Ikenga K.E Oraegbunam

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JOHN LOCKE'S POLITICAL LIBERALISM: ITS RELEVANCE TO NIGERIAN DEMOCRACY

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PREFACE

The task of this essay is to make a critical study of John Locke's philosophical liberalism and investigate its possible relevance to an African democracy. For the purpose of this exercise, we have divided this essay into two parts. The first part will expose the tenets of Locke's political philosophy, while the second part will be a conceptualization of this political theory in the Nigerian body-politic as it exists today.

1. ANALYTICAL EXPOSITION OF JOHN LOCKE'S POLITICAL LIBERALISM

i. THE GREATNESS OF JOHN LOCKE

John Locke has been described as one of the most influential philosophers of modern times from the epistemologico-political point of view[1]. A founder of empirical theory of knowledge, his thoughts presented a veritable challenge to the already prevailing theoretical dogmatism and innatism of his time as championed by the rationalistic tradition of Descartes, Spinoza and Leibniz. But it is in the area of political philosophy that his influential star shines, becomes glaring, flaming and so lasting that he must be treated as the founder of philosophical liberalism and modern representative democracy.

Born in 1632 at Wrington, Somerset, John Locke's intellectual odyssey led him to be trained as a classicist and a scientist, and ethician and a logician, a medical doctor and a diplomat. John Locke has been called the apostle of the English

diplomat. John Locke has been called the apostle of the English Revolution of 1688 which has been described by Bertrand Russell as "the most moderate and the most successful of all revolutions[2]. "As a man who embodied the spirit of that political paradign shift which dethroned king James 11 and enthroned William of Orange, most of his works appeared within a few years of 1688. his Chief work in theoretical philosophy, *Essay Concerning Human Understanding* was published in 1690. There are many other works but his most important work in political philosophy is his *Two Treatises on Government* (1690).

Locke has been regarded in the estimation of Russell as the most fortunate of all philosophers[3]. He completed his work in theoretical philosophy just at the moment when the government of his country fell into the hands of men who shared his political opinions. Both in theory and in practice, the view which he advocated were held for many years to come, by most vigorous and influential politicians and philosophers. His political doctrines, with the developments due to Montesquieu, are embedded in the American constitution. The British constitution for a very long time was also based upon his political conviction which the French too adopted in 1871 via the hermeneutical effort of Voltaire. Indeed, it is apropos to say that Locke is the theoretical architect of democracy[4], as it exists in most of the modern world today. It is upon this consideration that we thrust into a descriptive analysis of his political philosophy with a view thereby to relating it to Nigeria's new democracy.

ii. THE HEREDITARY PRINCIPLE AND THE BASIS OF POLITICAL AUTHORITY IN LOCKE'S THEORY

It is the *Two Treatises on Government* more than any other writing that contains the bulk and the hub of Locke's political ideas. The first of these two treatises is a criticism of the doctrine of hereditary power of kings. The Treatise thus becomes a reply to Sir Robert Filmer's work entitles *patriarcha* which is on the natural power of kings published in 1680. according to Filmer, "Adam was first king and present kings are, or are to be reputed

next heir to him"[5]. In the word of Appadorai, the essence of Filmer's theory of divine origin of kings,

> *is not only that God created the state in the sense that all human institutions may be believed to have had their origin in divine creation; the will of God is supposed to be made known by revelation immediately or immediately the certain persons who are his earthly vice-regents and by them communicated to the people*[6].

The King therefore makes the laws alone which proceed solely from his will. He is perfectly free from all human control, and cannot be bound by the acts of his predecessors, or even by his own acts. According to this theory, obedience to the state becomes a religious as well as a civil duty and disobedience sacrilege. As an explanation of the origin of the state, the theory of divine origin is generally discredited, because it necessarily involves propositions that are to be accepted as matters of faith rather than of reason. It as well leaves the community at the mercy of a despot since political power derives neither from any contract nor from any consideration of the public good, but entirely from the authority of a father over his children.

In a critique of this patriarchal principle, Locke points out that if parental power is what is concerned, the mother's power should be equal to the father's. He lays emphasis on the injustice of primogeniture, which is unavoidable if inheritance is to be the basis of political power. Locke argues that Adam can have only one heir, but no one knows who he is. Thus if Filmer's basis for power were accepted, all kings except at most one, would be usurpers, and would have no right to demand obedience of their de facto subjects. Therefore heredity according to Locke cannot be accepted as the basis of legitimate political power. He then sources the origin of political authority from what he calls the "social contract" made by people who were hitherto in the " State of nature".

iii LOCKE AND THE STATE OF NATURE /NATURAL LAW

John Locke opens his second Treatise on Government by saying that having shown the impossibility of deriving the authority of government from that of a father, he will now set forth what he calls the true origin of government.

