

De-pauperization: a panacea for African socio-political instability

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Abstract

The human society is a system, the main elements of which are the people in it. Man is the subject of economic, historical and political processes in the society. But one major "monster" that perpetually haunts mankind is poverty. Its effects are more amplified in Africa where war, backwardness, distress, starvation and instability have almost become parts of the people's culture. As a result, the term "Africa" seems to be synonymous with poverty and backwardness. To many, the continent is a conglomeration of nations swimming aimlessly in abject poverty, with its activities being monitored by the super powers. This paper identifies what I choose to call "pauperism" as the main cause of the socio-economic problems that threaten the attainment of peace in Africa. Pauperism, here, is the doctrine or orientation that encourages policies that aimed at keeping the poor perpetually in a degrading position in order to create and maintain a gap between him and the rich. This is done in many ways; through government policies, economic means and domination in various forms. Essentially pauperism is a multi-dimensional phenomenon. At the international level, pauperism consists in the impoverishment of some developing countries by some privileged individuals or countries. This is done mostly by making such pauperized nations politically unstable, economically stagnant, and disallowing them space for meaningful development. I therefore posit that until this monstrous attitude is changed, there would be no peace, social justice, stability and socio-economic development in Africa. Therefore, this paper proposes the adoption of "de-pauperization" as an effective antidote to the epidemics of poverty and instability in Africa. This device depicts a paradigm shift which will involve both the Africans and the different powers concerned. The change must be total and final, and its principles must be enforceable across the globe in order to guarantee its effective implementation, with a view to making peace a permanent feature in Africa.

Introduction

The issue of poverty in human society seems to receive more attention than ever before. This is probably because of increased awareness of the enormous threats which poverty constitutes to both human and national development. Indeed, no nation can successfully develop when the

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majority of its peoples are poor. "These issues become more critical in developing countries where poverty has been noted to be pervasive and chronic, engulfing a large proportion of the society"¹. This is particularly an overview of the situation in Africa where poverty has enveloped the whole society with its attendant negative consequences. To this end, concerted efforts have been made by various African national governments as well as both local and international organizations to alleviate poverty in Africa. In this regard "data have, over the years, been collected, analysed and conclusions have been accepted by scholars and policy makers who have used them in policy formulation"². In recent years, the World Bank as well as some United Nations Agencies such as the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), have carried out some studies on human development in developing nations including those of Africa. Truly, the World Bank's commitment towards the alleviation of poverty in Africa, like elsewhere in the developing nations, is noticeable in its policies and methods of granting huge loans to such needy African countries, though not without some stringent conditions. But, in spite of all these seemingly laudable programmes initiated and executed by both international and local bodies to alleviate poverty in Africa this monstrous epidemic remains ever active and spreads faster with formidable strength which seems to defy any form of earthly solution. Indeed, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) loans granted to various individual African countries seem to have aggravated poverty in Africa. In most African countries, there is little or nothing to show as the benefits from such international assistance other than the vestiges of structures of ensuring perpetual reliance on external bodies which translates to a gradual but steady erosion of the sovereignties of the concerned African states. Since most of these aids are not offered with good intentions, the "seminales" and machineries to forestall their effective utilisation are not only implanted and ascertained before the loans are granted and offered; they are also nurtured and sustained afterward to prevent the emergence of an escape route from the vicious circle. So, poverty not only lingers on, it also becomes regularly complicated. This is not to say that poverty is a peculiar feature of a particular society. Its reality can be spatio-temporarily contextualised. The riches of a wealthy person in a developing country may be considered worthless in another or a more developed country. A man who has a million Naira in Nigeria classes himself as a millionaire but in the United States of America, his money suffers a total debasement as a result of the fallen exchange rate of the Naira to the U.S. dollar as well as the disparity in the standard of living in the two countries. But it is also clear that irrespective of where, when and how it appears the nomenclature of poverty does not change.

What then is poverty? Poverty is a "state of being poor"³. It can also be defined as "the inability of any person to attain a minimum standard of living"⁴. Amongst the economists "the term poverty connotes a situation of low income consumption"⁵. Poverty, therefore, is a condition where people live below a specified minimum level of income. J.K. Galbraith describes the condition of the poor as follows:

People are poverty stricken when their incomes, even if adequate for survival, fall radically behind that of the community.... They are degraded, for in the literal sense, they live outside, the grades or categories which the community regards as acceptable⁶.

