

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST

A CRITICAL STUDY OF THE POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY OF

KWAME NKRUMAH

INUSAH AWUNI

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BY

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Thesis submitted to the Department of Classics and Philosophy of the Faculty of Arts, University of Cape Coast, in partial fulfilment of the requirements for award of Master of Philosophy Degree in Philosophy

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DECLARATION

Candidate's Declaration

I hereby declare that this thesis is the result of my own original research and that no part of it has been presented for another degree in this university or elsewhere.

Candidate's Signature:..... Date:.....

Name: Inusah Awuni

Supervisors' Declaration

We hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of the thesis were supervised in accordance with the guidelines on supervision of thesis laid down by the University of Cape Coast.

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Name: Dr. Adejare Oladosu

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ABSTRACT

Since Plato, political philosophy has been regarded as man's attempt to prescribe the ideal solution to the problems of governance, in order to bring the ideal state into being. In post-colonial Africa, several post-independence African leaders, prominent among them, Kwame Nkrumah, attempted theoretical constructions of this ideal state. Nkrumah particularly thought that the three factors that could bring about the ideal state in colonial Africa were: the realisation of political independence, the establishment of socialism and continental unification. In other words, Nkrumah's political philosophy is based on the conviction of the need for freedom and the unification of Africa and its islands. More importantly Nkrumah believed in the liberation of the African conscience, conditioned by the combined presence of the "triple heritage". Attractive as this political philosophy may appear to be, nevertheless, it is replete with some contradictions. The central objective of this study is to elucidate some of these problems. First, the simultaneous reliance on subversion and diplomacy for the realisation of African unity did much to extinguish that vision. Second, as a panacea to the alienated African psyche, Consciencism is nebulous; because it fails to reflect the African spiritual world view neither does it reflect Marxian materialism. Third, Nkrumah's idealisation of traditional African socialism was not borne out by the facts, since it fails to consider the individualistic elements inherent in that system. In the fields of religion, commerce and to some extent land management, the African in traditional Africa exhibited individualistic tendencies. In addition, Nkrumah's call for African unity distorts historical facts, as he argued as if pre-colonial Africa were united but disbanded with the advent of colonial rule. In fact, Africa as a geopolitical concept did not exist in pre-colonial times. What is now called Africa was an amalgamation of empires, kingdoms and states—centralised and non-centralised. We also aver that Nkrumah's resort to the one-party system was contrary to human soul, whose nature, since Plato, is to be free.

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DEDICATION

To Mrs. Irene Awuni and Professor Steven Owusu Ansah

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Background to the Study

Political philosophy as an integral part of philosophy is concerned with the quest for the truth about political matters. It is the philosophical investigation of political society as a demand of human nature. All the tools of philosophical investigation are employed to deal with the existing societal problems of political nature. Man, says Aristotle, “is a political animal.” As a social animal, man requires certain basic principles to help him organise and realise his aim in society. At one time or another, societies are confronted with specific social and political problems, and the views expressed by philosophers about these problems are relevant as theoretical guides to such societies in resolving those problems. The ultimate aim of political philosophy is to conceive a good society where people can live happily. Although political philosophy may reflect on the socio-political milieu of an era, society or group of societies, the ideas generated from such reflections may transcend a historical epoch or the peculiar circumstances of a society.

Miller defines political philosophy as a critical reflection on how best to arrange our collective life, our political institutions, social practices, economic system of production and our pattern of family life (Miller, 2003). Miller further

contends that political philosophers seek to establish basic principles, that will for example, justify a particular form of society, demonstrate that individuals have certain inalienable rights, or justify how a society's material needs should be distributed among its members (Miller, 2003). This calls for analysis and interpretation of certain ideas like freedom, justice, authority, and democracy and at the same time applying them in a critical way to the social and political institutions that exist (Miller, 2003). History reveals that some political philosophers have tried basically to justify the prevailing arrangements of their society while others like Plato and Ambrogio Lorenzetti of Fourteenth Century Italy have painted pictures of an ideal state that could be described as utopian.

Other authorities such as Stroll and Popkin (2000) have acknowledged the difficulty in formulating a precise definition of political philosophy, precisely because; it appears to have no special subject matter of its own. Nevertheless, they maintain that political philosophy's main tasks are, in part, to describe past and existing social organisations, in which respect, it encroaches on the domain of economics, political science, anthropology, biology and sociology. In part, it appears to evaluate the above mentioned disciplines, in which respect, it duplicates the findings of applied ethics (Stroll & Popkin, 2000).

Examining philosophical disciplines as arising in response to societal problems, Larmore (2012) sees political philosophy as a discipline which is concerned with the systematic reflection about the nature and purpose of human life. Larmore identifies two schools of thoughts that are parallel as far as the definition of political philosophy is concern. One school of thought considers

moral philosophy to constitute a more general discipline, dealing primarily with the good and the right in all their manifold aspects, and not only in the domain of politics. Hence, according to this school of thought, political philosophy appears to constitute an aspect of this bigger enterprise, “focusing on the class of moral principles that have to do, not with our special relationship to others, but with the shape our social life should have as a whole” (Larmore, 2012, p. 2). Thus, this school of thought considers justice, and ‘justice’ regarded as a moral ideal, conceived in abstraction from the exigencies of practice, as constituting its fundamental focus of theorising about political issues.

In contrast to the above school, another school of thought sees political philosophy as an independent discipline, “setting out not ... the truth of morality, but instead ... those basic features of the human condition that make up the realities of political life” (Larmore, 2012, p. 2). According to this school of thought, people disagree and their disagreements range from their material conditions to the issues of right and the good, so that the possibility of society or the state is largely dependent on the establishment of authoritative rules, binding on all and backed by threat or the coercive arm of the state. These principles, according to this school of thought, are the phenomena on which political philosophy should investigate to bring about the ideal state.

Yet, there are some other scholars such as Schramme (2008) who expresses profound skepticism about the viability of political philosophy as an independent discipline. He recounts Laslett (1956) announcement of the death of political philosophy on the assumption that the application of the methods and

conclusions of contemporary social and political situation appears to invalidate the normative theorising in political philosophy. Besides, logical positivism in the 1920s, according to Laslett, appears to have added a fierce assault on the already anxious nature of normative theorising prevalent in political philosophy because logical positivism deemed normative statements unverifiable and separated by an unbridgeable gap from descriptive discourse (Schramme, 2008). Thus, the only proper task of political philosophy according to logical positivism would be the clarification and logical analysis of words, terms and terminologies used in politics.

However, Berlin (1962), disagrees with the radical approach proposed by logical positivists regarding the focus of political philosophy. Berlin posits that the character of the problems that political philosophy tries to solve invites an approach that should neither reflect the empirical study of phenomena nor the linguistic analysis of words. Berlin maintains that a genuinely normative approach to political philosophising does not necessarily render the purpose of political philosophy pointless (Schramme, 2008). Berlin's position presupposes that, as human beings, we cannot successfully abandon normative issues on the grounds of logical positivism, because normative concerns are an element of the human condition (Schramme, 2008). We agree with Schramme (2008) that the very fact that normative issues fall outside the domain of disciplines which proceed by an acknowledged method is what exactly classifies them as philosophical issues. Indeed, if there were an agreed end on society or a consensus, it would not be difficult to agree on a method and political philosophy would then become

something like applied political science, and silence all debate about the tools of the discipline (Schramme, 2008). Schramme concludes that though normative thinkers and critics have a case in expressing their misgivings about empirical findings, nevertheless, their rejection of the reducibility of political philosophy to applied political science amounts to ‘throwing the baby with the bath water’ (Schramme, 2008)

Schramme is not alone in this kind of thinking. Berlin (1962), Miller (2008), and Siedentop (1983) all argue that philosophical accounts of political matters need to be in touch with empirical reality. It appears this is a more liberal position to take simply because we cannot reduce normative concerns to empirical ones. This seems so, because in the field of normative beliefs, what is more fundamental to ask is what people ought to think, not what they do in fact, already think. In political philosophy discourse therefore, what ought to be the ideal state as in Machiavelli’s *Prince* and in Plato’s *Republic* already presupposed ‘what was’ or ‘what is.’ And so what ‘ought to be’ cannot be determined without reference to ‘what is.’ Hence, Chen, Wang and Teng (2005) have made it clear that:

As a philosophical reflection of political natures and possible values, political philosophy focuses on possible values, ideal political modes and theories of political norms, directs its spearhead of criticism to human living plight resulting from the unitary expansion of empirical reason, and faces current issues of human existence directly, not being far away from

the actual life world as general philosophy was and not being short of the vision of value judgment as the philosophies in some fields were (p. 510).

The above quote appears to reveal the perplexity of empirical reason from a different angle other than politics. It clearly demonstrates the urgency of political science incorporating the findings of political philosophy in order to enrich its domain. Thus, Chen et al, implicitly buy into the complementary thesis, which maintains that political philosophy and political science are disciplines that should complement each other in as much as methodology is concern.

Again, two American scholars appeared to have taken the debate in political philosophy to a higher level. According to Cohen for example, “We do not learn what justice is fundamentally ... by focusing on what is permissible to coerce Justice transcends the facts of the world” (Cohen, 2009, p. 48). Cohen by this assertion is espousing the idea that the concept of justice as a sub-theme in political philosophy cannot be investigated only by empirical means. On the other hand, Williams, in contrast argues that “political philosophy is not just applied moral philosophy, which is what in our culture is taken to be Political philosophy must use distinctive...political concepts, such as power, and its normative relative legitimation” (Williams, 2005, p. 77).

The debate between Cohen and Williams regarding the focus of political philosophy seems to reinforce the idea that political philosophy should be seen either as a moral ideal to be ascertained independently of the issue of political legitimacy or as political ideal to be defined only in the light of the political life

(Larmore, 2012). In brief, it is more like a debate between moral philosophy and politics in a more general sense. What however appears to be more predominantly examined in the history of Western philosophy is the view that political life is the highest and most comprehensive form of human association since its principal aim is to promote the ultimate aim of all human endeavours, the human good or the good life.

Indeed, such is the position (the political life of the individual as being ultimate) we encounter in the opening pages of Aristotle's *Politics*. Aristotle maintains that no human being can live well by living alone because we do not have the self-sufficiency of the gods. Aristotle avers that only in society are we able to obtain and utilise the means indispensable to a flourishing existence, the material requirement needed to sustain our diverse functions, the education that steers us in the right direction, and the public space in which to reflect and debate about the best way of organising and pursuing this collective interest or the common good (Larmore, 2012). In Aristotle's opinion, the various spheres of social life, including the economy and the family, are not oriented toward the attainment of different aspects of the human good. That is, political life should not be seen as playing a particular role towards achieving a particular objective. Aristotle sees political life as being all encompassing. It encompasses all the others (*pasas periechousa tas allas*) as the most authoritative (*kuriotate*) king of association since its ultimate purpose is to ensure our lives collectively flourish (Larmore, 2012). We see that from Aristotelian point of view, the supremacy of political association has the advantage of establishing the rules of justice. Hence,

the moral question plays a secondary role in Aristotle's political philosophy. In other words, the attainment of the collective life is necessary in bringing about the moral issues of the state

Be that as it may, political philosophy has been practiced as long as human beings have regarded their collective arrangements not as immutable part of the natural order but as potentially open to change, and therefore as standing in need of philosophical justification (Miller, 2002). It is therefore, interesting to note, that the methods and approaches which are being utilised by political philosophers tend to reflect the general philosophical tendencies of their time. First, recurrent development in the fields of epistemology and ethics, for example, tend to alter the assumptions on which political philosophy do, and in fact, proceed. Second, the political philosopher's mission is largely determined to a very large extent by the prevalent social and political circumstances of the day (Miller, 1998, Omoregbe, 1999). For instance what ought to have been the relationship between the church and the state became the dominant theme in political philosophy in Medieval Europe. Moreover, in the early modern period the main argument was between defenders of absolutism and those who sought to justify a restricted, constitutional state. And in the nineteenth century, the social question, that is, the question of how an industrial society should organise its economy and its welfare system became a dominant debate in political philosophy (Miller, 1998).