He begins by supposing what he refers to as the" state of nature" antecedent to all human government. Locke envisaged; this state as:

> *a state of perfect freedom to order their action, and persons as they think fit within the bounds of the law of nature, without asking leave or depending upon the will of other men*[7].

Thus, the state of nature is better described as the state of "I for I" and "mine is mine"; a state where every person is a lord of himself, where every person depends wholly on his thought. It is a state of self- consciousness and individualism. Yet having a state of liberty, it is still not that of licence. Unlike Hobbes' state of nature wherein there was" war of all against all, and life was nasty, short and bruthish"[8], Locke's individual in the state of nature "has no liberty to destroy himself, or so much as any creature in his possession". It is intrinsically characterized by freedom and equality, a state in which all powers are equal, no one having more than the other. Each person is classified equally with the same intelligence and faculty even of punishing offenders against him and as such no person may be subjected or subordinated to the others. It is a state governed by the principle of reciprocity where by the measure given one will be the measure he will get. Locke calls it:

> *a state of equality, wherein all the power and jurisdiction is reciprocal, no one having more than another*[9].

It is a state that abhors every form of arbitrariness in the use of power on people's life and property; it eschews despotism, anarchism, absolutism and authoritarianism. But at this juncture one may ask why in the state of nature it is not possible for one to legitimately harm another unlike in Hobbes'. Locke answers that the state of nature has a "law of nature to govern it, which obliges everyone; and reason, which is that law teaches all mankind, who will but consult it"[10], that being all equal and independent, no one ought to harm another in his life, health, liberty, or possession[11]. This is perhaps why Locke describes the state of nature as that of "men living together according to reason without a common superior on earth with authority to judge between them"[12].

Despite the merits of state of nature, it will however be utopic and contrary to common sense for one to hold that complete sanity would reign since there certainly are men who do not live according to the law of nature. Therefore such a politeia contains the seeds of its own destruction. Since everyone is the judge of his own cause, the net effect, for A. Appadorai, is that "while the state of nature is not a state of war as in Hobbes' it is still full of fears and continual dangers and man's enjoyment of right is very insecure"[13].

Therefore the peace among men may be so precarious as not to be easily distinguishable from the anarchy depicted by Hobbes. This is exactly what give birth to the social contract theory in John Locke's political philosophy.

iv. THE SOCIAL CONTRACT ACCORDING TO LOCKE

Locke takes what he calls the social contract to be the origin of the state or political society instituted by way of remedy for the inconveniences of the state of nature. In his analysis of Locke's theory of social contact, Appadorial presents the inconveniences as three fold:

First the want of an established, settled, known law, received and allowed by common consent to be the standard of right and wrong, and the common measure of decide all controversies secondly, the want of a known and disinterested judge, with authority to determine all differences according to the established law; thirdly the want of power to back and support the sentence when right and to give due execution[14].

Hence the state according to Locke is created through the medium of a contract in which the individual agrees with every other to give up to the community the natural right of enforcing the law of reason in order that property might be protected. This social contract is an "artificial product of the voluntary agreement of the free moral agents that there is no such as natural political authority"[15]. Michael Oakeshott calls such a contract "a doctrine of will and artific"[16]. It must however be understood that social contract is not a means that contracting parties forgo their liberty and then live in servitude as obtainable in the rule of Hobbes' Leviathan[17]. It means they forgo their right of correction and hand them over to a common legislative power for the common good. In this way for Locke the people would preserve their lives, freedom and property. Thus, Locke unlike Hobbes gives the power to the community and not to a government. According to Appadorial, the contract is also not general, but limited and special for the natural right of enforcing the law of reason alone is giving up; the natural rights of life, liberty and property, reserved to the individual limit the just power of the community[18].

For Locke, social contract and consent go through three stages: firstly, men must agree together to uphold one another as a community to pool their natural power so that they act together to uphold one another's right, secondly, the members of this community must agree by the majority vote to set up legislative and other institution. Thirdly, power of property in the society must agree either personally or through their representative to whatever taxes are imposed in the people. This constitutes the basis of democracy which according to John Locke is " nothing

but the consent of any member of freemen capable of majority"[19]. Unlike in Hobbes' where the *leviathan* is not a party to the contract and hence can legitimately be absolute and arbitrary in his decisions, the sovereign in Locke's polity is a party to the main purpose of this socio-political contract and consent? Locke answer it is for the protection of individual property.

v. MEANING OF PROPERTY AS USED BY LOCKE

What does the term "property" mean in Locke's political philosophy? Property in Locke means a collective right to life, liberty and estates: He writes:

Lives, liberty and estates I call
by the general name, peoperty[20].

