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**MAO TSE-TUNG'S SOCIO-POLITICAL THOUGHTS AND
CHINA'S BREAK-THROUGHS: IMPLICATIONS
FOR NIGERIA**

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Abstract

In this article, 'Mao Tse-Tung's socio-political thoughts and China's breakthrough', implication for Nigeria, I posit, that authentic development that is integral and holistic is not something that one just stumbles upon, or something that happens by accident. It is rather something that requires good vision, careful planning and great sacrifice on the part of all the stakeholders. The contention of this article is that China got her breakthrough through the visionary leadership of Mao and his foresight in planning. He carefully looked at agriculture, homo-culture and industry as areas that needed real attention. The three areas were key to China's breakthrough. The paper argues that Nigeria can take a clue from China to re-plan her developmental needs in the socio-political thoughts of Mao as highlighted in the paper. The paper uses the philosophical method of analysis.

Keywords: Mao Tse-Tung, Socio-political thought, breakthrough, implication, for Nigeria.

Introduction

Mao Tse-Tung: A Profile

Before us is an outstanding Chinese socio-political thinker. He is perhaps the most decorated Chinese philosopher, GREAT REVOLUTIONARY leader, who attempted to apply Marxism

to Chinese situation. Emmanuel Hsu describes him thus, “to many Mao was personification of Chinese communism and China without Mao is inconceivable.”¹ Such is the caliber of the philosopher before us.

In this presentation, we intend to examine his philosophical ideas to see how useful they can be to us in our peculiar situation in Nigeria. As we do this, it may be necessary to look at his profile.

He was born on December 26, 1893 in Shao – Shan, Hunan province. As a child, he studied the traditional Confucian classics. He did most of his studies on his own because he lacked funds to pay his fees. In 1919, he started active political life in organizing groups and publishing political reviews, while supporting himself as a primary school teacher. He was married four times and was said to be a lover of women. Zhisui Li, Mao’s physician said of him, “Mao had aversion for bathing and was also a chain smoker.”² He was a founding member of the Chinese communist party in 1921 and the leader of the Hunan branch. He concentrated mainly on labour organizations, party organization, propaganda, and the peasant movement training institute. His 1912 “report on the peasant in Hunan” expressed his views of the revolutionary potentials of the peasantry. Though at this stage it was not yet phrased in the proper Marxian form. He empowered the masses and made them know that true power belongs to them and without them, the exercise of that power is impossible.

Later that year Chiang Kai-Shek took control of the Kuomintang after the death of Sun Yat-Sen, reversed the party policy of cooperation with the communists and purged all communist from the movement. This made Mao to flee to the country side. On the mountain of the Southern part of China, he established with Chu Teh a rural base defended by a guerrilla army. It was the singular innovation of the fusion of the communist leadership with a guerilla force operating in rural areas with peasant support that was to make Mao, the leader of the Chinese Communist Party, from now on, (CCP). In 1930,

following their growing military power they were able to resist the Russia – controlled CCP leadership. In 1931, despite criticism of his policies and his weak position in the party, a Chinese soviet was founded in Juichin, Kiangsi province, with Mao as chairman.

This was followed by a series of extermination campaign by Chiang Kai-Shek's Nationalist government that forced CCP to abandon Juichin in October 1934 and to commence the Great March. At Tsun-1 in Kwichow Mao for the first time gained effective control of the CCP, thus ending the era of Russia direction of party leadership. Remnant of the communist forces reached China in October, 1934 after a march of 10,000km (6,000 miles). They then established a new party headquarters at Yen-an.

In 1937, the Japanese invasion forced CCP and the Kuomintang to once again form a united front, the communist gained legitimacy as defender of Chinese homeland and Mao rose in stature as a national leader. During this period he established himself as military theorist and through the publication, in 1937 of such essays as “on contradiction,” and ‘on practice,’ laid claim to recognition as an important Marxist thinker. Mao's essay “On New Democracy” (1940) outlined a unique national form of Marxism appropriate to China. “His talks at the Yen-an Forum on literature and Art” provided a base for party control over cultural affairs.