In a more particularistic sense, one cannot make any sense of Plato's *Republic*, especially the rule of the philosopher king without reference to the strife

in the Greek city-states and to the Spartan mode of communism which convinced him to propose a political model similar to Spartan communism in ancient Greece. Similarly, one will fail to make any sense of Machiavelli's *Prince* without reference to the political turmoil and civil war that confronted Italy in fifteenth century Europe. Thus, in formulating a given political philosophy, the political philosopher is profoundly conscious of 'what is' to help him determine 'what ought to be'. It is precisely existing social and political milieu of his time which prods him to prescribe or propose 'what ought to be' (the ideal state). In light of this, we aver that political philosophy is not entirely abstract. It is meant to interrogate and reflect on existing reality with the purpose of realising the ideal state. Since problems in political philosophy are identified by critically reflecting and interrogating prevailing circumstances at a given period, what sort of questions are likely to be posed by political philosophers? Some of these perennial questions in political philosophy include the following:

What is the justification for the existence of government? What is, or ought to be, the relationship between the state and the citizen? How can one person ever justifiably claim the authority to govern another person? Should a state adopt a one-party state or a liberal democracy with free elections? Should the economy be centrally planned or based on free market economy? In a more general sense, how can the ideal state be organised? In trying to answer these questions, political philosophers draw inspiration from related disciplines such as ethics, epistemology and logic. One question that immediately arises from the propositions of political philosophy is whether the principles that political

philosophers propound are to be regarded as having universal validity, or whether they should be seen as expressing the assumptions and the values of a particular political community. Indeed, this interrogation is closely linked to a question about human nature from the point of view of moral philosophy (Miller, 2003).

In order to justify a set of collective arrangements, political philosophy must examine the nature of human beings, their material needs, whether they are selfish or altruistic among other considerations. The question is, can we discover common traits in human beings everywhere for all times, or are people's behaviour predominantly determined by the particular culture or environment they emanate? Thus, the indeterminate nature of human behaviour places a constraint on political philosophy as a theoretical and practical discipline. This partly explains why political philosophers, for the most part, though influential, hardly made direct impact on political events of their time.

For the purpose of illustration, Aristotle acted as tutor to Alexander the Great, Plato acted as a tutor to Dionysius, Machiavelli attempted to render political counsel to the Medicis in Florence, and Diderot was invited to Saint Petersburg by Catherine the Great to discuss the modernisation of Russia (Miller, 2003). All the above mentioned philosophers were unsuccessful in their bid to implement their political philosophies through the rulers they counselled. Perhaps, because they viewed politics from a philosophical lens, they were bound to conflate theory with practice, interrogating the conventional beliefs held by both the public and rulers alike (Miller, 2003). This apparent failure of most political philosophers to implement their political philosophies suggests that politics, to be

sure, the art of ruling, could be approached from a more empirical point of view. Hence, it will be illuminating to make a distinction between political science and political philosophy.

Distinction between Political Philosophy and Political Science

Mukherjee and Ramaswamy (2010) suggest that the distinction between political philosophy and political science arose as a result of the rise of modern science, which brought about a general shift in intellectual perceptions. Following this development, political science is seen as a discipline which attempts to provide plausible generalisations and laws about politics and political behaviour in an empirical manner. It does this by describing political institutions that provide basis for generalisation. Political philosophy on the other hand reflects upon political phenomena and political behaviour by subjecting them to philosophical or moral interrogation (Mukherjee & Ramaswamy, 2010). It achieves this aim by reflecting on existing political phenomena and prescribes what ought to be. In other words, political philosophy provides general answers to general questions, to concepts and theories such as 'justice', 'right', the distinction between 'is' and 'ought' and 'politics' in general. This, political philosophy should be seen as part of "normative political theory, for it attempts to establish the interrelationship between concepts" (Mukherjee & Ramaswamy, 2010, p. 3).

In a more particularistic point of view, political philosophy is concerned with the idea of analysing theoretical foundations and fundamental issues which constitute a striking contrast to the increasing descriptive and experiential nature

of politics (Collie, 1988). On the other hand, political science aims at describing and explaining the empirical world of politics. Thus, politics as a science focuses on the political matters as empirical facts and on the specific manifestation of political matters and distinctive process of political activities (Chen, et al, 2006). Political science achieves this aim by revealing the process of political activities, existing structures of political power and the laws of its operation through empirical investigation into political matters. These descriptions of the empirical world are engendered by propositions such as ‘empirical statements’, which are concerned with state of affairs without being involved with value judgments. In brief, empirical statements as they pertain to political science are concerned with ‘what is’ rather than ‘what should be’. Hence, epistemological concerns in political science can be ascertained, as long as these empirical propositions are consistent with people’s observation of the empirical world of politics.

Moreover, political philosophy places emphasis on the inherent features of political matters and on the value orientation and possible norms of political activities. It does this by revealing the fundamental norms of political evaluation through the study of basic social values or concepts as fairness, equality, justice and freedom (Chen, et al, 2006). It is thus worthy to note that the basic assumptions in political philosophy originate from some normative propositions, ethical statements and metaphysical reflection of political matters that cannot be ascertained by empirical evidence (Chen et al, 2006). This does not in any way presuppose that political philosophy does not provide useful knowledge. Its usefulness lies in the fact that it provides us a blue print of the ideal state. In

contrast, political science in its strictest form, attempts to emulate the natural science, and to be as exact and as universal, objective and nameless as the natural science. In order to be as universal as the natural science, political science attempts to ignore value judgments in particular and moral questions in general.

In spite of the distinction between political philosophy and political science, Isaac (1988) gives us an insight into the converging aim of the two disciplines. He maintains that although political philosophy places much emphasis on prescription and political science on experience, both disciplines tend to converge at a point where they play the role of analysis (Isaac, 1988). It therefore appears that political philosophy and political science attempt to subject the main themes in their respective disciplines to rigour and criticality. Political philosophy analyses in detail, the proposed ideal state, while political science analyses existing political structures of the state.

Be that as it may, political philosophy does not consist in the generalisation and summarisation of political knowledge, but it is a discipline dealing with human existence and the nature of the world through a conscious reflection of political matters in a general manner. In other words, it provides the most valuable reflective path to comprehending the essence of the world and human life. In this vein, the “real world is not an abstract integral world, but a multileveled and multidimensional world, which accordingly leads to the result that there are various angles of view ...” (Chen et al, 2006).

Though both political philosophy and political science at times overlap regarding their aims and methods, political science is not as embracing as political

philosophy on matters of human social existence (Okoro, 2004). As an all-embracing field, political philosophy concerns itself with the formation of ideological and ethical norms and standards, theories of the state—its function covers the material, physical and moral exertions to bring about the derived goals that a sociological setup demands (Okoro, 2004). The all embracing role of political philosophy was recognised in the history of ancient Greek philosophy by Plato when he advocated for a philosopher to be the king in his great work, the *Republic*. In this book Plato contends that

Until philosophers rule as Kings or those who are now called Kings and leading men genuinely and adequately philosophise, that is, until political power and philosophy entirely coincide, while the many natures who at present pursue either one exclusively are forcibly prevented from doing so, cities will have no rest from evils... nor, I think, will the human race (*Republic*, 473c-d).

The role of political philosophy in nation building or reconstruction cannot be overemphasised. For instance, Machiavelli believes that everyone deserves a strong and effective government. Thomas Hobbes believes that everyone deserves peace and security. Jeremy Bentham thinks that everyone deserves happiness, while Karl Marx believes in the economic equality of mankind and thus urges, in the interim, the dictatorship of the proletariat. In Africa on the other hand, Kwame Nkrumah and Frantz Fanon believe in the survival and dignity of the African personality among others.

Some scholars are of the view that the role of the political philosopher is purely theoretical. They are unaware of the aspect of philosophy which deals with

‘what is’ or ‘what there is.’ Contrary to this view, the role of the political philosopher, like that of political philosophy and philosophy itself, is all embracing. It consists of theory and practice, action and reflection. This is so because as Nkrumah famously observed, “practice without thought is blind, thought without action is empty” (Nkrumah, 1964, p. 56). Once again, Plato realised the role of the political philosopher as a theoretician and a politician and thus advocated that a philosopher should always oversee the affairs of the state. In the same spirit, after he jointly published the *Communist Manifesto* with Engels, Karl Marx participated in the revolt aimed at overthrowing the ‘Kaiser’s regime’ in Germany. Nkrumah went beyond theory to establish an ideological institute at Winneba, a coastal town in Ghana, the purpose of which was to train politicians in the art of good governance and at the same time liberate the African Personality from mental slavery, in order to enable the African recover his lost dignity and identity.

One of the most essential functions of political philosophy is that it helps us to establish an ideological direction and orientation. Those who are aware of this fundamental role of political philosophy readily comprehend and analyse world socio-political and economic issues—be they international, regional or domestic. In doing this, such political philosophers follow their ideological preferences or direction which mainly consist of ideals, theories, norms and programmes of action.

Fundamentally, political philosophy could be said to have four main features:

- (i) It is itself a social reality. It is a kind of reality in terms of which certain institutions and practices are justified and others rejected.
- (ii) It is applied ethics. An articulation of ideals which on various levels of generality and articulation is used in judging man's events, actions and decisions and as goals, guidelines and policies.
- (iii) It theorises about man's society and history, the reason and the need of society and why events and facts are intertwined yet distinguishable.
- (iv) It designates agencies of action, of the means of reform, revolution and conservation. It contains strategies and programmes that embody both ends and means, and designates the historical levers by which ideals are to be won and maintained after they have been won (Okoro, 2004).

Thus, the basic function of political philosophy is that it tells us how to find out where we stand and where we may be going. It gives us some answers to these questions and prepares us for the unknown future. To examine any political philosophy therefore, one must examine it as a social reality, a statement of ideals, designation of agency or agencies and as a set of social theories (Okoro, 2004).

It must however be observed that a given political philosophy is largely determined by the prevalent circumstances of a given historical epoch. It is problems of a given period that compel political philosophers to react and then make efforts to address such problems of their time. Thus, political philosophy does two things. Firstly, it reacts to existing problems such as anarchy, corruption and oppression among others. Secondly, it attempts to provide a theoretical or philosophical blue print to address such existing problems of a given period. For

instance, writing at a time of political chaos and moral confusion, Italian unification constituted the fundamental objective of Machiavelli. Macchiavelli perhaps hoped to redeem Italy from poverty and servitude. Hence he dreamt of a united, rejuvenated and glorious Italy. In order to achieve this objective, Macchiavelli thought that the end justified the means. He reasoned that the defence and preservation of the state should be the main preoccupation of the “Prince”. Considerations of justice or injustice, humanity or cruelty, as well as glory or shame were immaterial in light of protecting the individual’s life and liberty (Sabine, 1973).

Philosophers, before, during and after the era of Plato have been preoccupied with the idea of attaining a strife-free ideal state. Similarly, African independence leaders were preoccupied with the idea of formulating their political philosophies with the aim of realising the ideal state. This had become necessary because of European conquests and colonisation of the African continent which left no distinctive political philosophy they could rely on. Kwame Nkrumah was one African leader who was preoccupied with a political philosophy not only for his country but a political philosophy for the African continent as a whole. The political philosophy of Kwame Nkrumah has been enunciated and restated in his major works and pamphlets. Fragments of Nkrumah's political philosophy can be gleaned from his more abstract philosophical works. This is so because since time and circumstance play an influential role on the philosophy of a philosopher, one could suggest that Nkrumah’s busy reaction to the colonial system did not give him much time to systematise his political philosophy in a single coherent piece.

The objective of this work is to extract many of the themes of Nkrumah's political philosophy from his numerous works and speeches, in order to construct a comprehensive and coherent political philosophy.

Statement of the Problem

Numerous academic treatises, conference papers, academic presentations as well as books have already been written about Kwame Nkrumah. Exposition of Nkrumah's legacies—be they positive or negative—have been embarked upon by such notable scholars like Mazrui (1966, 1965) and Rooney (1988). Such examinations come in a form of books, articles and inaugural lectures. However, academic works undertaking the critical examination of the political philosophy of Kwame Nkrumah have not been accorded the desired degree of scholarly attention with regard to comprehensively critiquing his political philosophy. This study seeks to fill that gap.

Methodology

The study is largely library based. Primary and secondary scholarly works by Nkrumah were collected. The data were analysed using the analytical method, in order to tease out the political philosophy of Kwame Nkrumah. The analytical method is chosen because it allows one to break certain complex terms and terminologies into simpler units for ease of understanding. This study involves textual analysis of the major works of Nkrumah. Authoritative scholarly works done on Nkrumah's writings will be examined. The primary sources involve original works written by Nkrumah. The secondary sources include available authoritative commentaries by other scholars on the works of Nkrumah.

The framework of this research is basically analytical. Under the influence of twentieth century analytic philosophy, political philosophy still has as one of its fundamental tasks, conceptual analysis and the clarification of basic political concepts. The analytical method is traceable to the German philosopher Gottlob Frege of the Nineteenth Century (Geach & Black, 1960). Frege was perhaps the first philosopher to apply logic and mathematics to the analysis of propositions. In his work “Concept-Script,” a study devoted to the analysis of language, Frege offers the philosopher a useful tool to help him or her lay bare the misconceptions that through the use of language almost unavoidably arise concerning the relation between concepts. Since Frege, the concern of the analytical method is the application of logic and mathematics to the analysis of language (Geach & Black, 1960). And this is done by breaking down words, propositions and concepts into smaller units for the purpose of clarity. The method of analytic philosophy in modern times is a generalised approach to philosophy. Though originally associated with the very limited projects of logical analysis, it nowadays focuses on a clear, precise approach with particular emphasis being placed upon argumentation and evidence, avoidance of ambiguity and attention to detail.