So Locke does not take "property" to mean only the material and economic acquisition but fundamental human rights which according to him are inalienable. He further stresses that these rights belong to men even before the formation of state. It is a truism in Locke's philosophic liberalism that the source of these right is the "reason" with which man is endowed for his own benefits. Here Locke manifests his ardent belief in God for God is the ultimate source of this "reason". He maintain that:

God who has given the world to men in common had also given them reason to make use of it to the best advantage of life and convenience.[21]

Therefore John Locke does not jettison his belief in God even though he rejects the theory of divine right of kings.

It is striking however that Locke associated the right to private property with the produce of ones own labour[22]. although this stretches back to Aquinas, it is this according to B. Russell that explains the labour theory of value, a doctrine which states

that the value of a product depends upon the labour expended upon it, the theory which some scholars attribute to Karl Marx and others to Ricardo[23].

According to this theory therefore to own a property in Locke's view, one has to labour as an indispensable extra-effort added to whatever nature has provided. Morestill, Locke tried to find this right also on the notion of utility. According to him,

> *Natural reason tells us that men, being once born, have a right to their preservation and consequently to meat and drink and such other things as nature affords for their subsistence*[24].

Elie Halevy comenting on this Lockean basis for right to private property writes:

> *Locke is less logical for he after having founded property on utility immediately proceeded to found it on labour starting from the consideration that labour determines the value of things in exchange, and implicitly admitting the postulate that nature is just*[25].

But it is precisely because in the state of nature injustice sometimes thrives that a society based on contract is formed. Whether however the right to property is based on utility or labour or both, it is still important to ask the question as regards the extent one can through his labour acquire property. John Locke answers that the same law that entitles us to acquire also limits us:

> *As much as any one can make use of any advantage of life before it spoils; so much he may by his labour fix a property in whatever is beyond this, is more than his share, and belongs to others*[26].

It is upon this conviction that Bertrand Russell argues that "one finds in Locke side by side and unreconciled doctrines which

forshadow those of developed capitalism and doctrines which adumbrate a more neatly socialistic outlook"[27]. the expressions "as much as anyone can make use of" and "whatever beyond this is more than his share" seem to point to capitalism and socialism respectively. Despite this dialectical tension in the right to and use of property, Locke still holds that the purpose of the state via social contract is for the protection of property. But who is the sovereign in this state?

vi. CHECKS AND BALANCES:

The doctrine that the legislative, executive and judicial functions of government should be kept separate is characteristic of liberalism. It is because Locke stood at the explicit source of this teaching that his political philosophy is dubbed liberalism. In modern political parlance the doctrine is called that of separation of powers. It arose in England in the course of resistance to the Stuarts. Although according to Appadorai, the theory of separation of power was clearly formulated for the first time by Montesquieu in his *The Spirit of Laws* (1748), it was achieved only by the inspiration of Locke's notion of sovereignty. On whom does the sovereignty reside in the state of society? Is it on the legislature or on the executive? Can one person be both executive and the legislature? For Montesqieu there can be no liberty if one person becomes both; for Locke if the two functions belong to one person, there will be abuse of power.

Locke gives us a different picture of the sovereign power in society from the one we find in Hobbes. Hobbes' sovereign was absolute. Locke agrees that there must be a "supreme power", but he carefully places this in the hands of legislature and consequently the majority of the people. Arguably, according to Russell, this Locke's preference for the legislature is due to his biases against the Stuart Monarch[28]. For, Samuel Enoch Stumpf, "Locke emphasized the importance of the division of power chiefly to ensure that those who execute or administer the laws do not also make them"[29] since according to John Locke "they may exempt themselves from obedience to the laws they make, both in

its making and execution, to their own private advantage[30]. "The executive is therefore under the law". Even the legislature is not absolute although it is supreme" for legislative power is held as a trust and is therefore only a fiduciary power[31]. Locke would never agree that man had irrevocably transferred their rights to the sovereign. It is this phenomenon that guarantees checks and balances in the "polis". The right to rebellion is retained, though rebellion is justified only when the government is dissolved. Thus, whereas Hobbes places the sovereign under God's judgement, Locke states that "the people shall judge".

vii. LIMITATIONS OF LOCKE'S LIBERALISM: A CRITIQUE

Although John Locke has been hailed as the father of modern democracy in which he has constructed a political edifice that appeared to give almost equal right to the citizens of his own state, it must still be stated at this juncture that some of the bricks which build up the wall of his theory contain the seeds of their own cracking and destruction.

In the first place, the individualism seemed to have been promoted by Locke's theory leaves much to be desired. Contrary to the well-meaning and acclaimed purpose of the state, namely propagation of common good, Locke informed by the spirit of modernism as fathered by Cartesian *cogito ergo sum*[32], hings the *raison d'etre* of the state on mere protection of the individual property. It appears to me that any democracy that is based on such a supremacy of the individual over the community will be a charade, a sing-song and an invitation to anarchy. It is only a little better than what obtained in the state of nature. Anthropologically and sociologically too, individualism does not pass the test of time since man is intrinsically an *ens socialis*.