The soundness of Mao's self-reliance and the rural guerilla strategies accelerated the growth of CCP, during the Yen-an period, from 40,000 members in 1937 to 1,200,000 in 1945. The shaky relationship between the communists and the nationalist was broken at the end of the war. Efforts were made by the United State in particular to form a coalition government. This failed and civil war erupted that lasted for almost three years 1946-1949. At this war, Kuomintang was defeated and Chiang Kai-Shek's government was forced to flee to Taiwan leaving the Peoples Republic of China, formed by the communist in late 1949, in full control of the entire Chinese mainland.

Mao tried to re-establish relationship with the United States in the late 1940s but this attempt was rebuffed. Mao then concluded that China would have to “lean on one side” and a period of close alliance with the USSR started. The Korean war further helped to solidify China’s relationship with the United States. During the 1950s, Mao served in various capacities in the party as chairman of the communist party, chief of state, and chairman of the military commission. His international status as a Marxist leader rose after the death of the Soviet leader Joseph Stalin in 1953.

In 1957, Mao showed his commitment to continued class struggle under socialism in his treatise, “On the Correct Handling of Contradictions among the People.” Dissatisfaction with the slow pace of development, loss of revolutionary momentum in the countryside, and the tendency for CCP members to behave like the privileged class, led Mao to take a number of radical and unusual initiatives in the late 1950s. In the Hundred Flower Movement of 1956-1957, he encouraged intellectuals to make constructive criticism of the party leadership. This revealed some hostility for CCP leadership, Mao then started the process of accelerating the transformation of rural ownership by calling for the last vestiges of rural private property and the formation of the people’s communes and the initiation of rapid industrial development through a programme known as the “Great Leap Forward.” The suddenness of these moves, like it is typical of all changes, met with stiff resistance and administrative confusion and lapses. Further, the situation was aggravated by adverse weather conditions that led to a drastic drop in crop production and severe food shortages. As a consequence of all these negative indices, Mao lost his position as the chief of state and his influence over the party was greatly curtailed. During this time also, Mao’s government began to reveal its differences with the USSR.

In the 1960s, Mao tried to make a comeback, by attacking the new party leadership and the chief of state through a programme known as “the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution” between 1959 and 1966. This revolution was championed by Mao’s wife Chang Ch’ing. This revolution was perhaps Mao’s greatest

innovation and it was essentially an ideological struggle for public opinion, carried out in form of frantic public debates. In this, he proved to be a master tactician. Students mobilized as “Red Guards,” and became his avid supporters

On the popular level, the thrust of the Cultural Revolution was to teach the Chinese people that it was “right to revolt and that it was also their privilege to criticize those in authority and also to take active part in decision making. During this revolution, Mao’s sayings were printed in a little, Red Book and buttons bearing his image. These were distributed to the masses. His word was treated as an ultimate authority and his person the subject of ecstatic adulation. He continued to state his position and his belief in the Leninist’s notion of collective party leadership. In his humility, he asked that the number of statues of him be reduced.

Towards the end of his life, Mao put forward a new analysis of the international scene in which the world states are divided in three groups.

1. The under-developed nations
2. Developed nations
3. The two super power (USA & USSR). Both of which seek worldwide hegemony. In this analysis, China’s position emerged as the leader of the Third World (the under-developed).

In his foreign policies, since China’s relationship with USSR was beginning to normalise, he aligned with the United States. In 1972, Mao lent his prestige to this policy by receiving the US President Richard M. Nixon in Peking. Mao died on September 9, 1976. According to some sources, his last words were, “I feel ill, call the doctor”³

After his death, the following month, Chang Ch’ing, his wife and her radical associates known as the “Gang of Four” were arrested. In the same vein his chosen successor, HuaKuo-Feng, was also stripped of his position and the party came under

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the control of moderates led by TengHsiao – P'ing. In 1981, the party criticized the excesses of the Cultural Revolution while praising Mao for his leadership in earlier years. The constitution of 1982 stated that, economic cooperation and progress were more important than class struggles and banned all forms of personality cult. During the 1980s, a general movement away from Mao's beliefs was noted and his status was removed from a number of cities throughout China. In 1989, a member of the central advisory commission to communist party wrote in an official newspaper the "Guangming Daily," that "Mao was a great man who embodied the calamities of the Chinese People, but in his last years he made big mistake over a long period and the result was great disaster for the people and the country. He created a historical tragedy."