I shall use this method to appraise, by interpretation and elucidation, the political philosophy of Nkrumah. By using this framework, we embark on the analysis of the concepts propounded by Nkrumah in order to coherently and comprehensively elucidate his political philosophy. Hence the qualitative method is what has been used in this research.

Objective of the Study

At the end of the study, the researcher hopes to achieve the following objectives:

- i. To comprehend and articulate the political philosophy of Kwame Nkrumah.
- ii. To grasp the phases characteristic of Nkrumah's socialism, a framework which he proposed as a guide to the "All-African Union Government..."
- iii. To demonstrate through critical evaluation, the strengths and weaknesses of Nkrumah's political philosophy

Organisation

The work is organised into four chapters. Chapter one comprises the background to the study, statement of the problem, methodology and objectives of the study. Chapter two is comprised of literature review. This chapter reviews relevant literature such as articles, books and other primary and secondary data relating to the political philosophy of Nkrumah. Chapter three attempts a comprehensive and coherent presentation of the political philosophy of Nkrumah. Chapter four, the final chapter of the work, carries out a critique of the political philosophy of Kwame Nkrumah.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

This chapter sets out to examine the literature related to the topic under consideration, namely, a critical study of the political philosophy of Kwame Nkrumah. It examines both primary and secondary sources relating to the political philosophy of Kwame Nkrumah. It is the researcher's firm conviction that copious research ranging from the biography of Kwame Nkrumah to his legacies has already been undertaken. Scholars have examined Nkrumah's form of Pan Africanism. They have equally examined his socialism as well as Ghana's domestic and international policies under Nkrumah's regime. However, the lacuna prevalent in most scholarly works on Nkrumah is a critical look at his political philosophy. Some have argued that Nkrumah has no political philosophy of his own. Nonetheless, many of these scholarly works on Nkrumah afford us the opportunity to tease out the political philosophy of Nkrumah and to subject his views to a critical examination. To this, we now turn.

In *The African Reader: Independent Africa*, Cartey and Kilson (1970) provide comprehensive biographical information of the major works on almost all African nationalist leaders. Works by African independence leaders like Kwame Nkrumah, Tom Mboya, Oginga Odinga, Julius Nyerere and Leopold Senghor are comprehensively catalogued in this book. The works of these nationalists are

merely sketched or reproduced without any analysis of their political philosophies. Carthey and Kilson, however, recognise, in chapter five of their book, that there was an urgent need for African independence leaders to carefully examine the ideologies they intended to adopt or craft when it became evident that political independence was inevitable (Carthey & Kilson, 1970). They further observe that almost all African independence leaders espoused African socialism as a framework for development. That the motivation behind the adoption of African socialism was to synthesize African traditions with modern technological methods in order to foster economic, political and social development (Carthey & Kilson, 1970). Besides, they point out the differences that exist amongst African independence leaders regarding African socialism in a general manner. Thus, their work is a chronicle of the works of African independence leaders. As a biographical sketch, it helps us with comprehensive information required for this study. But it falls short of a critical examination of Nkrumah's political philosophy that we set out to achieve.

Mazrui, a renowned Kenyan scholar, argues in his book, *Towards a Pax Africana*, that it was not the duty of the departing metropolises (Britain, France or Portugal) to impose any ideology on the colonies that were emerging from colonial rule (Mazrui, 1967). Mazrui contends that "No ideology commands respect so widely in Africa as the ideology of 'socialism'...." (Mazrui, 1967, p. 97). Mazrui recognises that in Guinea and Mali, a Marxist framework of reasoning prevailed whilst in Ghana, Leninism was welded to notions of traditional collectivism. In the same vein, Tanzania under Nyerere, in Mazrui's

view, devised *Ujamaa* (derived from a sense of tribal community life) that constitutes Tanzania's form of socialism (Mazrui, 1967). With regard to East Africa, Mazrui observes that a sort of dilemma between establishing socialism and Africanising existing capitalism was the major ideological issue that confronted Kenya at independence. Mazrui paid a great deal of attention to the ideal of social justice in countries like Nigeria, Senegal and Uganda. He contrasts the above countries to Ivory Coast, a country which completely rejected the idea of socialism and instead, resorted to the capitalist system as its development framework (Mazrui, 1967).

Mazrui further distinguishes between the two senses in which socialism can be used, namely, socialism as an ethic of distribution and as an ideology of development. Mazrui believes that the birth of socialism in European historical development was motivated by the quest for distributive justice as a result of existing inequalities in feudal Europe. That is, in the wake of the *laissez-faire* Industrial Revolution in England, socialism was not linked with development. That development was not the ideal of socialism; rather 'social justice' was its ideal, so that social justice was conceived in terms of greater equity in the distribution of goods and services (Mazrui, 1967). On the view of socialism as a framework for development, Mazrui opines that the adoption of socialism by most African leaders in the independence era was largely measured against the fact that socialism was seen as an ideology noted for its efficiency in development. Mazrui further reveals that three factors appealed more to African independence leaders in the adoption of socialism. These are opposition to exploitation of one race by

another, egalitarianism (equitable distribution of goods and services) and a general sense of social fellowship (Mazrui, 1967).

In a nutshell, Mazrui tries to demonstrate that far from being a positive contribution to the realisation of pan-Africanism, socialism militated against the realisation of Pan-Africanism. He uses Tanzania as an example of a country in East Africa that developed along the socialist lines which led to the disintegration of the East African Community, comprising Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania (Mazrui, 1967). Mazrui's analysis is basically narrowed down to the Pan-African implication of socialism and the moral justification of the one-party scenario in post-independent Africa. We think that Mazrui's penetrative analysis of the ideologies adopted by independence African leaders helps us narrow down our discussion of the political philosophy of Kwame Nkrumah, especially tenets of Kwame Nkrumah's socialism and Pan-Africanism. Since Mazrui's work incorporated the political thoughts of many African independence leaders, including Kwame Nkrumah, it appears that little space and attention is devoted specifically to the examination of Nkrumah's socialism and Pan-Africanism, the central objective of our study.

Davidson contends that African leaders who adopted one-party system at independence did that because they looked to it as the appropriate model for creating a new form of egalitarian society and to restore the unity and order which lost their relevance as a result of the colonial experience (Davidson, 1964). That, having successfully convinced a cross section of the masses that one-party state was the panacea for bringing unity and order to the people, the question of

“model” or ideology became the next task confronting African leaders. Davidson observes further that immediately after independence had been attained, African leaders became, as he puts it, “all socialist now” (Davidson, 1964, p.110). Two factors conditioned the thoughts of those leaders who had gone socialist. The first factor which was responsible for this ideological shift towards the left was the real colonial crisis “which had capitalism” as its framework. The second factor concerned the kind of reconstruction that should be attempted when African independence became inevitable. Davidson further recognises that at the practical level, African leaders pointed to the example of Latin America. Though Latin America had been politically emancipated, and thus remained in the private enterprise system, almost all the states in Latin America remained pauperised and chaotic in social structure, bedevilled by oligarchic corruption and by dictatorship. The experiment of Latin America convinced African leaders that capitalism was indeed bedevilled by certain inherent problems that did not make for social and political progress of their newly freed nations.

On the factors that led to the different brands of socialism put forward by African leaders, Davidson points out that their exposure to Marxist ideas in Europe during their formative educational years was chiefly responsible for this state of affairs. Davidson’s study is illuminating, it helps us to gather bits of information that we need to critically examine the political philosophy of Kwame Nkrumah. Just like Mazrui, Davidson’s study appears too general, because it attempts to theorise and draw conclusions on aspects of the political discourse of African leaders in the post-colonial epoch. But this generalisation could not have

comprehensively addressed the political philosophies of all independence African leaders that came under Davidson's scrutiny.

Bell (1986) observes that at independence, many African leaders shared a rhetorical commitment to a peculiar African ideology which was aimed at cutting across the 'capitalist-socialist divide'. This ideology was called African socialism. Bell contends that the legacy of colonialism which was based on Western capitalism convinced most African leaders that a form of socialism would be the most appropriate strategy by which national cohesion and renaissance could be achieved. Bell, however, expresses skepticism that since the colonial experience had left some capitalist imprint on the minds of Africans especially the masses, their receptiveness of a new ideology such as socialism was in doubt. To be sure, Bell thinks that African socialism was seen as an ideology of development arising from the unique circumstances of exploitative and oppressive colonial rule and integrating within it the essential elements of traditional African society. However, Bell indicates that it lacked univocal definition and coherency and thus "it is at this point that we see important contrasts emerging between the African leaders in their interpretation of the same ideals and beliefs..." (Bell, 1986, p. 15).

Bell concludes that despite the diversity in the interpretation of socialism, "there has been shared in common a political commitment to state involvement in social and economic development through the planning mechanism" (Bell, 1986, p. 136). It is our view that Bell's work is basically a glimpse of the nuances of socialism espoused by African independence leaders. Particularly, Bell pays keen attention to how this socialist framework affected the economies of those who

adopted it. Though Bell recognises and acknowledges that differences in the conception of socialism can be gleaned from the political philosophies of African independence leaders, he does not point out these differences. Besides, his study of the desire of African leaders to integrate traditional values into scientific socialism in order to address African realities seems to ignore Nkrumah's *Consciencism*, a work that attempts this exercise. Thus, Nkrumah's socialism and Pan-Africanism, which ultimately constitute the political philosophy of Nkrumah, seem to constitute the missing link in the above author's study.

In "Philosophy and Human Affairs", Gyekye (2004) examines the African situation in post-colonial times. Gyekye observes generally that post-colonial Africa was bedevilled by authoritarian governance which produced remarkable political corruption and instability. He contends that the economy of most African states did not fare too well at the time they regained their political independence from their erstwhile colonial powers. His reason is that because of the linkage between politics and economics, bad political leadership affects the economy in the long run (Gyekye, 2004). Gyekye indicates that the choice of an appropriate ideology in post-colonial times was an equally daunting task that confronted African independence leaders.

The ideology pursued by a very large majority of the African political leaders on attainment of political independence was socialism, but they preferred to refer to it as 'African Socialism' because they regarded it as having African ancestry. The pursuit of socialism by African political leaders was aggressive and

unrelenting, but with disastrous consequences that, in the course of time, led or rather forced—some of them to change...direction (p. 22).

Though Gyekye's observation helps to throw more light on our study and helps us to enrich the topic through his keen observation of the failure of socialism in Africa, Gyekye's examination of his theme appears to be a generalisation of the programmes of African political leadership in the post-colonial times. His study will aid us in our critical examination of the political philosophy of Nkrumah, in chapter four.

Though the *Wretched of the Earth* is devoted to addressing the colonial questions and its psychological effects on the colonised, the Martinique–Algerian born revolutionary writer, Fanon, minces no words about the ideal system (ideology) which should have been adopted when independence came to Africa. Fanon observes that the rudimentary conflict which seems to exist between colonialism and anti-colonialism is the same relationship that exists between capitalism and socialism in the post-independence era in Africa. In this light, Fanon points out that independence can only be meaningful with redistribution of wealth, which was unevenly distributed during the colonial epoch. Fanon advises that the underdeveloped countries in Africa which exploited the fierce competition between capitalism and socialism for the purpose of national liberation should not become a factor in that competition. In other words, Fanon thinks that “the under-developed countries ought to do their utmost to find their own particular values and methods and a style which shall be peculiar to them”

(Fanon, 1963, p. 151). Fanon identifies the enemy of the underdeveloped countries in Africa as capitalist exploitation together with its monopolies and cartels. Against the exploitative tendencies of capitalism therefore, Fanon expresses his preference for socialism, arguing that:

...a socialist regime is completely oriented towards the people as a whole and based on the principle that man is the most precious of all possessions will allow us to go forward more quickly and more harmoniously, and thus make impossible that caricature of society where all economic and political power is held in the hands of few who regard the nation as a whole with scorn and contempt (Fanon, 1963, p. 78).

Thus, we can safely say that Fanon belongs to the school of thought that regards the socialist ideology as the panacea for Africa's socio-economic progress and liberation. Fanon, however, fails to painstakingly demonstrate in detail how the socialist programme could be applied to these territories that were emerging from colonial rule. Besides, Fanon fails to illustrate how socialism could serve as a developmental framework for the Pan-African state which was being canvassed by Nkrumah.

