may provide employment for the surplus labour which will result from the modernization and mechanization of agriculture, so that we may become economically independent and only voluntarily interdependent.
7. *New roads must be constructed to modern standards to achieve a target of at least one mile of road to two square miles of territory. At the same time, existing roads, bridges, railways, and waterways must be reconstructed to the same standards.* A man's efforts would be almost completely wasted, unless the goods he produces can be brought quickly and cheaply to those who require them.
8. *There should be comprehensive and compulsory insurance scheme for all Nigerian citizens.* This scheme should be open to ALL, regardless of whether they are employed or self-employed.
9. *Government should plan for the achievement, within a period of time, of the above objectives, and should institute measures for the control and regulation of the forces of supply and demand (1981e, pp.27-30).*

In Awolowo's view, if these objectives are faithfully pursued, they will definitely promote the economic well-being of the individual, without discrimination, and certainly develop the nation. In this connection, Awolowo insists that some of the real and basic causes of our crisis, as a nation, are unemployment, mass ignorance, endemic and debilitating diseases, low productivity, much poverty, and much discontent (1981e, p.30). He believes that we do not go to the root of the causes of the nation's maladies when we talk of bribery and corruption, favoritism and nepotism: "They are not. They are nothing more than the natural outcrops and inseparable concomitants of the fundamental causes which, we have just previously mentioned" (Awolowo, 1981e, p.30). As long as there is a wide gap in educational development between one group and another in the country, so long will envy, contempt, and resentment; inferiority and superiority feelings; disposition to suppress and disregard merit; dilution and lowering of standards; so long will all these evils mingle to poison inter-state, inter-ethnic, and inter-tribal relations, and incite disharmony and acrimony among Nigerians (1981e, p.31).

For Awolowo, the wounds inflicted during the Nigerian civil war will be deepened and take much longer to heal, if able-bodied adults and adolescents, especially those who lost their loved ones in the civil war, are compelled against their wish to be without work; and if our boys and girls are unable to pursue their education, to the level of their ability and aspiration, simply because their parents or guardians are poor, or had died during the civil war (1981e, p.31). It is quite unfortunate that, several years after Awolowo, the issues of injustice that led to the Nigerian civil war are yet to be well addressed, and therefore contribute to national conflicts.

Human Nature and Freedom

Freedom is the capacity for self-determination (Omoregbe, 1993, p.36). A free action is one which a person chooses to perform, when he could choose not to perform it. This implies that a human person engages his free-will when he acts in freedom, and therefore is responsible for the action and its consequences. Awolowo believes that man is free by nature. In other words, freedom is man's very nature. This is why Jean Paul Sartre argues that it is impossible for a human being not to be free: "Not to choose, is in fact, to choose not to choose" (Sartre, 1969, p.481). Awolowo shares this conviction. In the *Voice of Reason*, he argues:

Freedom is defined in the dictionaries as a state of being free, a state of exemption from the power or control of another; exemption from restraint; exemption from slavery or servitude; power of self-determination. In other words, freedom means a state of being free to do whatever you like, in whatever way you choose, and at whatever time you elect (Awolowo, 1981c, p.158).

A closer look at this conception of absolute freedom will lead to disastrous consequences, as Awolowo himself points out in the *Voice of Reason*. Therefore, Awolowo distinguishes between absolute freedom and practical freedom. Absolute freedom is theoretical and utopic, while practical freedom is relative and mitigated (Awolowo, 1981c, pp.158-159).

Awolowo's submission therefore, is that there would be chaos if the exercise of absolute freedom is possible in reality. If anyone does just what he likes with absolute and unqualified freedom, having no regard for what others feel, people would get in one another's way every moment of the day; there would be no end to trouble and confusion, with the ultimate consequence of a violent breach of peace (Awolowo, 1981c, p.159).