Secondly, the term "property" is not without some equivocation in Locke's political philosophy. At one time Locke uses it to denote goods or estates. This inconsistency has created a considerable ambiguity about those who are parties to the social contract and renders more problematic the task of understanding

Locke. This is particularly true as it is the ownership of private property that qualifies one to become a party to the Lockean contract, and it is this that constitutes the basis of Locke's exclusion of women and the poor from the right of citizenship, a group which according to Locke own no property. This exclusion cancels, by *reductio ad absurdum*, Locke's own idea of equality of all men, and thus renders questionable the sincerity of his predilection for democracy.

Thirdly, to comprehend Locke's pretentious explanation of the transition from the state of nature to the civil society is equally a hard nut to crack. Locke describes the state of nature as the original state of man where there is equality, peace, freedom and mutual love. This seems not to be true to common sense, because if that were to be true, there would not have been any real need to form a civil society. Although Locke argues that it is because all does not obey the law of nature that the civil society is formed in order to take care of the inconveniences, human experience still shows that not even in the so-called civil society that all men obey the laws despite its democratic apparatus and political machineries of law enforcement.

Moreover, it is the above criticism that casts a serious aspersion on the historicity of Locke's state of nature and the social contract. Thus many argue that the contract origin of political authority is untenable, not only because historical records are wanting as to those early times when, if at all, such contract must have been made, but also because what historical evidence there is, from which by inference primitive conditions may be imagined, is such as to show its impossibility. Under such conditions the very idea of men contracting themselves as not only in Locke, but also in Hobbes and Rousseau into civil society seems improbable. The illogicality of the theory becomes glaring when it is seen that it presupposes that the individual must have known what a government is before they can make one. In the views of Russell, government like measles and whooping cough must have grown up gradually and not by any contract for before men had

studies anthropology, they had no idea of the psychological mechanism involved in the beginning of government[33].

Morestill, even granting that an example of an original contract could be found it cannot necessarily bind the descendants of those who *ab initio* entered into the contract. It is quite unrealistic that a son must consent even afresh to a contract made by his father. That would be a violation of the freedom characteristic of a democracy. Even if such consent takes place, it is even more shadowy. Furthermore, Locke's theory about majority rule and consent deserves commendation. It must however be put against Locke that he takes it for granted that majority is always right. But this is not necessarily so in real life situation. It seem to me as to Russell that such a divine right of majorities pressed too far, may become almost as tyrannical as the divine right of kings which Locke devoted his lifetime to fight against.

It is equally surprising in his liberalism that Locke says nothing about the judiciary although this was a burning question in his day. Until the Revolution, judges could at any moment be dismissed by the King; consequently they condemn the king's enemies and acquitted his friends. Again, Locke continuously writes that the power of government by contract never extends beyond the common good. But it seems not to have occurred to him to ask who was to be the judge of the common good. Nor does Locke account for the law of resolution of possible conflicts between executive and the legislature. With such a lacuna it is presumable that Locke precisely as a lover of revolution would advocate for solution reached by fighting since it is assumed that heaven will give the victory to a better cause. Such a view would be an anachronism for in more modern democracies, thanks to Montesqieu, wherever the principle of checks and balances prevailed the judiciary became a third independent branch of government alongside of the legislative and executive.

Furthermore, Locke's political philosophy according to some critics was on the whole adequate and useful but only before the industrial revolution. For instance, Russell argues that the principle that a man has right to the produce of his own labour is

useless in an industrial civilization[34] for it would be extremely difficult to calculate the labour value of, for example one working as an employee of a capitalist brewing industry at Onitsha or Awka. It is in order to prevent the exploitation of labour that some favour a more socialistic method of production and distribution over against the labour theory of value. In the same vein, the power of property today, as embodied in vast co-operations and multi-nationals has grown beyond anything imagined by Locke especially in this era of globalization and integration. Nationalism too has brought also an alliance or amalgamation of economic and political power, making war the principal means of competition. Thus the single separate citizen has no longer the power and independence that he had in Locke's 17th century speculations. And since our age is that of organizations, and its conflicts are mostly between organizations and not between separate individuals as such, the state of nature as *midwife* by Locke still exists as between states and groups[35]. Thus a new international social contract is necessary before we arrive at Locke's political promised land.