In "Nkrumah: The Leninist Czar", Mazrui (1966) compares and contrasts the different dimensions in which the political organisation of the masses was carried out by Lenin in Russia and by Nkrumah in the Gold Coast. Mazrui stresses that most of Nkrumah's doctrines and treatises as well as his anti-imperialistic posture were influenced by Lenin's work, and as such Nkrumah tries

to fashion his political philosophy along Leninism. Mazrui contends that Nkrumah's seminal book, written in 1945, title *Towards Colonial Freedom*, was inspired by Lenin's theory of imperialism. Besides Nkrumah's last book while in power, *Neo-colonialism: Last Stage of Imperialism*, in the words of Mazrui, was equally inspired by Lenin's theory of imperialism. Also the emergence of Nkrumah's Marxist newspaper, *The Spark* was covertly motivated by *Iskra*, a Marxist newspaper founded in 1901, which initiative is traceable to Lenin. According to Mazrui the similarity between Nkrumah and Lenin arises out of similarity of political functions and partly out of conscious ideological emulation. Mazrui (1966) contends that like Lenin, Nkrumah had a strong conviction in organisation-a political spirit which helped to ignite West Africa's nationalism in the immediate aftermath of the Second World War. Similarly, World War I and its effect on the Czarist regime in Russia was an important contributory factor towards the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917.

Mazrui seems to intimate that the two revolutions of different kinds, namely, the Russian Revolution and World War II, which shaped the political consciousness of Lenin and Nkrumah merit some kind of comparison. Mazrui argues that "it was not merely Nkrumah's interpretation of economic imperialism which was Leninist" it was also Nkrumah's strong conviction in the organisation of the colonial masses for the purpose of independence. Hence, World War II and its effect contributed towards shaping Nkrumah's appreciation of the need for organisation. It is precisely this belief in organisation that links Nkrumah's political activism with that of Lenin. For Lenin, in Mazrui's view, it was not the

organisation of masses which was vital for effective action—it was the organisation of some elite. Lenin thought of the masses as dangerously gullible; and that itself was one reason why the revolutionary elite should be sufficiently organised to avert the danger of a misguided populace. As Lenin himself puts it, as quoted by Mazrui, “I assert that it is far more difficult to unearth a dozen wise men than a hundred fools. This position I will defend no matter how you instigate the masses against me for my anti-democratic views” (Mazrui, 1966, p. 10).

Perhaps Lenin's remarks were to reinforce his distrust of the masses for effective political organisation. But for Nkrumah, according to Mazrui, organisation was, from the onset, basically mass-based. In January 1945, Nkrumah's newspaper put it this way: “No section of the people of this country should be left unorganised..... The strength of the organised masses is invincible... We must organise as never before, for organisation decides everything” (Mazrui, 1966, p.10). Be that as it may, Mazrui keenly observes that in so far as the target in the Gold Coast was the overthrow of the British Colonial regime, Nkrumah's emphasis on mass organisation made sense. Conditions in Lenin's Czarist Russia did not permit mass organisation. It is a truism that domestic tyranny can best be overthrown by comprehensively organised revolutionary elite, while colonial rule can best be toppled by well organised popular demonstration or boycott. We infer from Mazrui's analysis that the difference between Nkrumah's and Lenin's tactics of political organisation could be both explained and justified by the difference in the kind of enemy they sought to battle and overcome.

Mazrui shifted his attention to Nkrumah's and Lenin's interpretation of the term imperialism, under a sub-title 'the Economics of Rule Britannia'. Here Mazrui quotes copiously from Nkrumah's *Towards colonial Freedom* in order to demonstrate Lenin's influence on Nkrumah. Mazrui makes it clear that whereas Lenin's interpretation of imperialism hinges so much on the conditions in the imperial countries themselves, Nkrumah's interpretation of imperialism was based on the conditions in the former colonies. That in his furtherance of Lenin's theory of imperialism Nkrumah demonstrates that the new phenomenon of exploiting other peoples abroad (supposedly inferior) without actually ruling them is to a certain extent, serving the same purpose as the old imperialism of Cecil Rhodes. It is ultimately delaying class consciousness and confrontation within the metropolises. Mazrui opines that the final solution to this exploitation of other people, especially Africans, lies in a politically united Africa. And so, Nkrumah's political kingdom summed up in Nkrumah's immortalised expression—'seek ye first the political kingdom' was inconsistent with the economic determinant theory of imperialism he inherited from Lenin and expounded in *Towards Colonial Freedom* and *Neo-colonialism: Last Stage of Imperialism*.

Mazrui recognises that when he (Nkrumah) said "seek ye first the political kingdom", he does not seem to have meant the Ghanaian kingdom on its own. In the context of his political philosophy as a whole, the real political kingdom for Africa was the kingdom of Africa itself (Mazrui, 1966). By this quotation, we think that Nkrumah was trying to reinforce the primacy of political organisation, even if such reinforcement is inconsistent with the Marxist and Leninist economic

thesis he inherited from them. Indeed, Mazrui presents us with a critical and fascinating analysis of the similarities and differences between Lenin's and Nkrumah's sense of political organisation in different historical epochs under similar or different circumstances.

The socialist framework which Nkrumah intended to serve as a framework for African continental unity does not feature in Mazrui's article. Likewise Nkrumah's vision of continental union Government of Africa does not appear in Mazrui's analysis. Nevertheless, Mazrui's penetrating analyses put us in a position to approach our study of Nkrumah's political philosophy in a critical manner.

In "The Development of Kwame Nkrumah's Thought in Exile:1966-1972," Biney (2009) comprehensively examines the evolution of Kwame Nkrumah's political thought during Nkrumah's last years in power to the Conakry exile years. Drawing ample evidence from Nkrumah's post-power publications as well as Nkrumah's political life experiences in exile, Biney points out the apparent radicalisation of Nkrumah's intellectual thought which developed between 1966, when he was overthrown, to 1972, when he passed away. According to Biney, Kwame Nkrumah had, by these years, developed an intellectually radical outlook as he abandoned constitutional path to independence and in its place embraced a revolutionary armed struggle as the ultimate solution to Africa's innumerable problems of vulgar capitalism, imperialism and neo-colonialism. Biney goes on to cite several factors as constituting the source of the radicalisation of Kwame Nkrumah's intellectual outlook especially, his political

thought. For instance, Biney thinks that developments such as the unfolding socio-political struggles in Vietnam and Latin America as well as the racial question in some African-American cities in the United States, such as Harlem and Washington, exercised a profound impact on Kwame Nkrumah's thought (Biney, 2009). Thus the February 1966 coup which ousted Nkrumah and subsequently forced him into exile in Conakry, Guinea, should be seen as the foundation which provided the political platform against which Kwame Nkrumah's radical political thought and radical intellectual thinking unfolded.

We consider Biney's incisive examination of the shifting intellectual and political thought of Kwame Nkrumah as refreshing. Her analysis enriches our understanding of Kwame Nkrumah's political philosophy, especially when her analysis is examined against the destructive effects of neo-colonialism and imperialism foisted on Africa insidiously. It must however be pointed out that Nkrumah's radical intellectual stance after his overthrow was not necessarily a unique phenomenon. Clearly, political leaders before and after Nkrumah, have demonstrated this radical tendency. We argue that any other political leader with a grand vision of a continental unity such as Africa and a hope for a dignified lifestyle for his suffering people would have reacted the way Nkrumah did. Be that as it may, Biney appears to have overlooked the idea that if Kwame Nkrumah later abandoned constitutional approach to political independence and Africa's continental unity, it was precisely so because he saw the revolutionary approach as the last option when all other means failed—a position he never departed from, since the 5th Pan-African Congress in 1945 at Manchester. We are therefore at a

loss as to how constitutional means could successfully constitute a rational means of negotiation with colonialism and imperialism that had become hostile and militant in Africa and elsewhere.

Poe (2001) adopts an Afrocentric method to evaluate the works of Nkrumah. He pays attention particularly to two key terms in Nkrumah's political discourse, namely, Nkrumaism and Pan-Africanism. By Afrocentric method, Poe sees it as "an African centred perspective, and as such, its ultimate challenge is how to bring about social justice or *Maā*" (Poe, 2001, p.730). Poe advises that the works of Africa's political independence leaders should be studied as subjects of historical experience- not objects to be studied from a distance with Eurocentric lenses. Poe further advises that for a better understanding of Kwame Nkrumah and his overall objective, especially his ideology, one needs to consider the social forces and agents with which Nkrumah had to interact. In keeping with the above, Poe observes that scholars of political discourse in Africa will have to define a workable relation with African tradition in order to secure an African present and future. Poe further observes that the question of what was to be retained and what was to be discarded as independence dawned in Africa, were well addressed by Kwame Nkrumah in his *Consciencism: philosophy and ideology for Decolonization*. According to Poe, Kwame Nkrumah places man at the centre of affairs in the above work in his (Nkrumah's) Pan-African agenda. As Poe puts it, "Nkrumahism speaks to the primacy of an African identity over local variants as a necessary condition of well-being. Nkrumahism, as an ideology, eventually

forbade a local identity to be granted more weight than the Pan-African identity” (Poe, 2001, p.740).

On the whole, Poe’s article adds to our understanding of the topic under consideration. However, Poe’s article leaves room for further questions. For instance, if Kwame Nkrumah places man at the centre of affairs in his *Consciencism*, was he not trying to become too much of a humanist? Might not a utilitarian object to this? All the same a utilitarian might still object if Nkrumah had jealously maintained Ghana’s independence because, considered as a country, Ghana’s population would be in the minority as compared to the rest of the Africa Nkrumah was trying to emancipate through his continental union vision. Besides, Poe does not show that *Consciencism* did not satisfactorily address what Nkrumah thought should be retained or abolished as a result of the triple heritage problem, namely, the combined and uneasy intercourse of Euro-Christian culture, the Islamic tradition and traditional African culture. Indeed, Poe simply states that denunciation of postures and interpretations that extend hegemony over Africans are found in Nkrumah’s selected works without explicating them and showing how they connect with the African experience and how they help develop Nkrumah’s ideology. On the whole, the title of this article, “The Construction of Africological Method to Examine Nkrumah’s Contribution to Pan-African Agency”, seems to purport one thing, but in fact carries out a different objective. It defends an African-centred approach to scholarship concerning things Africa.

Williams (1984) observes that one deficiency facing Africa is its lack of ideological clarity and unity. And that the effect of this ideological deficiency is that it leaves the African masses with no alternative means to harness their energies for collective action and the pursuit of a common objective or goal. He laments that Africans are not tied together by a common ideological system in spite of the homogeneity of their problems, namely, neo-colonialism and capitalist-free-market exploitation. Williams avers that the absence of ideological unity within the African world should not be taken to mean that there is no ideological system in Africa that is capable of “galvanizing”, “harnessing” and “amalgamating” the energies of the Africans in their struggle for emancipation. Williams identifies Nkrumaism as one such ideology which he regards as “the consistent and coherent body of ideas, policies and principles espoused and practiced by Osagyefo Dr. Kwame Nkrumah” (Williams, 1984, p. 118). Williams thinks that African identity or African Personality as well as African unity constitute Nkrumah’s ideology, and as such the liberation of Africa was seen by Nkrumah as a pre-requisite for the liberation of Africans elsewhere. This therefore informed Nkrumah’s rejection of regionalist unity in favour of continental unity, because regional unity was seen as a dangerous development, since it could breed regional loyalties vulnerable to foreign interference and intervention.

In accepting the solution to the African Personality as a result of the combined presence of the three religions in Africa, Williams seems to have ignored the idea that the ontology of these three religions are diametrically opposed and as such one wonders how they can harmoniously co-exist as

proposed by Kwame Nkrumah. Further, Williams is of the view that Nkrumah's theoretical framework is taken from some European leftists, yet, it deviates from orthodox Marxism in emphasis. For instance, Nkrumah sees matter as existing primarily but not solely, which gives more attention to the role of ideology in transforming the material conditions of man. Besides, Nkrumah acknowledges the primacy of class struggle in Africa but does not embrace Marxian analysis of the class question.

A closer scrutiny of the overall objective of Williams reveals that his work undertakes an exposition of the major part of our topic, namely, an exposition of three fundamental themes in Nkrumah's political philosophy, namely, Nkrumah's socialism, political liberation and Pan-Africanism. Aside its expository commitment, it does not adequately address the above three themes for lack of space. William's study helps us to demonstrate how Nkrumah's socialist commitment and African unity agenda contribute towards making Nkrumah's political philosophy complete and comprehensible,

Mazrui (1973) examines Kwame Nkrumah's foreign policy, especially Nkrumah's position on the American war on Vietnam. Mazrui specifically looks at Nkrumah's involvement in Vietnamese affairs- a diplomatic involvement which contributed to the overthrow of Nkrumah's regime in 1966. Mazrui emphasises that Ghana under Nkrumah, Uganda under Milton Obote, and Mali under Modibo Keita, were already rallying behind a general diplomatic disapproval of American policies in Vietnam, and as such, sympathised with the Soviet position in the conflict. Mazrui expresses skepticism as to whether

Nkrumah would or would not have been overthrown if he had not travelled to Hanoi to mediate between America and North Vietnam in 1966. Nevertheless Mazrui concludes that Nkrumah's absence from Accra, Ghana's capital, aided Nkrumah's own domestic opponents to oust him and thereby eclipse his vision of economic and political unification of Africa.