Awolowo's understanding of freedom is somewhat different from that of Sartre, in the sense that Awolowo does not endorse absolute freedom. In his *Being and Nothingness*, Sartre sees freedom in terms of nothingness. The foundation of freedom is nothingness (Sartre, 1969, p.486; Omoregbe, 1996, p.208). It is this nothingness that is the foundation of man's absolute freedom, it is what makes man the kind of being he is, that is, a being without rigidity and permanence; it is impossible to identify him in a fixed, permanent way, always constituting itself by negation and nihilation, a being who is not what he is and is what he is not (Omoregbe, 1996, p.209).

Awolowo does not go all the way with Sartre, as far as freedom is concerned. Awolowo believes that anarchy will result in the society if individuals are to exercise absolute freedom. This is why Awolowo makes a case for regulate absolute exercise of individual freedom by way of law enforcement, for the sake of the common good (Awolowo, 1981c, p.159).

Awolowo also argues that education is necessary for the beneficial use of one's freedom. In other words, society will be left in jeopardy if individuals are to exercise their freedom without requisite education. No one can claim to be truly free who is ignorant. An ignorant person is a victim liable to be exploited and

cheated at every turn by his more enlightened fellowmen. In fact, an ignorant person often uses his freedom to his own detriment, and the detriment of others (Awolowo, 1981c, pp.160-161). The nation will develop when it is truly free external control, ignorance, disease, and poverty (Awolowo, 1960, p.225). Thus, Awolowo believes in human freedom, but rejects the notion of absolute freedom. He holds that enjoyment of freedom in a family, community or nation must be regulated (1968b, pp.75-76).

National development through Democratic Socialism

Although, the history of democratic socialism predates Awolowo, as it is usually credited to Ferdinand Lassalle (Ogunmodede, 1986, p.207), Awolowo is distinguished for his commitment to democratic and socialist ideals, raising them significantly to the level of ideology. His main concern, expressed in his *The People's Republic*, is the quest for the socio-political system in which man can flourish best, which will also help in solving problems in society. According to him, he was in search of a system which will “provide the conditions under which man can exercise his individual freedom, live a full and happy life, and enjoy the fruits of his labour” (Awolowo, 1968b, p.83).

As Ojo observes, it is this quest for a socio-political system in which man will flourish and which will help him to solve the problems confronting him that leads Awolowo to his ideology of democratic socialism (Ojo, 1990, p.107). To explicate his understanding of democratic socialism, Awolowo begins by tracing the history of the systems that humanity has practiced, claiming that only capitalism and socialism are worthy of analysis (Awolowo, 1981c, p.186). He sees Capitalism as a “system which is founded on the principle of free enterprise and the private ownership of the means of production” (1981c, p.186). Awolowo rejects capitalism as an economic system because he believes that it encourages individualism. He argues that, unlike Capitalism, Socialism is firmly rooted in the principles of public ownership of the means of production, distribution and exchange of wealth. One of the cardinal aims of Socialism is that every labourer shall get his or her due, and that no one, however powerful or circumstanced, shall get any more than that (1981c, p.187). Thus, Socialism seeks to bring ethics to bear upon the operation of economic forces. In other words, the overriding aim of socialism is to bring about an economic commonwealth that caters for all, regardless of their circumstances. In other words, under socialism, capacity shall have its adequate reward, but also that those who, for any cause, are

incapacitated, or have not yet grown up to participate in productive activities shall not suffer misery (1981c, p.17).

Awolowo rejects Marx's brand of socialism on account of its sympathy for violence and exclusion of religion. Although he agrees with Marx's analysis and rejection of capitalism, Awolowo claims that he is not a Marxist (Awolowo, 1981c, pp.187-188). In summary, according to Awolowo, the aims of socialism include social justice, equal opportunity for all, respect for human dignity, and the welfare and happiness of all, regardless of circumstances.

Awolowo identifies two kinds of socialism: Revolutionary socialism and democratic socialism. Revolutionary socialism is what is generally known as Communism. But, its orientation is different from democratic socialism. This difference consists in the divergent methods of approach to the realization of socialist ideals. The communist believes that the political power of the State as well as the economic power of the capitalists should be seized by revolutionary actions, and that the 'dictatorship of the proletariat' should be established (1981c, p.188). Capitalists, who are in control of a capitalist state, will not yield ground to the communists without the stiffest possible resistance. The communists, on the other hand, are determined to break any such resistance at all cost. This often results in a bloody revolution, which Awolowo says, is never desirable (1981c, p.188). But, the democratic socialist believes, that socialism can be attained by democratic means, without recourse to violence.