Along with the founders of the Han and Ming dynasties, Mao Tse-Tung was one of only three peasants who rose to rule all of China in a single life time. Mao's greatest achievements were the unification of China through the destruction of Nationalists power, the creation of a unified People's Republic and the leadership of the greatest social revolution in human history. The revolution consisted in the collectivization of most lands and property, the destruction of landlord class, the weakening of the urban bourgeoisie and the elevation of the status of peasants and individual workers. As a Marxist thinker and leader of a socialist state, Mao gave theoretical legitimacy to the continuation of class struggles in the socialist communist development. He stressed the importance of land re-distribution for the benefit of the rural peasantry and his theories have had strong influence on the non-industrialized Third World. Mao was undoubtedly the key figure in China in the Twentieth century and one of the country's most important movers and reformers His ideas varied from flexible pragmatism to utopic vision. He published 40 poems written in classical tradition, political messages. He is worshipped by millions, but also considered as one of the most brutal dictators of the 20th century who undertook some of the most radical experiment in human history. Though dead and gone for years

now, his ideology is still hotly debated even today.

His Works

1. Chinese Revolution and the Communist Party, 1940
2. 'On New Democracy,' 1940
3. 'On the correct handling of contradictions among the people' 1957.
4. Strategic problems of China's Revolutionary War, 1963
5. On the Rectification of Incorrect Ideas in the Party, 1953
6. Mao Zedong "On People's War. 1967
7. Quotation from Chairman Mao Tse-Tung, 1965
8. Essay 'On Contradiction,' 1973
9. 'On Practice' 1973
10. 40 poems

Mao Tse-Tung: His Socio-Political Thoughts

Mao Tse-Tung's political philosophy is Marxian in character. His vision was the "*Chinazation*" of Marxist socialism: Sino-socialism. He was a revolutionary thinker, a great economic theorist, political leader, poet, statesman and pragmatic philosopher. His ideas rotated around, the class struggle between the bourgeoisie and the peasants, his economic policies; the Five Year Plan 1953, the Great Leap Forward, 1958, the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, 1966, the restructuring of democracy, New Democracy, the Fundamental Programme and the Specific Programme, the Politics of the Chinese Communist Party etc. All these are the areas we shall consider as we reflect on his political thought. Mao was a great revolutionary thinker. Edward Friedman raised the question, "was Mao Zedong a re-evolutionary?"⁴ In the answer he himself provided, he said "even to raise the question, was Mao a re-evolutionary? Seem perverse as virtually all through his political life, Mao self-consciously pursued revolution. He is universally recognized as a leading revolutionary both as theorist and an activist."⁵ Mao was a revolutionary communist and his communism was communism of war. He states, "Political power grows out of the barrel of a

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gun and on the pen”⁶ In another text he said, “A revolution is not the same as inviting people to dinner or writing an essay, or painting a picture. A revolution is an insurrection, an act of violence by which a class over throws another.”⁷ The thrust of the Cultural Revolution was to teach the people that they had the right and that it was right to revolt, to criticize the government, and to take part in decision making. This revolutionary trait accelerated participation in the reformation process. Lowell and Liu noted in this respect:

Only the thoughts of Mao Tse-tung is able to inspire us to go from victory to victory... if we want the revolution to succeed. This is impossible without the right leadership Mao Tse-tung is the greatest revolutionary leader of the people of China and we should learn from him⁸.

He was a revolutionary leader with a vision who inspired his followers. He preached in his revolutionary ideas the inequality of men; that only the poor are honest fellows and that to treat the rest as if they were entitled to the same right would be to abandon the class struggler which is the very motive and power of the revolution⁹. Mao was a revolutionary with great personal conviction, never giving up the fighting spirit and determination. This is a serious requirement for leaders today. Leaders need the foresight to embark on acts that are capable of changing the tides. African leaders have a lot to learn from Mao.

His Sino Socialism/Communism

Marxism according to the followers of Marx and Engels was necessitated by some conditions in the material process of history (Dialectical materialism and historical materialism). The collapse of capitalism which bears in itself the seed of its own destruction is the most determining of these conditions. Its own-throw ushered in socialism. Mao saw how viable this orientation was and modified it to suit the situation and problems of China. He believed that coping effectively with China’s fundamental

problems would be possible only in a socialist society in which the real interest of the people; long suffering and desperately poor, would be uppermost¹⁰ He noted that for socialism to take root in China, China needed to extricate itself from the shackles of foreign and feudal oppression.