Significantly but not exclusively, Nkrumah's fall from power can be attributed to his international assignments. His international entanglements helped to buttress his commitment to continental unity for Africa, which sapped his strength and absorbed his attention. Perhaps Nkrumah reasoned that conflicts which occurred outside Africa could exercise an indirect effect on Africa, hence his desire to arbitrate between America and Vietnam. In other words, Kwame Nkrumah viewed Africa from bigger lens and realised the interconnectivity of Africa to the outside world. Mazrui's study is thus illuminating. However, it is basically a historical study which traces the political and diplomatic life of Nkrumah as they unfolded.

Apter (1968) recounts the euphoria which greeted Black Africans around the length and breadth of the globe following Ghana's attainment of political independence in 1957. He indicates the anxiety that prevailed in the minds of Ghanaians who could no longer wait to be ushered into socio-political and economic paradise when political independence was won. Apter believes that the immediate political climate within which Nkrumah rose to power was constitutionalism; a constitutional framework whose objective was to provide the legal framework of a state with nationalism acting as a pivot for local loyalty and

national identity. On the whole, Apter provides a historical account of Nkrumah's rise to power, and demonstrates how the British parliamentary constitutional system inherited by Ghana helped prepare the opposition against Nkrumah's rule and how this opposition aided the 1966 coup d'état, a coup which was slow in coming, but eventually came.

Indeed, Apter's critical stance on Nkrumah is worthy of careful study. However, his methodology is purely a political science approach to scholarship, which seeks to describe a political programme, political state or a political figure. The inadequacy of this method is that the art of ruling is a dynamic enterprise and so to judge and critique a political programme on its face value is to see politics as a static discipline. For instance, in our reading of Apter's work, we came to a point where the author simply states that Nkrumah's charisma ended in 1952 (Apter, 1968). At this point a suspicion that Apter will mention the repressive legislation passed by Nkrumah's regime against the opposition as factors which contributed towards Nkrumah's unpopularity grew stronger. To our suspicion, legislative acts like Avoidance of Discrimination Act, Deportation Act, among others, were cited by Apter as legislative acts that were enacted to suppress the opposition, which also made Nkrumah infamous. Apter further believes that it was these repressive measures that eroded Nkrumah's popularity by 1952. Nevertheless, Apter's critical stance makes us approach Nkrumah's political philosophy with an open and critical mind.

In "Pan-Africanism", Emerson (1962) laments the failures of African unity as espoused forcefully by Kwame Nkrumah. Emerson maintains that the reasons

for the rejection of Nkrumah's political kingdom are easy to find. The reasons include manifest disinclination among African independence leaders to accept the preferred headship of Nkrumah himself in a potential African union (Emerson, 1962). Emerson suggests that the surrender of the trappings of office and the more substantial pre-requisites of sovereignty in exchange for a continental unity is not a step to be lightly taken. Against this background, therefore, several African leaders plainly indicated that "...they have not fought the battles for independence in order to abandon it again in favour of someone else's rule" (Emerson, 1962, p. 288). For instance, the Prime Minister of Nigeria plainly remarked that his country had waited one hundred years for freedom and did not propose to throw it away on gaining independence. On his part, the Ivorian leader Houphouet-Boigny protested that Ivory Coast had not come to independence in order to be subjected to a backward African country (Emerson, 1962). Commenting on the difficulty of newly independent African States surrendering their national sovereignty for continental unity, Nnamdi Azikiwe puts the matter as follows:

It would be a capital folly to assume that hard-bargaining politicians who passed through the ordeal of victimization and the crucible of persecution to win their independence will easily surrender their newly-won power in the interest of a political leviathan which is populated by people who are alien to one another in their social and economic relations. It has not been possible in Europe or America, and unless Africa can show herself

different from other continents, the verdict of history on this score will remain unchallenged and unaltered (Azikiwe, 1961, p. 72).

The sceptical stance expressed by Houphouet-Boigny and Nnamdi Azikiwe among other African leaders as enunciated by Emerson, that Nkrumah's vision of a total liberation of Africa and its political and economic unification constitutes a romantic, unrealisable vision that remained only in the imagination of Nkrumah. Since Nkrumah's vision of a continental unity constitutes a core tenet of our topic, Emerson's study provides a crucial insight into our subject.

In "The Intellectual and Political Legacies of Kwame Nkrumah" (2012), Biney disagrees with Mazrui (1966) that Nkrumah was the progenitor of "black authoritarianism" because Nkrumah employed the Preventive Detention Act (PDA) to incarcerate his political opponents. Biney cites three fundamental reasons, not with the aim of exonerating Nkrumah, but with the aim of justifying why such repressive legislative acts were warranted. First, Biney says that Nkrumah's decline into authoritarianism should be weighed against the real acts of violence pursued by the opposition groups that threatened both the security of Ghana and Nkrumah personally (Biney, 2012). That there were a number of intrigues and rumours to overthrow Nkrumah's government in 1958. Besides, there were explosions in various public places from 1951 as well as the assassination attempts of 1955, 1962 and 1964—which all appear to have justified the necessity of robust measures to safeguard his person and the security of the state. Thirdly, Biney compares the political measures Nkrumah adopted between 1958 and 1966 with the political measures taken by his contemporaries in Africa

and concludes that Nkrumah was not the progenitor of authoritarianism as Mazrui wants us to believe. Biney summarises as Nkrumah's intellectual legacy, his analytical and conceptual contribution to class struggle in Africa, neo-colonialism, Consciencism, the necessity and meaningful solidarity between Africa and the social movements of Asia and Latin America, the necessity for socialism and his principled opposition to nuclear weapons among others. With particular reference to Consciencism or "the triple heritage" as one of Nkrumah's ideological legacies, Biney advises that, like the Japanese who have industrialised and modernised but continue to retain Japanese identity, Africans should assert the African personality in their bid to modernise and industrialise (Biney, 2012). Biney concludes her article by pointing out that "Nkrumah's most important political legacy lies in his vision of a Continental Union Government of Africa or Pan-Africanism" (Biney, 2012, p.138). Biney's insightful analysis of Nkrumah's intellectual and political legacies adds to our understanding of Nkrumah's political philosophy. However, with particular reference to Nkrumah's Consciencism as an intellectual legacy to Africans, one is at a loss as to how Euro-Christian and Islamic culture can be said to constitute a legacy bequeathed to Africans. The reason is that, if we see legacy as something bequeathed to one by one's progenitors, one wonders how the Euro-Christian and Islamic cultures can pass this test. They should be seen as impositional cultures rather than positive legacies of colonialism bequeathed to Africans by their ancestors.

In "Nkrumaism as Utopianism", Smith (1991) expresses skepticism about the originality of Nkrumaism as a coherent political philosophy. Referring to

Nkrumah's view that "Nkrumaism is the ideology of the new Africa, independent and absolutely free from imperialism, organised on a continental scale, founded upon the conception of one and United Africa, drawing its strength from modern science and technology and from the traditional African belief that the free development of each is the condition for the free development of all," (Smith, 1991:30). Smith thinks that Nkrumaism is an amalgamation of old ideas drawn from Western socialism, Christianity and Gandhi's non-violence philosophy (Smith, 1991). His reason is that Nkrumah was heavily influenced by Western scholarship, especially Marxism, Western Liberalism and even the ideals of Plato expounded in the *Republic*. To buttress his argument, Smith quotes Basil Davidson, who asserts that Nkrumah's vision of the total unification of Africa is first an American idea because it was in America that Nkrumah became convinced that Ghana's liberation would be meaningless without African Unity (Smith, 1991). With regard to socialism, Smith avers that Nkrumah borrowed heavily from Karl Marx, but whose thought, Nkrumah modifies and in some cases, departs from. For instance, Smith has difficulty accepting Nkrumah's materialism, a kind of materialism which considers matter as capable of self-motion but denies atheism following from that premise. He insists that Nkrumah's apparent contradiction of asserting that matter has self-motion and yet denies that claim amounts to atheism as a consequence of that antecedent assertion was further reinforced in *Consciencism* where Nkrumah advocated modern 'scientific' socialism and the preservation of African traditional values. But Smith is quick to contend that Nkrumah's *Class Struggle in Africa* (1970) crowns Nkrumah's

Marxist commitment because it treats the African Revolution as an integral part of world socialist revolution, discusses how ideologies reflect class interests and lists bourgeois ideologies as comprising neo-colonialism, capitalism, racism, bourgeois democracy, liberalism, laissez-faire and elitism (Smith, 1991).

We concede that Smith's analysis of some fundamental tenets of Nkrumah's political philosophy adds to our understanding of the subject. In particular it helps us to demarcate the phases of Nkrumah's socialism, which will be examined in the following chapter. In other words, it reinforces our view that Nkrumah's socialist thought evolved over time and reached maturity after 1970 when he published *Class Struggle in Africa* (1970).

In an article titled "Where are the Nkrumaists?" Brown-Acquaye (2012) observes that after political independence had been won, Nkrumah was quick to realise that other crucial battles such as social and economic independence lay ahead. Brown-Acquaye reasons that Nkrumah's celebrated statement, "our independence is meaningless unless linked up with total liberation of the African Continent", was premised on the issue of aiding other African states in their struggle for political independence (Brown-Acquaye, 2012). Hence to provide an ideological basis for emerging Africa, Nkrumah established an ideological institute at Winneba. According to Brown-Acquaye, Kwame Nkrumah saw Nkrumaism as the application of scientific socialist principles to African realities. Brown-Acquaye sums up Nkrumah's political philosophy in three broad themes. The first was political emancipation which was seen as pre-requisite for economic independence without which there would be no meaningful freedom for Ghana in

particular and Africa in general. The second theme was the total liberation of Africans and the third was the building of a just society through the adoption of socialism. Brown-Acquaye's penetrating article is significant for our study. It gives us a foundation to critically examine Nkrumah's political philosophy.

In "Kwame Nkrumah and the African Revolution" Tunteng (1973) affirms that every revolution rejects existing socio-economic and political systems and seeks to replace them with a more progressive social and economic order. Tunteng indicates that Nkrumah's vision of a new order which was seen as a more progressive substitute for the colonial order included the liquidation of neo-colonialism, the overthrow of a white minority rule and a united Africa under socialist direction. The above three themes constitute the African Revolution which was championed by Kwame Nkrumah in Tunteng's view. Like Mazrui (1966), Tunteng (1973) further opines that Nkrumah's revolutionary side was influenced by the American and Bolshevik Revolutions of 1776 and 1917 respectively, and as such, Nkrumah flirted with Marxism and Leninism. Tunteng expresses some skepticism of their influence on Nkrumah's political programme. This is so because Tunteng suggests by way of comparison that while Lenin and Marx carried out their revolutionary programmes to their logical conclusions, Nkrumah did not. In other words, Tunteng believes that as political independence approached, Kwame Nkrumah became less of a revolutionary and more of a moderate politician who compromised with the inherited institutions of colonialism. Tunteng contends that while Nkrumah appears to be a revolutionary and sought to overthrow colonial imperialism, he actually accepted Ghana's

freedom within the British Commonwealth. In this regard, Tunteng sees Nkrumah not as an African revolutionary but as a reformer, whose main objective was to reform the institutions inherited from colonial rule.

Tunteng pays a glowing tribute to Nkrumah's continental union vision and argues that two central themes, namely, diplomacy and subversion played central roles in Nkrumah's quest to realise African unity. He thinks that though Kwame Nkrumah's continental union government of Africa was novel, nevertheless, the tactics which Nkrumah employed for the realisation of this vision antagonised leaders of African states who combined to form a formidable opposition which Nkrumah could not surmount. Tunteng thinks that Nkrumah's reliance on subversion as a means of coercing opponents to support continental unification merely guaranteed the futility of his diplomacy, since subversion and diplomacy do not complement each other (Tunteng, 1973).

Commenting on the ideology which Nkrumah had formulated to guide the continental union government for Africa, namely, Nkrumaism, Tunteng criticises Nkrumaism as a summary of Nkrumah's ambition rather than being a well thought out ideology. On the whole, we think that some, if not all of Tunteng's criticisms are fair. For instance, we agree with Tunteng that diplomacy or persuasion rather than subversion was the appropriate political tool that could have secured the support of other independence African leaders for continental unity. The subversion which Nkrumah employed sometimes only helped to alienate those African independence leaders and scared them from embracing African unity. We however disagree with Tunteng that Nkrumaism was a

summary of Nkrumah's ambition. It may be fair to see Nkrumaism as an attempt by Nkrumah to formulate a comprehensive and coherent ideology to guide independent Africa, which appeared, on the eve of independence, to lack an operational ideology. And in an attempt to formulate such an ideology, Nkrumah tried to use both local and foreign ideas. In fact, considered as an adaptation of some essential elements of Marxism to suit African conditions, Nkrumaism represents a coherent idea. This is so because Africa and its evolution appears distinct from Europe where Marxism was intended to apply.