Awolowo conceptualizes Socialism as:

the (normative) science which studies economic forces with a view to controlling, regulating, and directing them for the attainment and continuous enhancement of the economic prosperity and social well-being of all the citizens in the state, without exception or discrimination (1981d, p.136).

Thus,

socialism is a science of economic control. It is about ethics, social justice, and fairness. To say it is a science suggests its universal applicability. In Awolowo's view, it is as much Nigerian or African as it is Russian or Chinese in its aims and applicability. Therefore, those who, like Senghor, speak of African socialism, as distinct from Russian or Chinese socialism miss the point of what socialism stands for (Awolowo, 1981d, p.141).

Awolowo argues that Socialism is indispensable in the development of Nigeria (1981d, p.141). His confidence in the socialist ideology derives from the fact that it operates by analyzing and understanding the economic system of a society. Following Engels, Awolowo believes that the forces operating in society work exactly like the forces operating nature: blindly, violently, destructively, if we do not understand them. However, if we understand them, we can subject them under our control (1981d, p.136).

Hence, under socialism, every citizen, irrespective of his condition, is guaranteed equal opportunity to develop his natural, physical and mental endowments. So that whatever inequality remains, would be purely genetic and environmental, which can be overcome through education and good leadership (1981d, p.137).

Similarly, every State in Nigeria and every section of a State would have equal opportunity for economic development, to enable it to cater for its citizens. He admits that “after all these have been done, some inter-personal and inter-state as well as intra-state inequalities are bound to remain, but they will be inequalities which arise, pure and simple, from genetic and geographical limitations which, for the time being, neither science nor technology can overcome” (1981d, p.138).

Awolowo believes that the causes of our national maladies are essentially economic. Therefore, if we fail to find the right solutions to our economic problems, we would not succeed in solving our political and social problems (1981d, p.131). The ideals of democratic socialism, cannot be attained without planning, without selfless devotion and severe discipline on the part of those who are elected to formulate and execute policies, and without sacrifice, energy and money (1981c, p.191). Its slogan is: From each according to his ability, to each according to his deed/need” (1968b, p.192). To flourish, human nature requires democratic socialism, based on: (1) the well-being of the individual (2) national greatness and (3) international brotherhood:

In Awolowo’s view, there must also be checks and balances on the part of the leaders and citizens who are charged with the responsibility of delivering the ideals of socialism, such that no one can lord it over his fellow-citizens, or deprive others of their rights (1968b, p.274).

National Development through Mental Magnitude

Although, mental magnitude, as an expression, is not original to Awolowo, as it was coined by applied psychologists (Awolowo, 1966, p.158), but it was Awolowo who significantly developed a theory of Mental Magnitude as a theory

of self-conquest, which derives from the fact that man is composed of spiritual and corporeal elements.

Man possesses instincts which dispose him to positive emotions such as love, affection, care, tolerance; and also negative emotions like anger, hate, greed, etc. Man enters the regime of mental magnitude when he allows only positive emotions to determine his actions. Awolowo believes that leaders who combine mental development with emotional and spiritual depth make positive changes in the society. In other words, to succeed in the task of leadership and nation building, "leaders should possess comprehension, mental magnitude, and spiritual depth" (Awolowo, 1966, p.157). By comprehension, he means "the ability of a man to appreciate and grasp the salient details as well as most of the practical and temporal implications, of a given problem or situation" (Awolowo, 1966, p.158).

We automatically enter into the regime of mental magnitude, when we master ourselves, for "those who are masters of themselves become masters of others" (Awolowo, 1966, p.158). Mental magnitude means that which "is cultivated when we are sexually continent, abstemious of food, abstain totally from alcoholic beverage and tobacco, and completely vanquish the emotions of greed and fear" (Awolowo, 1966, p.158). Thus, the regime of mental magnitude is the regime of intellectual, emotional and spiritual maturity in man: "In short, in this regime we conquer what Kant calls 'the tyranny of the flesh'" (Awolowo, 1968b, p.230).