Despite all these defects however, one does not need to throw away the bath water together with the baby. Locke's theory has some merits. This theory succeeded in freeing individuals from the shackles of monarchism and the crippling hands and chains of absolutism[36]. As such, he has left for mankind an everlasting legacy for the better running of government in spite of the inadequacies in the ingredients that enter into the formulation of the theory. Locke's liberalism reminds the government of those human purposes which the state can serve and which alone can justify its existence. As Immanuel Kant says: "the legislator is under the obligation to order the law as if they were the outcome of a social contract". The theory of Locke just as that of Rousseau brought out the idea that civil society rests not on the consent of the ruler but of the ruled and thus became an important factor in the development of modern democracy.

There is no gainsaying the fact that the theory has brought to human awareness the fact that individuals have rights that are

natural and inalienable to them and as well need to seek for them and defend them. According to Locke then, government is for the people, made through the will of the people and therefore must seek the well being of the people. It is against this backdrop therefore which at the same time constitutes our point of departure that we thrust into the consideration of the relevance of Lock's political theory to Nigerian present democracy.

2. LOCKE'S LIBERALISM AND NIGERIAN DEMOCRACY: A JUXTAPOSITION

It is usually very interesting to make Nigeria a case study in any inquiry regarding African situation. It is not only because it is the most populous country in Africa but also the due to its being endowed with enormous natural and human resources. Blessed with vast arable land, mild climate, mineral reservoir, rich flora and fauna, and rich cultural heritage, Nigeria has the potential to raise up its head higher than any black nation and many western countries. With a population of over 120 million, it is adorned with intellectual giants in the fields of medicine, engineering, law, philosophy, theology, education and other humanities, most of whom are of international standing.

Yet Nigeria is paradoxically poor and the life of its inhabitants miserable. Some blame this malaise on "Nigerian socio-cultural diversities made up of numerous tribal and linguistic groups, speaking different languages professing different religions and differing one from another in manners and customs"[37]. For a majority of the masses however, and this seems more plausible, Nigerians suffer untold hardship at the hands of a succession of despotic rulers, decadent administrators, visionless leaders and reckless managers.

According to George Ehusani, "Nigerians have been stripped naked by a corrupt, selfish, greedy and callous elite. They have been humiliated, pauperized and reduced to a state of destitution by the combined forces of military dictatorship, political subterfuge, economic profligacy and moral degeneracy"[38].

Yet this is a country that became independent in 1960 and went republic in 1963. Although most of this independent era has been hijacked by military misrule, the remainder had been a political system "whose voice", according to F.U. Okafor, "is the voice of democracy but whose hand is the hand of autocracy[39]. In the draft of its most present proposed amended constitution, section 22 (1) holds "The Federal Republic of Nigeria shall be a state based on the principles of democracy and social justice"[40]. Same constitution declares that "Sovereignty belongs to the people of Nigeria from whom government derives its powers and authority"[41], and places security and welfare of the people as the primary purpose of government[42]. The motto of the Federal Republic of Nigeria is Unity and Faith, Peace and Progress, and her watchwords are equality, freedom and justice[43]. There is no gainsaying the fact that these fundamental political provisions and objectives mimic the ideals of Locke's political civil society. This will hardly be surprising if one knows that Britain which colonized Nigeria and much of which legal system Nigeria receives and practices, *mutadis mutandis*, was the original testing ground, *weltanschauung* and *lebenswelt* of the political theory of Locke, himself an English. Thus we prefer in this contextualization exercise to adumbrate various expects of our political praxis, bring out successes and failures, and make recommendations in the light of Locke's theory.

i. CONSTITUTION MAKING

One of the reasons why people enter into a social pact according to Locke is to avoid the inconveniences of the state of nature one of which is the lack of positive law to which all the individuals should make reference. It is this need for a law guiding all that is behind the whole idea of constitution-making. A constitution is a body of rules, written or unwritten, in accordance with which the powers of Government are distributed and exercised, and in Nigeria once enacted in written form, the constitution becomes the fundamental law of the country, unlimited by any other authority.

Unfortunately however, the history of constitution making in Nigeria has been dogged and dotted with controversies and compromises. Not the least of these shabby compromises was the forcible adoption of, for instance, a constitution that has turned out to be a patchwork of incoherent and contradictory rambling bristling with mischief and miscreancy. Characterized by the curtailment of democratic rights and undue influences on political and judicial institution, the various constitutions, colonial or neocolonial, have not emanated from the full involvement of the Nigeria people. The domino effect is that they remain elitist document, generate alienation and fail to serve as the basis of democratic governance. It could be argued that the numerous conflicts and crises at the socio-economic, religious, ethnic and political levels are the precipitates of this absence of constitution that addresses the national question, defines the nature and sphere of political authority and power, and guarantees the right of citizens in the context of a large democratic framework. The sole panacea to this is that constitution making process in Nigeria should put on a more democratic garb and participatoriness so that freedom, equality and justice will thrive.