Folson (1973) traces the history of ideology to the period predating the 1789 French Revolution and accuses African independence leaders of a distorted understanding of ideology and socialism. Agreeing with Apter (1968), Folson argues that three reasons explain the emergence of socialism as a dominant ideology in Africa. First, socialism provides a simple explanation of the causes of backwardness. Second, socialism places the guilt of Africa's backwardness squarely on the shoulders of colonial rule. Third, socialism helps to legitimise the powers of African leaders who profess it (Folson, 1973). Folson further singles out Nkrumah among the African freedom fighters and accuses Nkrumah's work, *Consciencism*, as a work that undertakes an overly ambitious task of providing a philosophical orientation and ideological direction for the African Revolution. That it was out of this ambition that Nkrumah tries to fashion out a metaphysics for Africa—a kind of metaphysics that would straddle traditional Africa, Euro-Christian and Islamic influences in the African experience (Folson, 1973). Folson further contends that sometimes Nkrumah advocated African socialism, Marxist-

Leninism, Afro-Marxism and nationalist socialism. Folson believes that all these were responses to the general backwardness of Africa which were a creation of the colonial system. Folson however disagrees with Kwame Nkrumah for attributing most of the socio-economic, cultural and political problems in Africa to colonialism and imperialism and at the same time advocating socialism as an appropriate solution to those problems. Folson's critique of Nkrumah for blaming colonialism for most of Africa's backwardness may seem fair. But while it may be true that Africa had its own internal problems before the advent of colonialism, those internal difficulties, such as minor conflicts, cannot be compared to the large scale economic exploitation that the continent had to go through when colonialism, goaded by capitalism, came to Africa.

In *Nkrumah's Legacy and Africa's Triple Heritage: Between Globalization and Counter Terrorism*, Mazrui outlines both the positive and negative forces of globalisation, and relates his analysis of globalisation to Nkrumah's triple heritage (Mazrui, 2002). Mazrui avers that the three forces of globalisation are religion, technology and economy. Mazrui further contends that it was Nkrumah's fascination with religion that the decolonisation concept of consciencism was born, and that it is in consciencism that Nkrumah identified Africa as a product of three forces- the force of Africanity and indigenous African religion, the force of Islam and Islamic culture and the force of Euro-Christianity. Mazrui agrees with Nkrumah's concept of the triple heritage by affirming that as a growing youth in the Kenyan city of Mombasa, he (Mazrui) was getting "westernized at school,

Islamized at home and at the mosque, and Africanized at home and in the street” (Mazrui, 2002, p. 2).

According to Mazrui, the second engine of globalisation after religion, which occupied the attention of Kwame Nkrumah, was technology. He cites the building of the Akosombo Dam and the configuration of the project of a nuclear reactor in Ghana as examples of technological globalisation initiated by Nkrumah. To Mazrui, the above developmental moves also exemplify Nkrumah’s socialist commitment because Nkrumah often insisted that “socialism without science is void” (Mazrui, 2002, p. 2). Mazrui further agrees with Kwame Nkrumah in respect of the third aspect of globalisation and observes further that Nkrumah was keenly aware of the economic relationship between the mini economies of Africa and the large economic market of the west, and that it was this negative side of globalisation which alerted Nkrumah to the recognition of the dependency consequences of Africa’s status within the European Economic Community. In this vein, Nkrumah, in Mazrui’s view, “correctly diagnosed that kind of African relationship with the European Economic Community as a form of neo-colonialism” (Mazrui, 2002, p. 2).

Mazrui wonders where Nkrumah’s legacy falls in the above three forces of globalisation. He sums up by affirming that “Nkrumah’s ideas ran counter to globalisation in his views against political pluralism and in favour of the one-party state. But Nkrumah’s ideas ran ahead of globalisation in his views of a continental unification and regional integration” (Mazrui, 2002, p. 6). It appears on hindsight that Mazrui's greatest problem with Nkrumah in relation to

globalisation is exactly Nkrumah's preference of the one-party state to multi-party system. He regards Nkrumah as a villain and a Black Czar who "started the whole legacy of the one-party state in Africa" (Mazrui, 2002, p. 7).

We think that Mazrui seems to ignore the fact that it was a set of internal contradictions and unrests that moved Nkrumah away from multi-party politics to the one-party state. In other words, the socio-political and ethnic factors in post-colonial Ghana that necessitated Nkrumah's resurgence of the one-party state is not given attention in Mazrui's analysis, otherwise, his conclusion might have been different. All the same, Mazrui's examination of Nkrumah's continental unity and regional integration adds to our understanding. In other words, Mazrui's consideration of the one-party state helps us to probe Nkrumah's resurgence of the one-party system further.

In "Lieu of Orthodoxy: the Socialist Theories of Nkrumah and Nyerere", Metz (1982) provides a detail examination of the socialist treatise of Kwame Nkrumah and Julius Nyerere on one hand, and African socialism on the other hand. Metz indicates that African socialism can be intellectually contextualised within three major tenets: the ethics of pre-colonial Africa which were based on humanistic values and egalitarian method of production and distribution, the colonial past which challenged the ethics of the pre-colonial system with those of capitalism, and the present, representing a stage of incomplete synthesis, combining elements of the colonial and pre-colonial past (Metz, 1982). Metz opines that it was within the above three matrix that the socialist theories of Nkrumah and Nyerere emerged. Metz further advises that because the socialist

theories of both Nkrumah and Nyerere are abstract explanations, containing social ontology and epistemology and plans for positive action, it is often impossible to separate the two sides of the issue—the theory and the practice—because both are interrelated and as such, one cannot be comprehended without the other (Metz, 1982).

Metz made reference to the degree to which Nkrumah and Nyerere deviated from orthodox Marxism. In Metz's view, a perfunctory examination of Nkrumah and Nyerere reveals that Marxism influenced Nkrumah's socialism to a much greater degree than Nyerere. Metz is of the view that though the material conditions faced by Nkrumah and Nyerere were similar, the historical logics which they used in constructing their socialisms differed radically (Metz, 1982). In other words, Metz's argument that Nkrumah was more orthodox in his socialist commitment than Nyerere was not because Nkrumah espoused revolution and industrialisation while Nyerere focused on rural socialism, but because Nkrumah subjected history and political economy to an analysis based on historical materialism (Metz, 1982). Metz specifically used Marxist orthodoxy as a variable in the comparison of Nyerere and Nkrumah, which made it convenient to outline the distinction between the socialist theories of Nkrumah and Nyerere within the larger context of the intellectual history of political and economic phenomena. Metz concedes that Nkrumah and Nyerere both recognised the deep impact which capitalism had had on their respective societies, and convinced them that socialism was a goal to be sought rather than an extant condition, and so, the

essence of the socialist theories of Nkrumah and Nyerere is a process of transition to scientific socialism (Metz, 1982).

With regard to the concept of society, Metz observes that Nkrumah and Nyerere had different foci. According to Metz, both Nkrumah and Nyerere believed that socialism transcends political economy. Metz believe that though Nkrumah and Nyerere would agree with Marx's contention that the 'real foundation of society is the relations of production', they disagree as to exactly what constitute the most basic unit for the social organisation of production (Metz, 1982). Metz argues that in their examination of the most basic unit for the social organisation of production, Nkrumah and Nyerere made great use of traditional African society, expressing a spiritual nostalgia for a return to some sort of tranquil village life, far removed from the pressures of capitalist society. It was their contention, in Metz view, that in ethical considerations, the pre-colonial epoch was far superior to the post-colonial situation.

With particular reference to Nkrumah in his bid for post-colonial reconstruction, Metz argues that Nkrumah was aware that colonialism, and the ensuing partial transformation of the production process, had led to a dominant ideology or myth in Africa which was incomplete—the continent was without a history, intellectually underdeveloped and naturally subservient to European culture (Nkrumah, 1964). Metz urges that Nkrumah recognised that the image of traditional African life was to be altered in order to form the embryo of a new ideology which would transcend the intellectually moribund status of post-colonial Africa. In this regard, Nkrumah saw the bases of this new ideology to be

egalitarianism, humanism, and communalism of the pre-colonial ethical system (Metz, 1982). According to Metz, Nkrumah recognises further that capitalism was not simply a tide which had "flowed into swamp traditional values and could be made to ebb, thus leaving them uncovered" (Metz, 1982, p. 383). Metz believes, that Nkrumah was able to judge correctly, that the effects of colonialism could not be reversed so easily because the changes brought by capitalism were permanent, and the contradictions which accompanied them could only be alleviated dialectically (Metz, 1982).

A cursory look at Metz's work reveals a profound comparison of the socialist theories of Nkrumah and Nyerere. Metz contention that both Nkrumah and Nyerere sympathised with pre-colonial ethic is acknowledged by Mazrui. In other words, we agree with Metz that both Nyerere and Nkrumah began with a common premise: the ethical values of traditional communal production but differ on the formula of production which would best encourage the renaissance of these values. Hence, Metz's detail comparison of the socialist theories of Nyerere and Nkrumah adds to our understanding. Such comparison helps us to apply our critical razor to the socialism of Nkrumah in particular, and to his political philosophy in general.

Geiss (1974) traces the history of Pan-Africanism to the era of Marcus Garvey and W. E. B. DuBois. He describes in graphic detail, the 1945 Pan-African Congress at Manchester, which greatly transformed the Pan-African movement from a movement which focused initially on the racial discrimination against Africans in and outside Africa, to a colossal movement which demanded

self-government for African territories under colonial rule (Geiss, 1974). Geiss avers that what particularly made the Manchester Congress the more important event was the economic calamities World War II brought to the European metropolitan countries and their colonies. According to Geiss, this development made the maintenance of overseas colonies difficult, and so, granting self-government to the colonies became pressing.

Against this background, Geiss traces the role Nkrumah played at the Manchester Congress as a joint secretary with George Padmore, up to the era of Ghana's independence, when Nkrumah seized the historic opportunity to call for a continental union government of independent African states (Geiss, 1974). Geiss examines African unity in relation to Nkrumah's socialist postulation and wonders how viable it was for Nkrumah to advocate a continental unity which was meant to reflect the socialist system of production. For Geiss, capitalism or the free market economy was not new to Africans as Nkrumah tried to demonstrate, and so since capitalism had already exercised a profound mark on the psyche of the African masses, especially during the colonial period and beyond, it would have been more plausible for Nkrumah to have advocated the capitalist system of production for his Pan-African kingdom (Geiss, 1974). Like Mazrui (1966), Geiss sums up by arguing that Nkrumah's socialist position represents a pronounced oscillation between modern and traditional ideas because Nkrumah wanted to maintain the pre-colonial ethical values of humanism while at the same time adopting a scientific system of production.

Geiss's in depth exposition of Nkrumah's Pan-Africanism adds to our knowledge of the topic under consideration. It helps us to situate, not just the strengths, but also the weaknesses inherent in both Nkrumah's Pan-Africanism and socialism.

We think that it is convenient for most advocates of African paradise to find the solution to Africa's socio-political and economic problems in the continental unity that Nkrumah forcefully put forward. They tend to forget that continental unity in itself could fail to address the socio-economic problems Africa faces. In other words, the realisation of the continental union government of Africa does not in itself eliminate the economic and social problems Africa faces. After all, the Organisation of African Unity, whose name was changed to African Union, that claims to be championing the cause of Africans and Africa, was so incapacitated militarily and economically, that when an Islamic militant group nearly overran Mali in December 2012, it took the intervention of French forces to repulse the rebel onslaught. This example illustrates that there is more to Africa's development than the continental union government *per se*.

Rooney's *Kwame Nkrumah: Vision and Tragedy* stands out as a comprehensive biography of Kwame Nkrumah, the first independence leader of Ghana. The book chronicles in detail Nkrumah's early life in a small village of Nkroful on the fringes of Western frontier of the then Gold Coast; the beginning of his education at Half Assini; his admission to the Government Teacher Training College in Accra; his completion of the programme; his encounter with

Rev. A. G. Fraser, a notable educator who became the 1st head of Achimota College.

Other important personalities whose life and works left indelible imprints on Nkrumah are set out in detail. They include W. E. B. Du Bois, Marcus Garvey, Nnamdi Azikiwe and Wallace Johnson, the Sierra Leonean nationalist as well as C. R. L. James.