It is impossible for the Chinese people to institute a socialist state system at the present stage when it is still their task to fight foreign and feudal oppression and the necessary social and economic conditions for a socialist state are still lacking¹¹

So the first challenge for him was to fight what he calls the foreign aggressor, (e.g. Japan colonial and semi colonial, feudal and semi-feudal structure). This is what he called the Fundamental Programme. It must be stated clearly, for any nation to accelerate the process of her growth, she must re-consider her internal policies against her foreign policies as a matter of priority. The home-needs must supersede the foreign needs.

The Fundamental Programme And New Democracy

The fundamental programme forms the general arm of the basic policy of the CCP under Mao. While the other arm consisted in what he called the specific. It is “a thorough-going bourgeoisie democratic revolution, led by the communist party... aimed at developing a new democratic economy based on three sectors – private – state – co-operation. All this is directed to create the development of the conditions that would form the foundation for socialism and communism¹² What Mao calls the new democracy which is a “united front and a democratic alliance based on the overwhelming majority of the people under the leadership of the working class”¹³ He outlined three ways to bring this about.

1. No big bourgeoisie led state system as the fascist, feudal or antipopular.
 2. No purely national bourgeoisie state, a new awakening of the
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proletariat and its leadership has appeared.

3. Need to do away with the present foreign and feudal oppression¹⁴

He noted in the coalition government thus, “the politics of the new democracy which we advocate consist in the over-throw of external oppression and of internal feudal and fascist oppression, and then the setting up not of the old type of democracy but of a new political system which is a united front of all the democratic classes”¹⁵ Even when all this is done class struggle will continue but it would be peaceful and non-antagonistic.

The Elements Of A New Democracy

The politics of the new democracy will emerge with a new economy and new culture. It is not the bourgeois democratic revolution, but the proletarian social revolution not be dictated by the bourgeois with the aim of establishing a capitalist society and bourgeois dictatorship. It is aimed at establishing a new democracy and a joint dictatorship of all the revolutionary classes. The three major elements of the new democracy include:

1. Politics
2. New Economy
3. New Culture. This is equally based on the three people’s principles of new democracy, nationality and livelihood (socialism)

These principles were also upheld by Sun Yat-Sen’s party (The Kuomintang). According to Sun Yat-Sen nationalism should uphold the people’s solidarity or unity and sense of freedom from sovereign subjugation. Democracies uphold the people’s sovereignty and livelihood is meant to be the state socialism.¹⁶

Chinese Communist Party And Its Politics

Mao Tse-tung assumed leadership of the party when he was elected Chairman of the Central Committee) on January 13,

1935. In 1949, the communist party proclaimed the establishment of the People's Republic of China; this set the stage for the implementation of the party's programme geared towards the establishment of Sino socialism (communism.) There were two fundamental programmes of the party; the minimum and the maximum fundamental programmes. Minimum programme was the starting point while the maximum programme was culmination leading up to socialism, through a democratic process. The first step was mass mobilization of the people to what CCP calls the government of the "people's – democratic united front," the government of the proletariat. This mass mobilization of the people as Wang opined is. "At the heart of Mao's political philosophy... the concept of "from the masses to the masses," commonly known as the mass line"¹⁷Briefly stated, the concept, of the mass line specifies that a party policy is good only if the ideas of that policy come originally from the masses¹⁸ This mass mobilization or mass line is considered as Mao's theoretical contribution to populism"¹⁹

In any truly democratic setting, the people/masses are the most important segment that should be given the attention. Any government that is not people driven, people-oriented, is no government at all. Friedman contends that, "whoever claims to represent the people's interest... must enter into dialogue with the people. Academic credentials are truly valuable, a degree worth even more, but without democracy, we don't have either"²⁰ Democracy must serve the public interest and all the time seeks after the public good.

This maximum programme whose culmination is socialism/communism also had an extended three phase socio-economic dimension. These are:

1. Land reform programme
 2. The collectivization of peasant working class groups, mutual aid terms, (embryonic socialism)
 3. The people commune – this undertook the common ownership of all property, the genesis of communal living. This includes
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eating together, common education and nurture.