ii. LEADERSHIP QUESTION

In Locke's state of society, there is a body of persons to whom all surrender their rights partially and not irrevocable though. This body constitutes the leadership. The term of reference with regard to the function of leadership in a civil society pivots around the promotion of the common good. Paradoxically, in our country, it is leadership that "is the trouble with Nigeria" in the words of Chinua Achebe[44]. Military dictatorship and political subterfuge make up the contours of Nigerian leadership terrain. Hardly do our political elites know that leadership is for service and not for selfish aggrandizement. Hence in our present democratic set up, all energies needed for democratic dividend delivery and rapid economic recovery of the country's economic infrastructure after decades of military decimation are now deployed into a creeping war of succession. Because politics has become lucrative, organizations, or shall we say, conspiracies are

formed either for the return of incumbents or the removal of same. The media are awash with manipulated public opinions, orchestrated celebrations of non-performance, all leading inexorably to the criminalization of journalism itself. This ritual of self-perpetuation has become a Gadarene rush, with virtually all elective officers digging in their respective bunkers, lying in wait for hapless pretenders to the throne. It is our view that Nigeria will never rise from its moribund status in the face of this political dysfunction if the excesses of political partysm and electioneering is not curbed. A real ethical reorientation is a *sine qua non*.

iii. CORRUPTION PANDEMIC AND MORAL TURPITUDE

Corruption in a political sense means a deviation from the normal moral norms and behaviour expected of individuals within a polity in respect of the general welfare of the community. It is to avoid corruption which tendency there is in the state of nature that Locke advocated for a more civil society. But this state of affair is yet far from being realized in Nigeria today. According to John Odey, "Corruption, fraud and smuggling are not only being institutionalized but are fast becoming a business in Nigeria[45], and consequently renders her a *pariah*. Armed robbery, theft, drug peddling & addiction, election rigging, ritual killing, prostitution, cultism and sexual harassment, looting spree, bribery, chicanery and thuggery have become the order of the day. Thus the passing in year 2000 by Obasanjo government of the bill on "Corrupt Practices an other Related Offences Act" could not pass the litmus test as it is carefully and politically castrated and thus deprived of a legal tooth. If Nigeria continues to harbour these socio-moral inadequacies, its democracy will ever remain a *banana* type.

iv. INFRASTRUCTURE AND SOCIAL AMENITIES

The purpose of government in Locke's political theory is for the protection of property and promotion of the temporal welfare of the individual in a society. It is this that concerns the

provision of basic infrastructures and amenities. But in Nigeria political environment which is utterly distressed, public property and utilities are treated with carelessness, apathy and neglect. The roads are death-traps. Hospitals lie fallow and overgrown with weeds due to disuse, not of course because Nigerians are no longer sick but because the money used to run the hospital, buy drugs and pay the medical personnel had been pocketed by crooked elites. The flow of such public utilities as pipe borne water and electricity, where they are available at all, remain epileptic. In urban areas people live alongside mountains of refuse dump, and in many rural areas, many are today still grappling with what could be described as stone age civilization. A lot of people still live in squalor and squatter settlements. What is however more painful about this is that side by side with this state of near destitution of the majority is the affluence and conspicuous consumption of a few super-rich Nigerians some of whose wealth and privilege derive from predation on the common coffers. The continued existence of these decrepit infrastructure and dearth of equal opportunities will lead to a war few against many and would generate a Hobbesian state of nature where life is "short, nasty and brutish".

v. HUMAN RIGHTS AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

The question of right is central to John Locke's liberalism. The "right to life, liberty and estate" is a recurring decimal in his theory. According to Charles Chukwudozie, "the idea of human rights arises from the indisputable qualities found in man alone which qualifies him to be regarded as human person"[46]. It is the intrinsic logical of this inherent dignity the origin of which Locke attributes to *Reason* that makes man never to be used as a means to any other end. Nigeria however paints, in the main, a different picture. Fundamental human rights of its citizens have been trampled upon. Incidents of police brutality abound and the doctrine of *Habeas Corpus Act*[47] thrown to the dogs. For a sustainable democracy in Nigeria, it is only necessary that the government should see to it that any tendency towards the curtailment of peoples rights, whether economic, civil-political,

moral-cultural are excised. The problems of the judiciary which is the ultimate protector or the defender of the rights of Nigerian people, such as poor funding, overlapping jurisdiction and the procedure over appointment and removal of judicial officers should be looked into.

vi. RELIGION AND SECULARITY

Although John Locke rejected the divine right of king, he did not abandon a belief in God for he holds that "reason" which forms the bedrock of his ethics of the state of nature, is a gift of God. But religion need not be an instrument of violence and politicking. Cases of religious conflicts in Nigeria especially the issues of *sharia* have really threatened to tear the country apart and grind it to a halt. Separation of state and religion is therefore a constitutional imperative if Nigeria's nascent democracy would not be brought to a *cul-de-sac*.