Whereas Hans-Peter Reprink sees poverty as the inability of any person to satisfy his or her basic needs due to lack of income or property and or means of change⁷. Whatever description or definition given to poverty, it is incontestable that the phenomenon is a plague afflicting some people all over the world. More often than not, the poor are easily noticeable: dirty, helpless, aimless, unorganized, and their lives are comparatively short. Poverty is not only dehumanizing it also debasing because "by its very nature, it is a condition that deprives individuals the right to

exercise potentials”⁸. It is a multi-dimensional phenomenon which is not restricted to insufficient food or poor clothing and poor shelter. Hiffe⁹ maintains that poverty state is circumstantial and depending on individual circumstances there are two types of poverty namely: “Conjunctural poverty” and “Structural poverty”. Conjunctural poverty is a transitory state of poverty in which people find themselves in the time of crisis. Very good examples of such people afflicted with temporary poverty are the displaced citizens of Liberia, Ghana, Sierra Leone and Burundi who become refugees in different parts of Africa or elsewhere in the world. On the other hand structural poverty is a long term kind of poverty which is usually a product of many factors such as: the circumstances of the afflicted individual, past and present, the condition of the environment in which he lives, the opportunities available for him to develop etc. Thus, poverty could either be transitory or chronic. Therefore, a pauper could be said to be a person in a chronic state of poverty.

Causes of poverty

One wonders whether it is impossible for human race to do without poverty. Akeredolu-Ale¹⁰ identifies four theories dealing with poverty, the “Necessity theory”, the “Individual – attributes theory”; the “Natural – circumstantial theory”; and the “Poverty theory”. The Necessity theory has three separate variants, namely: the “Functional theory”, the “Evolutionist theory” and the “Capitalist theory”. While the functionalist theory sees poverty as a product of class distinction or inequality created by the economic and social factors on the basis of individual’s capabilities in the society, the evolutionist theory traces poverty to the emergence of the society with its various inequalities. Yet, the capitalist (Free-enterprise theory) argues that the origin of poverty is linked directly to the nature of the crude exploitation in the capitalist society. The individual-attributes theory holds that men are the architects of their own misfortune. But the Natural-circumstantial theory identifies some basic factors as the causes of poverty. These variables or factors include geographical location and the natural endowment of individual’s age. The power theory maintains that the structure of political power in the society determines the extent and distribution of poverty among the population. Thus, poverty is a characteristic feature of a situation in which the few that possess the political power, organize the economic system to suit their own selfish interest. Poverty could be a form of deprivation (personal or physical or economic or social deprivation or cultural or political deprivation).

However, whatever may be the established theories on the emergence of poverty in the human society the causes of poverty in Africa can be categorized into two main groups namely: the natural causes of poverty and the artificial causes of poverty. The natural causes of poverty include such phenomena as drought or famine, changes in climatic condition, natural disasters, lack of natural resources, invasion by pests etc. In human history, man has been bedeviled with a lost of these mishaps which have called for both short-term solutions as ways out of the vicious circle. In some countries in Africa, the ruling class in those countries addresses these problems in two different ways-either for the government to consider the provision of appropriate solutions to such problem as a matter of top priorities or in a corrupt atmosphere, for the government to neglect the solutions to these problems completely. The result of such neglect depends on the level of socio-political consciousness of the masses. Otherwise, the masses may ignorantly assume that they are destined to live in such a society characterized by natural deprivations. This ignorance is further strengthened in countries where a change is regarded as an offence committed to disrupt and defy a divine rule.

Pauperism in Africa

The artificial causes of poverty are man made, and they adequately constitute what I tag pauperism. These artificial causes are common causes of poverty and they are of two dimensions, namely, pauperism at the national level and pauperism at the international level. In most parts, these two dimensions are interwoven. At the national level, the causes of poverty in Africa, besides the natural causes include, corruption; greed; deliberate attempt of the government to impoverish the citizens or a section of the country; domination and exploitation of the weak by the strong; the nonchalant attitude of the government, through its various policies, to alleviate the sufferings and the poor state of the masses; neglect of the well-being of the citizens by government; mal-administration by the few ruling class who may wish to consider rulership as their birth right; all forms of exploitation, oppression of the masses by the ruling class; the failure of the government to create employment opportunities, good and affordable system of education, destruction of natural resources by the ruling class which reduces agricultural activities without adequate compensations etc. The most fundamental of all these factors is corruption. According to S.A. Tella,