What this portends for Nigeria is the need for reforms in all sectors to re-understand the meaning of developmental plans that are capable of transforming the polity if politics is to yield its dividends.

Great Leap Forward 1958

The Great Leap Forward which Mao introduced was an industrial as well as an agricultural programme which was aimed at revolutionizing and transforming the economy. The Great Leap Forward was Mao's attempt to modernize China's economy. It took place in 1958. His target was that by 1988, China economy should rival America's he had discovered that the Chinese people were capable of doing anything. He hinged on two tasks, industry and agriculture. He had a five years plan (1958-1963). It was this plan that was called the Great Leap Forward. China was thus divided into communes. Members of the commune gave up their ownership of tools, animals, land, etc. to communal ownership. People now worked for the commune and not for themselves. The Great Leap Forward was a movement geared towards self-reliance which drew inspiration from the voluntary spirit of the people motivated by a new moral discipline rather than upon monetary gains only. Mao wanted the people to go into agricultural and industrial activities. He urged the people to go into farming to cultivate enough food to sustain the growing population as well and for export, as a prime duty. In addition to this, he reasoned that for agriculture to thrive, farmers would need tools and implements to work especially in the mechanized farming system that he had in mind. He wanted the Chinese people to be able to manufacture and not import these machines. Though, this did not meet with the much desired success. It was nevertheless innovative and backed up with good will. The peasants were ill-trained for this kind of gigantic industrialization plan.

The Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution

When the Great Leap Forward could not produce its desired results, especially following the disasters that the people suffered; Mao tried to stage a comeback to popularity by introducing the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution which peaked from 1966-1969. It was largely orchestrated by Mao's wife, Chang Ch'ing. It was seen as Mao's greatest innovation. It was essentially an ideological struggle for public opinion carried out in form of a frantic national debate. On the popular level, the thrust of the Cultural Revolution was to teach the Chinese people that it was right and their right to revolt; that it was also their privilege to criticize those in positions of authority and to take an active part in decision making. He was so explicit on his position of collective leadership. The cultural foolish, ignorant, un-informed, or deformed, mal-informed masses may be difficult if not impossible to govern. Political, civic and electioneering enlightenment are necessary today in Nigeria more than ever to properly prepare the people for active, meaningful and fruitful participation in the political process. An enlightened people are easier to lead.

This is a timely lesson for Nigeria, as we struggle to stabilize our democracy. This Cultural Revolution also did not yield the desired results. It was criticized after Mao's death. His politics in command was replaced by economy in command. His economic politics could not liberate China from poverty and backwardness. But this should not detract the veracity of its ideals. Though the fruits were not immediately visible, today China is a leading world power and a force to be reckoned with in all strata of development. China has an economy that is robust and stable.

Mao Tse-Tung: His Contribution To Chinese History

Mao, it is true, towers as an Iroko in Chinese history. Hsu says of him:

The Chinese Lenin and Stalin combined was sanctified as an all-knowing, all wise, demigod, who could do no wrong. Million's

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waved the “*Little Red Book*” of quotation from Chairman Mao, chanting its passages like magic formula that could turn defeat into victory. He was an incredible cult of personality that surprised even Stalin’s. The wonder was not so much that Mao permitted it, but that 900 million believed in it. Perhaps, they really didn’t but for a time they acted as if they did²¹

A good leader must pull people to believe in him and his policies so that they harness the support that he needs to succeed.

Until his death, Chairman Mao, was a voice to be heard, a man to be seen, in China, he was worshipped as if a god. Chen says of him, “in the heart of many, Mao Zedong is still a mysterious figure, a god that appears only once every 500 years”²² He was indeed a mysterious as well as a mystifying figure, difficult to understand, looking good and bad at the same time. It is in this line of argument that, Bo Yibo exclaimed that, “how to evaluate Mao’s thoughts and his historical position has been a very complex and sensitive problem”²³ Mao Tse-Tung appears to be a controversial man, a man of many sides. A college student put the official contrast between the good early Mao and the bad late Mao more pointedly, “he liberated China saving 400 million people. He mobilized the Cultural Revolution ruining 800 million citizens”²⁴ In spite of all the bad sides of him in his later days he is still venerated in China as a great socio-political philosopher. Even though, Wang sees him as much more complex person than has commonly been portrayed²⁵ Many have idolized him as a cosmic mystery. Friedman’s fascination is exciting. He said of him:

He is moreover the emperor at the apex of new communist world, the vicar on earth of the new cosmic principles of Marxism – Leninism, which orders the universe.... His propagandists depict him as one whose word is gospel on every subject.... He is in fact the latest of a long time of Chinese supermen²⁶

Along with the founders of the Han and Ming dynasties, Mao Tse-tung was one of only three peasants who rose to rule all of China in a single life time. His greatest achievements lay in the unification of China through the destruction of the Nationalist power, the creation of a unified People's Republic and leadership of the greatest social revolution in history. His theories have also influenced not only China but the non-industrialized Third World. In Nigeria, there are also leaders and heroes whose political convictions, ideologies and moral probity can inspire us to greatness as we grapple with developmental needs.

Mao Tse-Tung: His Other Side – Failures

Mao Tse-tung though innovative in his ideologies, met with some failures. He was criticized and his policies abandoned. In fact his death was seen as a welcome relief by many.

On the occasion of the 57th anniversary of the founding of the Chinese Communist party, in 1978, a speech made by Mao in 1962, was reprinted to show that he confessed to mistakes and ignorance of economic planning, industry and commerce:

In socialist construction we are still acting blindly to a very large degree.... I myself do not understand many problems in the work of economic construction... or much about industry and commerce. I understand something about agriculture but only relatively and in a limited way... when it comes to productive forces I know very little.²⁷

This speech is very revealing of his inadequacies and incompetence in driving home his programmes. Hsu says, "the underlying message could not have been clearer – Mao was not an omniscient deity, but a fallible human being."²⁸ And so if he is a human being then he must be fallible. Hsu also contended that Mao's mistakes were greater than people realized.²⁹

Mao, it has been said created a state that could not deal with modern challenges and his ideals and ideas were not intended to advance democratic freedom. His politics of command actually alienated society from the state rather than building a 'United Nation.'³⁰ A meaningful revolution ought to bring changes, freedom to the people; from all camps, (left, right) and making them see themselves as if coming from a concentration camp, reconciling our differences through our experiences.

Mao, from all these, it doesn't seem prepared himself sufficiently for the task ahead or perhaps, he did not consider the seriousness of the task before him. He is quoted to have said, "I am a person with many shortcomings... I have only begun recently to study economics, but... I study with determination, and will go on till I die... otherwise when the time comes for me to see Marx, I shall be in a fix, if he ask me question I can't answer, what shall I do (attributed to Mao Tse-tung, 159)³¹ Against this background Mao Tse-tung can be appreciated for his good will and honest effort to transform the socio-economic life of his people. Today, Mao is a great figure in Chinese history.

China After Mao's Death

A lot changed after Mao's death. China was greeted with fresh air that woke them up from their slumber, to the realization of the stark reality before them. Thus the imposing personality that Mao wielded, the superman figure that mystifies, suddenly evaporated. What followed was a period of de -*maofication* of Mao, his demigod status was questioned in public. An article in the historical journal remarked "that even the most far-sighted and resourceful of historical figures should not be considered as gods." He came to be seen as an ordinary human being with no extra-ordinary qualities. He was attacked in a number of ways some said he was a comrade, not a chairman, a mortal with earthly origin not a deity with heavenly origin. His statue and cult were destroyed, the Red Guard, a Symbol of Mao's cultural revolution was dissolved, his economic policies criticized as empty, and incompatible with historical situation in China. His cultural

revolution was seen as anti-cultural and he was held responsible for losses suffered in the agricultural, industrial, educational sectors etc. In education generations were left untrained, and scholars were denied years of teaching and research. It is as a result of all these shortcomings in his policies, that his death was seen as a welcome relief.