Mental magnitude goes beyond simple academic training; it must be accomplished by spiritual illumination, self-knowledge, self-discipline and self-control. A man enters the regime of mental magnitude when he is able to control himself by his ability to subdue every negative manifestation of his emotions. This is a function of a mind that has been well cultivated and working in harmony in a healthy body. Thus, in a regime of mental magnitude, man would live a full, happy, glorious and triumphant life (Awolowo, 1968b, p.214).

National Development through Education

Awolowo believes that with right education, every citizen will be well-disciplined and emotionally balanced and when this is achieved, the evils of the society will be checked. Awolowo places premium on education and leadership of mental magnitude, as the two aspects of the same tool of national freedom and development. This is because, national development requires systematic and scientific thinking (1968b, p.228), which is impossible without a culture of technological intelligence and research.

Painfully, in Nigeria, many universities and other tertiary institutions hardly get any significant funds to carry out researches and attend conferences, locally and internationally. Yet, without research progressive teaching cannot be done. At present, many leaders in Nigeria merely pay lip service to education, economy and security, causing many professionals to migrate to other parts of the world. Without proper education, no nation can acquire technology. Technology cannot be transferred without appropriate education (cf. Makinde, 2009, p.143). Awolowo recounted how the colonial masters never wanted Nigerians to be educated. They preferred a colony of illiterates who can easily be dominated. The North bought this hook, line and sinker. They paid no attention to the education of their citizens although there was selective education of the children of the elite. Awolowo recalled that when the white people tried to advise him not to educate the people of the Western Region, he reacted in anger: "I asked them whether Britain would have developed without education, without Oxford and Cambridge since the 12th century A.D." (Makinde, 2009, p.198).

Significance and Practicality of Awolowo's Socialist Orientation

Awolowo's conception of human nature gave rise to his socialist policies, which have been substantiated by their practicality and significant results. These policies can be adapted in our quest for the development of our nation. The impact of Awolowo's socialist policies was so much felt that at his death, *The Times*, a London newspaper, reported that he could have been a great prime minister of Britain (Oke, 2009, pp.303-304).

Oke (2009, p.105) observes that in less than eight years in the Western Region (1952-1959), Awolowo had practically recorded undeniable achievements in education, health care, agriculture, industry, housing and infrastructure. Soyinka refers to Awolowo as "a Guru for all time and all places" (Soyinka, 2009, p.xv). He wonders why a number Awolowo's works "are not textbooks in the highest institutions of learning on the various themes addressed in his works" (Soyinka, 2009, p.xv). "Too late, the man has left us, but fortunately he has also left us his mind" (Soyinka, 2009, p.xv). Osundare refers to Awolowo as "the constant stanza in the national song" (Osundare, 2009, p.vii). Sagay refers to Awolowo as the missing phenomenon in Nigerian politics (Sagay, 2009, p.21). And while Oke argues that "the main political question is whether you are with Awo or not" (Oke, 2009, p.147), Omoboriowo concludes that "Awoism is the way forward" (Omoboriowo, 2005, p.75).

Conclusion

It has been established, so far, that the key to Awolowo's socialist orientation is his conception of human nature. Awolowo left us the 'voice of wisdom' on how we can achieve the development of Nigeria: Nigeria will develop if we work for federalism, democratic socialism and a leadership that possesses mental magnitude (1968b, xii-xiii). He affirms that man is the alpha and omega, the only dynamic means and the sole end of all earthly activities:

I hold two propositions to be axiomatic, namely: That man is the Alpha and Omega, the only dynamic means and the sole end, of all earthly human activities; and that any development plans is a failure which falls short of benefitting every member of society in accordance with his deed or need as the case may be (Awolowo, 1970, p.85).

Awolowo believes that the state is derived from the very structure of human nature and out of the need to cater for it, and that the state can only be developed in accordance with human nature.

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