Corruption is rooted in poverty itself. It is a situation where everybody that seeks political power does so with the intention to acquire property that will not only last the life time of that individual, but also sustain the family after he is long dead. This property is acquired at the expense of the majority of the populace who do not have the same amount of power and may never be close to the corridors of power. This is a situation where there is pervasive poverty; and the office-seeker, realizing that no condition is permanent, tries to maximize his acquisitions within the shortest possible time.... The longer the individual concerned stays in power or within the corridors of power, the more public property, including funds he acquires for the uncertain future...¹¹

These features of corruption are common characteristics of the African social, political and economic life. This best gives the description of the course of pauperism in the African society. Thus, the various incidents of embezzlement, corruption which pervade the political and economic affairs of the Africans have devastating consequences on the African nations and reputation.

The pauperized members of the African society are known to be hopelessly devalued. Poverty creates a situation of disillusionment. Indeed, the poverty of the poor is his greatest obstacle to attaining prosperity. A hungry pauper is an angry person, and so, he sees corruption, nepotism and crime that pervade the pauperized society as virtues. As long as it is to make ends meet, any way is a way for the poor. He becomes hopelessly desperate and throws righteousness, decency, and in fact morality into the wind. He becomes aggressive and engages in all sorts of crimes; stealing, killing, robbery and all other social vices. That explains why in Africa today the propensity to explore all available avenues to steal and embezzle money becomes very high. When recalling the causes of the Liberian war, the justice and peace commission of the Catholic mission in Liberia reports that:

Corruption is perhaps the most significant factor that is responsible for this senseless war. A man is poor but becomes immensely wealthy overnight once he takes a government job that involves the handling of public funds...¹²

It is truly acknowledged the fact that there are catalogues of problems responsible for cases of instability in Africa, but hardly can there be found any, which does not have an affinity with pauperism. Essentially, it needs to be noted that most wars and revolts broke out when the pauperized people were hit by the missiles of poverty. Nationally, the poor usually seeks redress

by confrontational means, disobedience to government to the laws, violent agitation for change or reform etc. The poor is down and fears no fall if he dies in the course of violent agitation for the recognition of his rights, it is all well and good because he would be as hopeless as the dead if he remains complacent to pauperization. So, it is better for him to revolt, even if only for posterity to judge him right. Hence he is ready to strike at the slightest opportunity especially when he is pushed to the wall.

However, while we admit that “constant regime, famine, drought, civil wars and inter-state conflicts have combined at varying levels to generate poverty, condition of insecurity and uncertainty for the majority of Africans (emphasis mine)”¹³ we must not fail to recognize the impact of foreign intervention and influence on the African socio-political and economic affairs as one major contributing factor to the poor state of and instability in Africa. This is the international dimension to pauperism. E.K. Ogundowole succinctly expresses this that: “the progress of every advanced capitalist state derived heavily from the exploitation of the world’s backward states”¹⁴.

It is no news that the western world exploited and underdeveloped Africa. A lot of literatures have been written to show the master-slave relationship between the third world countries especially Africa and the colonialists. “Historical advance abounds to show that the development of most of the currently countries was made possible by what Gerald Piel called coercive deprivation”¹⁵. It is a well known fact that Africa is one of the best endowed regions of the world, with abundant resources, but it is till the least developed of the world inhabited continents. This is what Ali Mazrui calls “The Pathology of technical backwardness”¹⁶. Besides, in spite of its riches in resources Africa “is so fragmented that it includes the majority of the poorest nations of the world. The paradox here is of a rich continent which, contains many poverty stricken societies”¹⁷ And Ali Mazrui call this “The pathology of fragmented economy”¹⁸. The overwhelming majority of the counties which the United Nations considers as poorest countries are in fact in Africa. It is unthinkable that poverty can grow on a fertile soil. The majority of the population of the continent is undernourished and underprivileged. It is indeed a paradox of poverty in the midst of plenty.

Julius Ihonwere gives a highlight of the economic position of the African states in the following words.