Chairman Mao was a great visionary leader who knew exactly the practical demands of good leadership and its impact on the people and on all aspects of developments. He was a courageous leader with a very high sense of determination and conviction. Only a leader of that calibre can dare the revolutionary and transformative initiatives that he brought to bear on his administrative strategies. He was a leader who was far ahead of his contemporaries. Through hindsight and foresight, he read the handwriting on the wall and interpreted the signs of the time in his appreciation of the “*sitzimLeben*” (the situation at hand). He saw that only a revolution and transformative programmes through good planning can salvage China from the shackles of poverty, the grip of economic backwardness and technological and industrial advancement. All his programmes were carefully thought out. What perhaps was lacking was the nitty-gritty of its implementation. It appears China was not ripe for the kind of revolution and transformation that Mao clearly conceived. Though his last days were turbulent and tragic for him and for China, he nevertheless remained a colossus, an Iroko, an elephant and a giant, in his dreams and visions. Though after his death, a lot was done to *de-mao* (demystify) his cult and to discredit his initiatives, it is to his credit that China is where and what it is today. Today, there is basically no aspect of life that China has no influence on. That was the far dream of Chairman Mao.

Implication For Nigeria

Leadership is basic and central to any meaningful development in any country. It serves as a guide or pointer in policy design and implementations. It appears Nigeria's

leadership lacks both the vision and the determination. There are clearly defined developmental initiatives capable of transforming the country. What perhaps may be lacking is that our leaders are not purposeful in their drives and search for values and in their determination and political will to pursue their ideals set out in their policy frame work. Self-interest and egocentrism seem to be the “political god” of our leaders as they see their position as their opportunities to enrich themselves and not the masses and the society. The Great Leap Forward was Mao’s thirty year plan for development. It was a movement geared towards self-reliance which drew inspiration from the voluntary spirit of the people who were motivated by a new moral discipline rather than money. This moral motivation is what is needed to move the Nigerian society forward. Mao Tse-Tung has offered us a clear vision of what leadership ought to be. In his Sino – socialism/communism, he outlined his policies and administrative plans. They laid emphasis on the masses as the principal driving force. For any government and for governance to be productive and efficient, it must be people based in what Mao called collective leadership and participatory governance.

Democracy should serve public interest and should all the time seek the people’s welfare. The politics of the new democracy will emerge with a new economy and a new culture. Democratic culture and institutions are indispensable for good governance. These are grossly lacking today in the polity. Democracy has not yet become a culture. It is still built on personalities and not on institutions. Personalities come and go but institutions remain when these are solidly built.

The thrust of the ‘cultural revolution’ was to teach the people that they had the right and that it was right to revolt, to criticize the government and to take part in the decision-making process. Mao made it clear in his intra party structure that the intellectuals had the role of making constructive criticisms of the party’s stewardship to create room for internal democracy. He emphasized it to the masses that true democratic powers belong

to the people and that without them the exercise of that power was impossible.

It is obvious from these considerations that Mao's democratic ideals and policies have strong influence in establishing democracy even in Nigeria today.

Furthermore, Chairman Mao in his Sino – Socialism/communism, has also left a lesson for Nigeria's leadership, that a time comes when our foreign policies must also look at the developmental aspect of the economy. Foreign policy is not all about, politics, power – influence, social reputation, 'big brother' where our resource are wasted in defense of other countries. During those trying moments, Mao, looked backward and inward and said that the development of China rested on the shoulders of the Chinese people. Though he drew inspiration from Marxian – Leninist socialism, he adopted it to the real situation in China. Nigeria can do the same. Socialism is foreign to us. We have always been, from antiquity a communal people. Privatization of core government facilities of public utility should be reviewed. Nigeria has all the prospects of becoming a rich and a great nation, if leadership and policies are well channeled.

Conclusion

For any meaning development to take place in any society, the leaders must have the political will that is backed up by a well ordered developmental plan. This developmental plan must align with the real needs of the society. In most African countries, these kinds of developmental plans are lacking. In places where there are, they are mostly too distract without bearing on the needs of the people. Developmental plans should not be stretched beyond measurable durations. This enables quick re-assessment and adjustments to be made. These plans should cut across the essentials areas required for development. Areas of comparative advantage are better in this consideration.

In the Nigerian society, these plans should be tailored along the lines of agricultural expansion and industrialisation. This agricultural expansion and industrialisation should factor in the

mechanisation and the building of small scale industries to utilise the abundant raw materials, to process them into semi-finished or even finished products.

In politics and governance, political will, selflessness are *sine qua non* on the part of the leaders. In doing this, the lessons from Mao Tse-Tung can chart the way forward.

End Notes

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