vii. EDUCATION

There is no gainsaying the fact that quality education is a *sine qua non* for any genuine political participation. In Nigeria, the educational system has virtually collapsed. When the lecturers are not on strike for poor pay and unbearable conditions of service, the students will go on rampage to protest for basic amenities or against school fees increase. The net effect is that the psycho-moral upbringing of the child is greatly traumatized. For a lasting democracy, a serious attention need to be paid to the education sector, and the entire curriculum and policy rationalized in order to integrate the Nigeria student into the socio-cultural context of the body-politic.

viii. SECURITY

The inner garnut of Locke's political philosophy is the security of lives and property. The issue of security in Nigeria unfortunately leaves much to be desired. People are killed and maimed. They are raped and robbed. Apart from the juvenile bravado with which these crimes are committed, they are also

carried out with the sophistication of Italian mafia. Most of the times, the security agents are helpless either because of the endemic corruption that has deeply eaten into the very fabric of their rank and file or due to insufficient intelligence apparatuses. It is this that has led to proliferation of vigilante groups like Bakkasi, OPC and Egbesu boys. There is therefore the need in Nigeria for professionalization, reorientation, reorganization and repositioning of the security agency to enable it meet the requirements of public order, public safety and democratic governance.

ix. STRUCTURE OF GOVERNMENT AND CHECKS AND BALANCES

The doctrine of checks and balances derives its explicit source in the theory of Locke. The idea is to checkmate the possibility of government leaders taking law into their hands, and thus ensure the rule of law. It is also partly this that lies behind the idea of three-tier governmental structure in Nigeria into federal, state and local governments to ensure true federalism. The political realities on ground in Nigeria today sadly spell a far cry from these ideals. There is a constant quarrel between the executive and legislature partly due to insufficient understanding of their various roles, and partly due to greed, graft and political brinkmanship. Feuds also exist between federal and state governments, and between state governments and the local governments. This is manifest in the recent media and judicial war over resource control, Niger Delta question, and electoral bill and reform as it concerns the local government politics. It is all these that triggered off the hullabaloo on the so-called sovereign national conference. In the face of all these debacles, the executive-legislative and state-local government relations must be built on the foundation of nation's business as a co-operative spirit which must prevail over the temptation to indulge in the politics of conflict.

x. NIGERIA AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

Ever since the dawn of the present democracy in Nigeria, the Obasanjo administration has been trotting round the globe seeking for economic investors in view of revamping the already

crippled economy. Privatization, liberalization, commercialization have become the economic order of the day. All these and other ingredients of globalization as constantly recommended by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank have all their advantages and disadvantages. But it is the question of external aid that has proved to be a new form of economic imperialism.

"Nothing", according to Eugene Uzukwu, "is as alienating as aid just as begging and dependency"[48]. It should be underscored that Nigerians' economic predicament is not due to absence of resources and policy packages for there have been many. The problem is lack of strong and visionary governments that are able to orchestrate the mobilization of national resources for economic production. Nigeria is in dire need of leaders who will harness the resources of the nation and promote national prosperity and an efficient, dynamic and self-reliant economy. It is only by this that the economic ideals of Locke's civil society could be realized.

CONCLUSION

Having gone thus far, it is not difficult to see the relevance of John Locke's philosophical liberalism to Nigerian political society. What we have presented is only a tip of an iceberg. Despite the inadequacies of his theory, Locke proves himself a great apostle of equality, freedom and human rights. Our last word is that Nigerian political life need to be lived in such a way as to secure the maximum welfare, freedom and happiness of every citizen on the basis of social justice and equality of status and opportunity.

REFERENCES AND NOTES

1. Locke is the founder of empirical school of epistemology which attributes the origin of knowledge to sense experience. The mind was, prior to sensation and reflection, a clean slate (tabular rara). This is in contradistinction to rationalism which holds that knowledge is innate. Berkeley and David Hume brought empiricism to its logical conclusion. Locke's influence is also very felt in thoughts on democracy as a system of government.

2. Bertrand Russell, History of Western Philosophy, London: George Allen & Unwin, 1979, p. 584.

3. Ibid, pp. 584 – 5.

4. Democracy has been defined as "the government of the people by the people and for the people" (Abraham Lincoln). The etymology is a compound of two Greeks words: *demos* meaning "the people", "the poor people", "the mob", and *Ikratein* meaning "to rule". Demokratia means therefore" rule by people", "rule by masses". This ancient Athenian democracy was a direct one for all participated in decision making. (cf Herodotus *The Histories*, 5th century B.C., Mathew Nwoko, *The Rationality of African Socialism*, Rome, 1985, p. 66;Oliver Iwuchukwu, "Democracy and Regional Ontologies" in Obi Oguejiofor (ed), *Africa:* Philosophy and Public Affairs, Enugu, Pearls Functions Ltd., 1998, p. 84). But this form of direct democracy is no longer possible in today's sophisticated, large and complex world. Representative democracy fashionable now, as it were, where people vote in those who take decision on their behalf, has been attributed to John Locke as its source.