The continent harbours 20 of the 33 least developed countries in the world – the fourth world? – its contribution to global GNP is merely 1.2% against Latin America 4.8% its Physical Quality of life Index is 32, as against 57 for Asia and 71 for Latin America. Growth rate for most African states is less than 3% and population growth is much higher than the 3% growth rate. The crude birth rate is about 46.3 per 10,000, the highest in the world. About three-quarters of the African population are rural dwellers having virtually all basic human needs as using crude implements in the production processes¹⁹.

This is an analysis rendered many years ago, but even today economic changes in this respect. But one wonders why the African economy is so deteriorating to this disgusting poverty level. Does it mean that the Africans are not ready to develop?

The truth of the matter is that Africa suffers pauperization in the hands of the stronger nations through economic interaction of the African nations with the western world. There has been long standing trade relation between Africa and the rest continents of the world and especially the west. It may be a bit difficult to trace the origin of such trade link without going back to

history. But we cannot overlook the influence of colonialism on the socio-economic and political affairs in Africa. "With minor exceptions, the socio-economic formations of contemporary Africa are creations of colonialism"²⁰. The exploitative mode of production was introduced by the colonizers while they made sure that the surplus proceeds from the transactions in Africa was repatriated back into their home country. This account of colonialism has been adequately flogged by many scholars with varying comments on the impact of colonialism on the African society.

However, the colonial intruders, or masters are no longer around. Why has it been difficult for the independent African states to develop? Claude Ake notes that "after independence, the foreign influences prevailing on African economies were pluralized"²¹. Here, with the belief that they have gained their independence, these new African states established a broader relationship with their colonial masters. This plunged the new African states into the membership of many international bodies such as the United Nations, the non-Aligned Movement, UNESCO, the World Bank, International Monetary Fund, OIC, The Commonwealth of Nations, etc. Their involvement created more problems, as their dependence and state of underdevelopment increased. The African states became heavily indebted. As a result of this "debt burden, coupled with the domination of the IMF and the World Bank, and the cartel tendencies of the European Economic Community, it has been relatively easy for the multi-nationals to have a free run of African economies (emphasis mine)"²². Thus, with this arrangement African economies have perpetually been under the guard and dictate of the western powers. The subjugationist tendencies inherent in the orientation of the western pattern of administering their colonies, their exploitative and pauperization, "as well as order emanating from these activities and institutions constitute therefore the fundamental obstacles inhibiting progress of the new states"²³ and rendering them powerless and poor.

To make matters worse, African nations are satellites of the advanced countries. We all know from experience, that it has relatively been easy for African political leaders to secure the support of the western world even when the so-called leaders lack public support at home. When a leader in Africa takes over the reign of government in any country in Africa, be it de facto or de jure, he must secure the support of the advanced countries, not really because he needs their endorsement for the general advancement of his country, but usually to "co-operate" with him in times of crises. Such crises are often generated by the harsh policies which are aimed at pauperizing the masses to the advantage of the ruling class or the ruler. At the time of such crises, the western world provides political asylum for the corrupt African leaders. Of course, these western powers take less blame for protecting the human rights, as they usually claim, of such criminals. After all, greater parts of the African stolen wealth, by these African leaders are deposited into various banks in the west. But conversely, a pauperized person is regarded as an outcast whose fundamental human rights do not demand international protection. Behold! A pauper would not be able to secure an ordinary entry visa into any advanced country even when his mission is genuine, let alone being protected by a western power, since he is not credit worthy. It is irony that when these advanced countries talk of the need to promote peace, they initiate and encourage wars. Besides, they preach the recognition of human rights, while they, by their policies and agencies, suppress and deny individuals and national the rights to self-development.