Rooney's account of Nkrumah's trip through the United Kingdom to the United States to further his studies makes a delightful reading, as it captures in detail the financial challenges that Nkrumah had to overcome not only to pay for his travel but also to pay the fees for his schooling at Lincoln University.

Through his interaction with the above mentioned personalities and several more, Nkrumah grew to political maturity taking in his stride the reality of the colonial and racist experiences of his time and developing a perspective on how to engage these challenges of colonialism.

Rooney also devotes much space in examining Nkrumah's rise to national and international fame through the 5th Pan-African Conference held in Manchester in 1945. Soon after that epochal event, a seminal organisation called the *Circle* emerged. The *Circle* set out "to train effective activists among their members" ... "It saw itself as the revolutionary vanguard in the struggle for West African unity and national independence" (Rooney, 1988:176). Rooney records that by 1947, Nkrumah became so completely involved in the work of the Secretariat that he gave up his studies altogether. This was the time that Ako Adjei, his friend from Lincoln days wrote to offer Nkrumah the post of secretary

of the UGCC with a salary of £100 per month and a care. The tension between Nkrumah the radical elements on the one hand and the conservative petty bourgeoisie on the other in the UGCC is captured in detail, just as the eventual split and the founding of CPP. The struggle between the UGCC and CPP that ended with the triumph of CPP is given as much space as Nkrumah's engagement with the British colonial administration in the process of decolonization of the Gold Coast in Rooney's study.

Nkrumah, Rooney makes clear, had to contend not only with the fight to wrestle power from British colonialism but also to deal with the internal opposition to his quest to restore freedom and democracy to all the people of the Gold Coast. The eventual collapse of the UGCC and the emergence of National Liberation Movement and the political unrest arising from the polarisation of the independence political leadership are all set out in graphic detail.

Rooney makes reference to Nkrumah's socialist ideology several times in his book. However, it is in chapter fourteen that Rooney undertakes a detailed evaluation of socialism. He summarises the case for socialism thus: "no newly independent country was strong enough to defeat neo-colonialism, and therefore a socialist approach was essential" ... "the essentials of his philosophy were the common ownership of the means of production; planned agricultural and industrial development; and political power in the hands of the people" (Rooney, 1988, p. 288).

In Rooney's view, Nkrumah realised that local businesses would never generate enough surplus capital to provide investment on the scale needed, and if

they did create a surplus it was liable to be hoarded or sent abroad (Rooney, 1988).

Kah (2012) examines the salience of Kwame Nkrumah's clarion call for a united Africa and the reasons why Africa and its people should support continental unity. He laments the prevalence of pandemic diseases such as malaria and cholera in Africa. He believes that if Africa were united on a continental basis, controlling its own resources- human and natural- these pandemic diseases could easily be eradicated. Kah traces the practical history of Nkrumah's vision of a continental unity to the Ghana-Guinea Union in 1959, a union which was formed with the hope of laying a solid foundation for an eventual United States of Africa.

Kah also chronicles in detail the objectives of the Ghana-Guinea Union, which included cultural and economic ideals, a common flag, an anthem, a common defence and economic policy, a common black and a coordinated language teaching and cultural activities (Kah, 2012).

Kah's study is a detailed exposition of Nkrumah's Pan-African agenda, including its successes and failures, and its possible immense benefits. Kah, for the most part, remains sympathetic to Nkrumah's Pan-African agenda, and believes that the realisation of a continental union government of Africa is the surest way to eradicate illiteracy, diseases, hunger, poverty and other social vices from the African continent. Kah's work is thus apologetic to Nkrumah's Pan-African vision. It is also an exposition of African unity as a programme put

forward by Nkrumah. As an exposition, it aids us in our attempt to undertake an exposition of the political philosophy of Nkrumah in following chapter.

CHAPTER THREE

The Political Philosophy of Kwame Nkrumah

Overview

The objective of this chapter is to carry out an exposition of the political philosophy of Kwame Nkrumah. Two thematic areas which in our view constitute the core tenets of Nkrumah's political philosophy would be looked at. First, we examine Nkrumah's idea of a Continental Union from about 1945 to his exile period in Conakry. Moreover, we systematically and chronologically trace the development of Nkrumah's socialist thought which he conceived as the framework for the Continental Union Government for Africa. The above two themes which, in our view, constitute the nucleus of Nkrumah's political philosophy, were meant to refute the prevalent European colonial false belief that "...providence created some to be the menials of others" (Nkrumah, 1963, p. ix). Continental unity would destroy the artificial boundaries of Africa, thus enabling Africa to regain its independence; socialism would help to bring about economic equality among men in independent Africa.

The Continental Union Government of Africa

If there is one agenda or political framework which occupied Kwame Nkrumah's attention from his earliest political struggles to his overthrow in the year 1966 and even beyond, it was precisely his vision of a continental union

government for Africa. It was in fact his vision and mission to accomplish this. Learning a great lesson from the balkanisation of the Ottoman Empire, which was orchestrated by the European powers and which eventually led to the disastrous World War I (1914-1918), Nkrumah realised early in his political life that Africa's independent states, which were artificially carved out at the Berlin Conference in 1884, could not survive if there was no unified front on a continental basis in order to combat the threat imperialism posed. In other words, Africa needed a continental union government that could act as a shield against external interference. Nkrumah submitted that Africa's independent states could either become satellite states of the imperialist countries or collapse one by one as a result of imperialist meddling in their political and economic affairs.

Since some African countries were still struggling to liberate themselves from colonial shackles at the time Ghana gained her political independence, Nkrumah expressed optimism that Africa could be united under one socialist continental government, only if the remaining territories still under colonial domination were liberated. Thus, all resources, human and material, were mobilised in an effort to expel the colonial forces from the African soil. It was against this backdrop that on the eve of Ghana's independence Nkrumah made his celebrated speech: "The independence of Ghana is meaningless unless it was linked up with the total liberation of Africa" (Nkrumah, 1963, p. 100). Thus, with the attainment of Ghana's independence, Nkrumah reasoned that Ghana as a sovereign state could not isolate itself socially and politically from the rest of the continent, since it could not battle imperialism alone. Nkrumah was therefore

determined to see Africa united under a continental union government, just like the USA and the USSR (Nkrumah, 1963).

Nkrumah indicates that up to 1945 when the 5th Pan-African Congress was held in Manchester, England, his idea of African unity was limited to West Africa. In other words, it was his determination to see West Africa united under a single government. Perhaps the basic assumption underlying Nkrumah's idea of unity was largely motivated by the ontological reality of colonialism, which was mainly divisive. Divisive, in a sense, that colonialism thrived on the theory of divide and rule. Thus the division of colonial subjects into incompatible groups such as subjects and citizens in colonial Senegal for instance, could be remedied by continental unity Nkrumah put forward. In *Towards Colonial Freedom* for example, Nkrumah reinforced his idea of unity as follows:

There is, however, one matter on which my views have been expanded, and that is regarding African Unity. Since I have had the opportunity of putting my ideas to work, and personally experiencing the bitter and arduous test of wit, patience and endurance that was necessary before our own victory over colonialism was won, I lay even greater stress on the vital importance to Africa's survival of a political union of the African continent. Twenty years ago my ideas on African unity, important as I considered them even at that time, were limited to West African unity. Today, as I sit at my desk in Accra and glance at the several maps of Africa surrounding me, I see the

wider horizon of the immense possibilities open to Africans—the only guarantee, in fact, for our survival—in a total continental political union of Africa (Nkrumah, 1962, p. xi).

The above quotation seems to summarise Nkrumah's objective in seeking a continental political union for Africa. For among other advantages, such a union would not only give Africans a unified front in terms of diplomacy, foreign policy and defence but would also enhance Africa's material and cultural progress. It may be appropriate to ask, why political union but not cultural union? Nkrumah answered that it was equally possible to seek cultural and economic unity as opposed to the political unity he canvassed. He opined that political unity backed by a centralised authority would give expression to other social integrations, such as cultural, diplomatic and economic and at the same time safeguard Africa's hard won independence. He writes,

Since our inception, we have raised as a cardinal policy, the total emancipation of Africa from colonialism in all its forms. To this we have added the objective of the political union of African states as the surest safeguard of our hard won freedom and the soundest foundation for our individual, no less than our common, economic, social and cultural advancement (Nkrumah, 1963, p. xi).

The objectives of continental union as enunciated in the above quotation constitute the benefits Africa stood to gain if it were united under one continental union government. In this regard Nkrumah thought that what Africa stood for,

was what the imperialist powers stood against. Hence, he opines, “Just as our strength lies in a unified policy and action for progress and development, so the strength of the imperialist lies in our disunity. We in Africa can only meet them effectively by presenting a unified front and a continental purpose” (Nkrumah, 1963, p. xvi). It was therefore against this backdrop that Nkrumah became convinced that unless African leaders met the obvious and powerful threat of imperialism with a coherent and comprehensive united African front, based on a common military and economic policy, the imperialist powers would pick independent African states and destroy them one after the other (Nkrumah, 1963).

It must however be recalled that Kwame Nkrumah’s vision of African unity dates back to 1957, when the first conference of independent African states was convened in Accra at his request. This symbolic gesture continued and even gathered much momentum in 1959 when the seed of a continental union was sowed following the Conakry declaration—a declaration which sought to unite Ghana with Guinea as the seminal seed of continental unity. In all these conferences, the message remained the same, namely, African liberation and unity.

And yet it appeared that unity was destined not to be. Thus, it will be appropriate to ask the question, was the idea of African unity as conceived by Nkrumah utopia? It appears so because the artificial boundaries separating one African state from the other could not be dismantled or done away with, since African leaders were not prepared to surrender the political sovereignties of their small, albeit nonviable, states in favour of a larger union. More generally,

cultural, linguistic, and ethnic differences militated against political unity. In particular, African leaders disagreed on a unified framework or policy on which the African continent was to be united. While some preferred a gradual approach towards unity, others went for an immediate and radical approach to unity. Nkrumah belongs to the latter school. He was unrelenting and went ahead to propagate his views on the continental union government of Africa. These were outlined in his book aptly entitled, *Africa Must Unite*.

In chapter 15 of *Africa Must Unite*, titled 'Towards African Unity,' Nkrumah dismisses those who thought that Africans could not form a continental union because of certain natural and social differences like race, culture and language (Nkrumah, 1963). In spite of these natural differences, Nkrumah was convinced that those forces which united Africans outweigh those that divided them. Nkrumah was convinced that the development of Pan-Africanism, the African personality in world affairs and Africa's colonial past all call for unity (Nkrumah, 1963). In fact, Nkrumah's vision of African unity and his efforts towards its realisation which dated back to 1945 and was sustained up to 1963 and beyond were reinforced in *Neo-Colonialism: The Last Stage of Imperialism*, a book he published only a year before he was overthrown.

In the above work, devoted principally to the exposure of the imperialist powers' aim to keep Africa exploited, balkanised and backward, Nkrumah measured the sinister operation of neo-colonialism against the backdrop of African unity. Against this background therefore, he indicated that the evil of neo-

colonialism is the prevention of the formation of larger territories powerful enough to rival the imperialist countries. According to Nkrumah,

...if Africa was united, no major power bloc would attempt to subdue it by 'limited war' because from the very nature of limited war, what can be achieved by it is itself limited. It is only where small states exist that it is possible, by landing a few thousand marines or by financing a mercenary force, to secure a decisive result (Nkrumah, 1965, p. xi).

Since Nkrumah recognised neo-colonialism as an instrument whose deployment was meant to break formerly united large colonial territories into numerous non-viable states which would be incapable of independent development, and must therefore rely on imperial powers for economic and social direction, he proposed that the solution to the neo-colonial situation is a united action. He puts this succinctly, "I propose to show how in practice African unity, which in itself can only be established by the defeat of neo-colonialism, could immensely raise African living standards" (Nkrumah, 1965, p. xx).

Placing emphasis on political unity as a pre-requisite to all other developments, including economic, Nkrumah reminds us that however much the African continent increases its agricultural growth or productive capacity, it will not benefit from such an increment "unless it is sufficiently politically and economically united to force the developed world to pay it a fair price for its cash crops" (Nkrumah, 1965, p. 9). This assertion is right, because an increase in the production of raw materials in Africa without industrialisation is tantamount to

growing such cash crops to feed the industrial plants of the Western powers, in exchange for pittance. It was exactly this unfair economic relationship between Africa and the imperial powers that validated Nkrumah's call for continental unity, as enunciated in the introduction and concluding parts of *Neo-Colonialism*. He writes, "Only a united Africa through an all African Union Government...is the answer to neo-colonialism, balkanisation and all other internal enemies such as poverty, diseases, ignorance and illiteracy" (Nkrumah, 1965, p. 36 & 259).

