

The State, Class and the Challenges of National Development in Nigeria since 1914

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Abstract : Statecraft appears to be one of the greatest cultural achievements in the history of man's civilization. The state itself is often portrayed as the supreme community of the citizen's collective goodness and will. However, history experience reveals that the state has often been held in captivity permanently in the hand of the political class to almost a total exclusion of the labouring class of workers, artisans and peasants. Consequently, the hallmark of the Nigerian state and society in contemporary era is state of permanent crisis characterized by poverty, unemployment and profound insecurity. A lasting solution to this state of anomie is often touted in terms of ethnic, religious and regional integration which border on non-material perception of realities. A neglected aspect of the approach to the study of recurrent problems in contemporary is the materialist conception of realities through class perspectives of the society. The cutting edge of the approach is found in the attempt to reconcile the contradiction between the productive forces and the social relation of production. In other words, the contemporary state is skewed in favour of ownership of properties/commanding height of economy predominantly in the hands of the few monopoly companies to the total exclusion of majority of Nigerian population classified as peasant, workers and artisan. The lopsided situation creates economic and social disequilibria.

Keywords : national development, class, the state, Nigeria

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