It has also been discovered that the aid-trap reduces the African leaders to "puppets in order to ensure a smooth domination of the new states"²⁴. The center-peripheralisation engulfs all spheres of economic, social and political matters of the African nations. This situation is more amplified by the fact that, "Africa has been afflicted with deteriorating terms of trade, declining gross domestic investment at a time when public consumption, and foreign debt are increasing

and negative shift in the international economy are directly affecting the respective economies”²⁵. The resultant effect of this scenario is that the pace of development in Africa is determined by the economic condition of the West. Having pauperized the economy, the African leader would be compelled to seek external aid. In most cases, it is an indirect way of soliciting for buyers of the country’s assets and autonomy-neo-colonialism of a sort. “The so-called International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, serve subjugationist interests by persuading, and quite often also by compelling the ruling circles in the new states to adopt stringent internal economic measures that, very often degenerate into anti-labour, anti-self reliance laws which serve the interests of the international cooperations”²⁶. Successive government in Nigeria, for example, did not see anything wrong in taking loans from such international institutions. The Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) which followed the deteriorating economy of Nigeria, like elsewhere in Africa, spelt doom rather than improving the Nigeria economy. As if that was not enough woe for the nation, on May 05, 1999 it was published in the Guardian Newspaper of Nigeria, that Nigeria was preparing to negotiate for a new set of loans from both the IMF and the World Bank. For someone who is an insider, it is not surprising because it was one of the ways of proving money for the “Boys” who took over the reign of government from May 29, 1999. Nigeria under the military was a country where it did not matter if the country was sold off to a few hands that might probably have had a big time bite of the “national cake”.

At this juncture, we may wish to pause and ask a vital philosophical question. Are the so-called leaders of the African nations truly representing the interests of their people? Indeed, their actions are usually accompanied with pain and pleasure. It is a situation of unequal effects and magnitude. While some people are in pain as a result of government policies, some live in unquantifiable affluence and happiness in the same nations concerned. But then, to judge an action as right or wrong, St Thomas Aquinas²⁷ advised that we must consider four things:

1. We must consider whether the action was voluntary, that is, whether it was a free, deliberate action.
2. We must consider the specific nature of the action.
3. We must consider the intention of the doer or the moral agent that performed the action.
4. We must consider the circumstances in which the action was performed.

When a leader takes it upon himself to administer a policy which will have overbearing effects on the citizens, we should consider the intention of that leader as well as the condition under which he performs such action. Sometimes we often hear policy makers claim that their hands are tied on some particular issues. The various powerful interests of the society in Africa influence the decisions of the leaders on political and economic affairs of African nations. Even when the leaders desire to do well, they are persuaded or forced against their conscience, to do otherwise, in order to satisfy certain interests in the society. That explains the rat race for public offices in the African states. When eventually a leader manoeuvres his way to the seat of power in Africa, he clings to power firmly and would want to rule for life. An example of this claim was the Chief Olusegun Obasanjo’s Third Term Agenda in 2007. Such leaders are not out to serve humanity but to live in affluence and pauperize the people. Often times, when such an egoistic and self centered leader comes to power, he would fortify the seat of power with his trusted loyalists and suppress oppositions and pressure groups. Such regimes are characterized by oppression, pauperization, killings, and reckless spending.

The results of all these exercises are emanation of fear of uncertainty, discontentment, frustration and hopelessness. When people are pushed to the wall, they take laws into their hands. Besides, some leaders of certain countries in Africa are suspected to have sponsored

revolts in neighbouring African countries, especially when the latter do not co-operate with the former in certain areas of common interests. The UN and AU as well as the ECOWAS are always saddled with the responsibility of settling disputes, quelling revolts and forestalling wars resulting from such unhealthy relations in Africa. But the problem keeps resurfacing every now and then. When one problem is solved another surfaces. The thrust of the matter is that a proper diagnosis of the problem must be done and its causes must be identified before appropriate solutions can be proposed. Consequently, we have identified pauperism as the antecedent of political, social and economic instability in Africa. The solution to the problem, therefore, lies with our ability to eradicate pauperism from the Africa society.

De-Pauperization

By de-pauperization we mean an attitude which encourages true development of mankind. It is a change of orientation and fervent commitment to develop humanity, but not for selfish interest. De-pauperization is the act of emancipation of an impoverished person from his hitherto condition of deprivation and inability, into a condition characterized by abundant opportunities and supports for a good and meaningful life. The philosophy or doctrine behind this attitude can be called "de-pauperism". De-pauperization is, therefore, viewed as a panacea for the epidemic of poverty in the developing nations, especially Africa. Thus, "the dream of Africa free from hunger, sickness ignorance, unemployment, social and cultural inequalities, external pressures and aggression can only come true if the continent is self-sufficient"²⁸ and also eliminates the spirit of impoverishment both locally and internationally.