5. Robert Filmer, *Patriarcha* cited in A. Appadorai, *The Substance of Politics*, India: Oxford University Press, 1975, p. 31.

6. A. Appadorai, *Op. Cit.*, p. 31.

7. John Locke, *Two Treatises of Civil Government*, New York: Cambridge University Press, 1690, p. 120.

8. Cf Hobbes, *The Leviathan*, New York; 1651, p. 186.

9. John Locke, *Two Treatises*, 1690, p. 120.

10. *Ibid.*

11. *Ibid.*

12. *Ibid.*

13. A. Appadorai, *Op. Cit.*, p. 24.

14. *Ibid.*, p. 25.

15. *Ibid.*

16. *Ibid.*

17. *Ibid.*

18. A. Appadorai, *Op. Cit.*, p. 28.

19. John Locke, *The Second Treastise of Government*, London: 1976, p. 4.

20. *Ibid.*

21. *Ibid.*

22. *Ibid.*

23. It is to avoid exploitation of the labour value of the proletariats by the owners of capital (bourgeoisie) that Karl Marx advocated for communism via socialism (cf Marx's *Das Capital, The Critique of Political Economy*). Most of Marx's views on this issue is contained even before Marx in the writings of Ricardo.

24. John Locke, *The Second Treatise of Government*, p. 25.

25. Elie Halevy, *The Growth of Philosophic Radicalism*, London: Faber & Faber Ltd., 1971, p. 211.

26. John Locke, *The Second Treatise*, cited in Mathew Nwoko, *Basic World Political Theories*, Owerri: 1988, p. 83.

27. Bertrand Russell, *Op. Cit.*, p. 610.

28. The English Revolution of 1688 came as a result of the excesses and despotism of
the Monarchs. Locke become so biased against the democracy that later in his political theory of sovereignty, he gives primacy to the legislature over against the executive. (cf B. Russell, *Op. Cit.*, p. 614).

29. Samuel E. Stumpf, *Philosophy: History and Problems*, New York: Mc Graw Hill,
Inc., 1983, p. 273.

30. John Locke, *The Second Treatise*, cited in Stumpf E.E., *Op. Cit.*, p. 273.

31. Stumpf, *Op. Cit.*, p. 273.

32. Rene Descartes who is regarded as the father of modern philosophy and science built his philosophical system on the doctrine: *cogito ergo sum* (I think therefore I am). Thus the existence of God and other things was based on the existence of the self. Subsequent philosophers including Locke followed suit in this subjectivism, giving primacy to the self over against the other.

33. B. Russell, *Op. Cit.*, p. 610.

34. *Ibid*, p. 612.

35. *Ibid.*

36. Gregory Modi, *Individual Rights and the State in the Political Philosophy of John Locke*: An Unpublished Bachelor's Thesis in Philosophy, St. Joseph Major Seminary, Ikot Ekpene, 1993, p. 49.

37. Alan Burns, *History of Nigeria*, London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1969, p. 25.

38. George Ehusani, *A Prophetic Church*, Ibadan: Intec Printers Ltd., 1996, p. 7.

39. F.U. Okafor, "Law, Democracy, and Public Affairs: The Nigerian Case" in J. Obi

Oguejiofor (ed), *Africa: Philosophy and Public Affairs*, Enugu. Pearls Function Limited, 1998, p. 74.

40. The Constitution of *The Federal Republic of Nigeria 1999* (Amendment) Bill,
2001, Section 22 (1). Report of the Constitution Review Committee, vol. 11.

41. *Ibid.*, Section 22 (2) (a).

42. *Ibid.*, Section 23 (2) (a).

43. *Ibid.*, Section 23 (1).

44. Chinua Achebe, *The Trouble With Nigeria*, Enugu: Fourth Dimension Pub. Co. Ltd., 1983.

45. John O. Odey, *The Anti-Corruption Crusade*, Enugu: Snaap Press Ltd., 2001, p. 39.

46. Charles M. Chukwudozie, *Introduction to Human Rights and Social Justice*, Enugu: Ochumba Pub. Comp. Ltd., 1999, pp. 2 – 3.

47. *Habeas Corpus Act* is the doctrine that one should not be detained for more than 24 hours without trial. (Cf. Black's Law Dictionary).

48. Eugene Uzukwu, *A Listening Church: Autonomy and Communion in African Churches*, New York: Orbis Book, 1996, p. 70.