Philosophically speaking, de-pauperization entails a proper and positive perception of the reality of man's being as a moral agent whose existence is determined in relation to others in society. A man is not an island unto himself. He exists along with other human beings in society. Therefore, by virtue of his rationality man is obliged to obey or disobey the immutable laws of nature which serve as the source of civil laws. Man is endowed with the will to choose whether or not to act in some certain ways. But the accuracy in the exercise of this will depends largely on the development of man's intellect. Yet, whether he acts rightly or wrongly, or whether the actions are done ignorantly or cognitively, man is responsible for his actions. To act according to the laws of nature is to act according to right reason. It is proper and right for man to recognize the fundamental human right of others in the society, for if he does otherwise, he should expect the same feelings from other people about his own very existence and rights – a sort of Kantian universalization of an ethical maxim. Therefore, while pauperism denies rights to some individuals, de-pauperization recognizes the need for every human species to live happily as a family devoid of psychological feeling of class distinctions and inequalities on the basis of race, sex, creed and age. It preaches true love rather than hatred; generosity rather than greed; compassion rather than wickedness, brotherhood rather than discriminations; and commitment to develop for the general well-being of man rather than exploitation and impoverishment of the less privileged.

To remove pauperism is to eliminate the doctrine of deliberate impoverishment, mal-administration, corruption and all ills which go with administration and governance. Thus, de-pauperization involves good government, built on strong political foundation which recognizes the fundamental human rights of all. For sure, there can never be peace in any country in Africa under the rulership of bad and irresponsible leaders. The government owes it a duty to protect the interests and rights of the citizens, provide conducive atmosphere for its citizens to develop, and also generate equal opportunities for all its citizens without discrimination of any sort. Good government is judged on the basis of its commitment to the well-being of the citizens as well as overall development of the nation. Such responsible government must ensure, among other

things, full employment opportunities for its citizens. Thus, one of the ways to reduce the spread of poverty in Africa is to actively engage the citizens in jobs which will ensure their personal development. Consequently, "appropriate or immediate technology which utilizes many workers should be adopted by the poor nations instead of the high technology adopted in both the capitalist and socialist western industrialized nations"²⁹. In the same spirit, a good government will not wait until there is a revolt before providing the basic needs of its citizens. These basic needs include food, portable water, good transport and communication system, clothing, shelter, medical services, education and participation in decision making process in the country. By so-doing, the citizens will have a stake in the existence of the country. Since the well-being of the people presupposes the well-being of the state, any government in Africa that demands obedience and respect from its citizens must be found to be highly responsible.

Moreover, any government that desires to pursue de-pauperization policy must also adopt the principle of self-reliance. E. K. Ogundowole defines and describes the self-reliance thus:

Self-reliance is the realization of the principle of self-reliance. It is the ideology or orientation based on this principle. A set of purposive activities directed towards self-realization. It demands for organizing the entire activities of a people into a definite set may be admitted but only when more important alternatives are not passed; which other will be regarded as always necessary and constantly to be preferred to all other possible alternatives.³⁰

It must be pointed out that self-reliance promotes competence dedication, confidence, national consciousness, originality, inventiveness and creativity in all aspects of the citizens' ways of life. Specifically, self-reliance may be taken to mean autonomy of making decision to fully mobilize the society's own initiative and direction towards a sustainable development. This is one of what Africa requires in order to eliminate pauperism for the enthronement of depauperisation. By so doing, the individual African nations will no longer be subjected to the whims and caprices of the western world when making decisions bordering on issues affecting the lives of their citizens.

However, the commitment of the leadership of any African country to imbibe the doctrine of depauperisation and good governance depends on the support of the followership. The rulership must wield such charismatic power which usually emanates from the support of the citizens leading to welfarist policies and programmes of the government. Thus, a tyrannical government will not achieve much in this respect since it will not support the adequate exercise of fundamental human rights of its citizens. Of all existing political concepts, it seems democracy best allows for accountability, responsiveness, and recognition of the fundamental human rights. "Modern political democracy is a system of governance in which rulers are held accountable for their actions in the public realm by citizens acting indirectly through the co-operation of their elected representatives"³¹. The beauty of democracy is in its pattern of distributing responsibilities and provision of conditions for proper governance. In any democratic government, there is usually a clear description of the "methods of access to the principle public offices; the characteristics of the actors admitted to or excluded from such access; the strategies that actors may use to gain access; and the rules that are followed in the making publicly binding decisions"³². We nonetheless admit that the wind of change now blowing across the African continent has rendered any other form of system besides democracy, unfashionable, absolute and consequently unfit. But until recently, the military institutions in Africa did not see democracy as an alternative system needed to face the challenges of the millennium. We were then used to the baffling news of military coup de tat in some African countries even without the consent of the people. Even now and as it was in the past, when leaders get to power in Africa, be in a democratic or autocratic or military system, they plan to remain in power. This is because

African leaders are power drunk. They rule rather than leading their people; they inflict sufferings and untold hardships on their people rather than serving them; and above all they pauperize their people and force them to accept these rulers as gods or divine rulers. Until recently too, it used to be fashionable for young men and women to enlist into the army because it was the ambition of every young military officer serving in the army, to rise and become a de facto ruler whose commands would be unquestionably obeyed. That was why Nigeria went through a long-period transition period which almost became endless. We therefore think that public offices should be made less attractive to reduce the rat race for power.

We need to mention also that the respect for rule of law is most emphasized in a democratic system. Governance should follow the due process of law. "Democracy can not be contemplated in a political climate in which the individual is not given freedom, in conformity with the principle of the rule of law."³³ Consequently, "under military rule, the rule of law and democracy are seriously impeded and citizens rights are constantly traumatized".³⁴ Even with the coming of democracy, most African nations pay little or no attention to the principle of rule of law because they are still under the tyrannical rule which effectively pauperize their citizens. A change in the political set of such nations becomes imperative in order to allow for peace and development.

De-pauperization goes beyond the political and economic change of orientation at the national level. At the international level, the West and the rest of advanced countries must recognize the need for the developing African countries to overcome their traumatic periods of unrest and stagnation. The co-operation and change of orientation of these advanced powers becomes a very basic and fundamental requirement for African peace. Indeed, there can never be peace in Africa when the African economic and political affairs are indirectly controlled from outside; when the advanced countries are ready to grant African corrupt leaders political asylum; when Africa only serves as the source of raw materials of the western world without industrial development in Africa; when Africa buys finished products of Western technology without being encouraged to produce finished products to be patronized by the western world; when Africa is chocked up to the extent that the only recommended alternative is to go for foreign loans which will continue to pauperize and deteriorate the economies of Africa; and when the west takes delight in seeing Africa in crisis. Therefore, since these issues are in the realm of international affairs the international organizations especially the United Nations should come up with a programme to curb these anomalies. To this end, we wish to recommend that the UN should devise by which erring leaders in Africa and elsewhere will be summoned to the assembly for questioning, and be jailed if found guilty. The organization should also make an edict denouncing and discouraging arbitrary protection the corrupt African leaders, by some advanced countries. Finally, efforts should be made to repatriate all illegal money deposited in various banks in the advanced countries by such corrupt African leaders. It is only by these means of de-pauperization that Africa can develop and assure peace and stability. For sure, Africa is not alone in this problem of underdevelopment and pauperization, it is therefore expected that the African experience of these solutions will serve as remedies to cases of pauperization anywhere around the globe.

Conclusion

Peace in Africa is not by readiness to exchange fire for fire, nor by relying on a specially formed army of men to quell revolts and insurgencies. This has been a common method of settling dispute not only in Africa but everywhere in the world, where there is crisis. It is true that human beings have the tendency to dominate, but it is equally true that orientation determines people's

attitude to life. Once an attitude is formed and is repeatedly performed, it becomes a virtue for the moral agent. But a change of orientation can effect positive changes in the attitude of the moral agent, especially if such new orientation is founded on just laws. This is the method by which the atrocious orientation of pauperization is changed for de-pauperization.

When the society changes its orientation in favour of the recognition of the fundamental human rights of the citizens, there will be a renewal of hope for the hitherto pauperized masses. The provision of the basic needs and concern for the general well-being are the doses for the epidemic of poverty in Africa. This is because the various deprivations of the citizens' needs are the antecedents of poverty, while poverty is the antecedent of instability. Therefore, the concern of all the people of the world, is the alleviation of poverty, which can only be realized by developing a zeal and fervent commitment towards the development of humanity. This is de-pauperization.

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