It appears pretty clear that Nkrumah's idea of a continental union government permeated his major works especially towards the end of his life when his political thought became revolutionary. At this period, Nkrumah began to advocate revolution in order to bring about such a union. In my opinion, Nkrumah's change of views and strategy was quite right, considering that all diplomatic efforts towards bringing his vision of African unity into realisation had not achieved the desired results. It is consistent with the ethical principle that violence or revolution should be seen as a last resort when all diplomatic and persuasive efforts have failed. At this stage too, Nkrumah began to see socialism and African unity as complementary, such that one could not be achieved without the other. Equally important is the fact that such a novel objective as African unity, in Nkrumah's view, could not be attained without the contribution of African peasants. According to Nkrumah,

The choice has already been made by the workers and peasants of Africa. They have chosen unification; and this can only be achieved through armed struggle under socialist direction. For

the political unification of Africa and socialism are synonymous. One cannot be achieved without the other (Nkrumah, 1970, p. 84).

In his concluding remarks in *Class Struggle in Africa*, Nkrumah dismissed the idea that Africa could only unite if there were a common language, common culture and common territory. Once again, he opposed this view. He felt that, “The notion that in order to have unity it is necessary for there to be a common language, a common territory and common culture, has failed to stand the test of time or the scrutiny of scientific definition of objective reality” (Nkrumah, 1970, p. 88). What then is scientific definition of reality? Nkrumah never answered this question satisfactorily. Perhaps he assumed that it was an obvious issue that needed no further clarification. Nkrumah’s apparent failure to clarify some expressions in his political philosophy poses a problem of clarification. For example, if we are not so clear on the scientific definition of objective reality, to what extent can we successfully interrogate African unity with regard to the diverse ethnic group and cultures? It is more of a debate between philosophical monism and pluralism. These are two parallel schools of thought whose definition of reality does not concur. Monism recognises that reality is fundamentally one, while pluralism recognises that reality is composed fundamentally of multiple objects and existence. Thus, given the diverse people and culture on the African continent, how successful could this pluralistic continent be made monistic through continental union as enunciated by Nkrumah?

All the same, Nkrumah summed up the objectives of his continental union government of Africa as follows: The first objective is the overall economic planning on a continental basis in order to increase economic and industrial power of Africa. The second is the establishment of a unified defence and military command. The third involves the institution of a unified foreign policy and diplomacy, in order to give political direction to the joint efforts for the protection and economic development of Africa (Nkrumah, 1963). To sum up, Nkrumah's vision of a united Africa was so forceful that when he was writing from exile in Conakry, the Guinean capital, his foreword to Jaramogi Oginga Odinga's *Not Yet Uhuru* reads:

It is clear than ever before that the political union of Africa, which has been one of my main pre-occupations since the attainment of independence by Ghana, is the key to Africa's economic and political stability, peace and progress. A Union Government of Africa backed by organised military power and sound continental and economic planning is bound to compel nations outside Africa to respect our collective interest. States with imperialist tendencies, however powerful, will tremble before taking unilateral decisions to interfere in our affairs (Odinga, 1967, p. xiii)

Phases in Kwame Nkrumah's Socialism

It is interesting to note that up to 1963 when *African Must Unite* was published, Kwame Nkrumah was preoccupied with the arduous task of building

socialism in Ghana as an alternative path to national development. Socialism was therefore seen as an ideology that would be adapted to suit the African environment, African conditions and African communal way of life. Thus, at this stage, Nkrumah believed in African socialism as opposed to scientific socialism. This marks the first phase of Nkrumah's socialism. In *Consciencism* and *Neo-colonialism* however, Nkrumah attempts an elucidation of socialism as a theory, and then defends African communalism- its humanist and egalitarian principles- as the precursor of African socialism. Here, Nkrumah contends that the idea of class struggle is inconsistent with African egalitarianism. He brands Marxian materialism atheistic, because Marxian socialism is contemptuous of spiritual values. He states that "strictly speaking, the assertion of the sole reality of matter is atheistic, for pantheism, too, is a species of atheism. Philosophical consciencism, even though deeply rooted in materialism, is not necessarily atheistic" (Nkrumah, 1964, p. 84).

Finally, the period 1967-1972 marks the last and final phase of Kwame Nkrumah's socialist discourse. This period saw Nkrumah's efforts towards presenting a comprehensive and coherent analysis of socialism within the Marxian framework. Nkrumah acknowledges the class antagonism in Marxian socialist philosophy as a fact and he advocates social revolution in order to establish scientific socialism in Africa. In this section of this chapter, we examine the three phases that constitute Nkrumah's defense of socialism. However, before we examine the phases in Nkrumah's socialism, it is worth noting to first of all examine African socialism, a concept which was espoused

by most African independence leaders. This, we believe, will throw more light on the phases in Nkrumah's socialism.

African Socialism

In the course of the 1960s, African socialism emerged as a popular version of socialism embraced by the post-independence African leaders. After political independence in Africa there was a rush by African leaders to call their political ideas anything but capitalism. The label "African socialism" came in handy. This was the situation not just because it was fashionable to do so but perhaps also because they thought socialism had different local characteristics, and so Africa had its own version of socialism uniquely African.

Mboya defines African socialism as "... those proven codes of conduct in the African societies which have, over the ages, conferred dignity on our people and afforded them security regardless of their station in life" (Mboya, 1975, p. 60). Mboya further notes that African socialism should be seen as those ideals and attitudes of mind in traditional African norms and customs which regulated man's conduct, with the social well-being as its fundamental objective (Mboya, 1975). Similarly, In *Consciencism*, Nkrumah argues that the indigenous African society is anti-capitalist and egalitarian in nature. To this effect, socialism in his opinion had a lot in common with traditional African communal past and hence socialism was a suitable ideology for the new African countries.

In justifying his preference for socialism, he argues that such a theory is an advancement and refinement of communalism. Thus humanism and egalitarianism are common features of socialism and communalism. Employing

ethical analysis, especially the principle of utilitarianism, Kwame Nkrumah argues that, “under socialism the study and mastery of nature has a humanist impulse and is directed not towards a profiteering accomplishment, but the affording of ever increasing satisfaction for the material and greatest needs of the greatest number” (Nkrumah,1964:68).

These views among other African socialist theories tend to see socialism as a socio-ethical doctrine. Socio-ethical doctrine in a sense that the state will play a critical role by exercising a socialistic control over the economy while discouraging the concentration of wealth in private hands by ensuring the widest form of property decentralisation. Though African socialism will allow private enterprise and public control of the economy, nevertheless, it repudiates both capitalism and communism (Omi & Anyawu, 1981). To be sure, it regards capitalism as too exploitative of human dignity and communism as being contemptuous of African spiritual values. At another breadth most African independence leaders believe that apart from the unethical concerns of capitalism regarding its treatment of man as a means to an end, how could such an ideology which had been responsible for Africa’s underdevelopment be the same ideology for Africa’s advancement? Seydou Kouyate, Mali leader for Development, stretched the argument further. He argued that “You cannot be a capitalist when you have no capital” (Benett, 1964, p. 98). This argument helps explain partly why African states found it difficult to switch directly to the capitalist system of production when independence came. If socialism is the means by which

production, distribution and exchange of goods are publicly owned and controlled, what then would be the characteristic content of the African brand?

African leaders did not have a coherent answer to this all important question. Attempts were made to rectify this intellectual confusion. The first attempt to clarify the various ideas construed as African socialism was made at the Dakar Colloquium in 1962. At this conference, several notions were raised about African socialism. Apart from the diverse views expressed as African socialism by Senghor, Nyerere and Kenyatta, Nasser of Egypt also spoke eloquently about Arab socialism.

Nyerere, together with Sekou Toure, and Senghor and Nkrumah insists that traditional Africa exhibited no classes or class struggle. Hence while the existence of occupational castes in West Africa and elsewhere in Africa should be acknowledged; these were not classes 'founded on wealth' with conflicting interests in their opinion (Benett, 1964, p. 98). Nyerere and Sekou Toure emphasise the strong community sense of African society. While Nyerere regards Ujamaa (familyhood) as the basis of African socialism, Sekou Toure considers that "Africa is essentially 'communaucratic'. 'Collective life and social solidarity,' he says, 'give her habits a humanistic foundation which many peoples may envy' (Benett, 1964, p. 98). Thus African socialism as conceived by its adherents may be summarised under four broad themes, namely, the denial of classes or class struggle in pre-colonial Africa, the rejection of vulgar materialism inherent in Marxian socialism, the desire to return to the African past that never was and the rejection of capitalism on ethical grounds.

The different nuances about the ontology of African socialism put forward by African leaders are well captured in Friedland and Rosberg's comments that "there was much failure by Africans themselves at the Dakar Conference and elsewhere to present a precise definition of African socialism" (Friedland & Rosberg, 1958, p. 50).

The inability of the leaders at the Conference to clearly state what constitute African socialism made it difficult to present a coherent and systematic articulation of the concept. The different perspectives that existed in the name of African socialism make it appear a potpourri of ideas, having little or no coherence. Confused by the oversimplification of the concept of socialism by independence African leaders, the magazine, *African Report*, accused the delegates of paying lip service to socialism. Nkrumah, of all the leaders who converged at Dakar, saw the need of giving the concept a coherent interpretation. This realisation however came only after his exile years in Conakry. Nkrumah in *Class Struggle in Africa* affirms that the basic tenets of socialism are universal and abiding.

Socialism as a Path to Development

Shortly after Ghana became a republic in 1960, Nkrumah recognised the urgent need for ideological education that would enhance his socialist agenda. We recall that in *Towards Colonial Freedom* he underscores the importance of political education as an instrument for winning political independence. To realise this objective, the Kwame Nkrumah Ideological Institute at Winneba was established in 1961. And in his speech at the launching of the institute, Nkrumah

reiterated his commitment to socialism as a framework for national development. Nkrumah said that “For twelve years, twelve long years therefore, no conscious consistent effort had been made to provide party members with the requisite education in the party’s ideology of socialism—socialism based on the conditions, circumstances and peculiarities of our African life” (Obeng, 1979, p. 6).

What does ‘African life’ in the above quotation imply? One may guess that the communal life of cooperation which is unique to Africans as opposed to the individualism of the West was what Nkrumah meant. Secondly, Nkrumah seems to have bought into the socialist debate among African independence leaders about the viability of African socialism. Nkrumah opines that the ideological training at his institute was meant to equip men and women with analytical knowledge so that “men and women who pass through this institute will go out not only armed with analytical knowledge to wage the battle of African socialism but will also be fortified with a keen spirit of dedication and service to our motherland” (Obeng, 1979, p. 6).

In fact, this was a tacit admission that apart from Marxian socialism, there was another version of socialism called African socialism, and that African socialism encapsulates the African experience, the African conditions and the African way of life. At another point in the same speech, Nkrumah hinted that the structure of his party was to “built up from Ghanaian experiences, conditions, environments and concepts entirely Ghanaian and African in outlook and based on the Marxist philosophy and world view” (Obeng, 1979, p. 12). Nkrumah seems to present a difficulty of interpretation. What does it mean to say

“Ghanaian and African experiences and conditions based on Marxist socialist philosophy and adapting it”? Could it mean borrowing Marxism and adapting it to suit Ghanaian conditions? Or integrating African experience into Marxist socialist philosophy? This lack of clarity in Nkrumah’s socialist thought partly explains why Rooney (1988) remarks that “a clear and coherent outline of Nkrumah’s socialist policies is difficult to achieve because, although his overall aim remained fairly constant, his views and attitudes often appear contradictory....” (Rooney, 1988, p. 236)

Again, in a dawn broadcast of April 8th 1961, Nkrumah intimated that the aims and objectives of his party “are the building of socialist patterns of society in which the free development of each is the condition for the free development of all” (Obeng, 1979, p. 16). If state socialism is defined as the process by which the means of production, distribution and exchange of goods and services are owned and controlled by the state, then Nkrumah implies exactly this:

As our party has proclaimed, and as I have asserted time and again, socialism is the only pattern that can within the shortest possible time bring the good life to the people. For socialism assumes the public ownership of the means of production— land and its resources— and the use of those means for production that will bring benefits to the people. Socialist production is production of goods and services in fulfilment of the people’s needs. It is not production for individual private profit, which deprives a large

section of the people of the goods and services produced, while their needs and wants remain unsatisfied (Obeng, 1979, p. 70).

Nkrumah however conceded that Ghana was yet to become a socialist state because apart from the unavailability of adequate material conditions in Ghana at the time, the foundation of socialism which he recognises as complete industrialisation and scientific agricultural production had not been built in the country. Hence, “socialism” in Nkrumah’s view needs socialists in order to build it (Nkrumah, 1963).

In chapter 14 of *Africa Must Unite*, titled ‘Building socialism in Ghana,’ Nkrumah outlines the topmost priorities of his government as consisting in fighting “poverty, ignorance, illiteracy and improving the health services” to the people. Given the colonial legacy his government inherited, Nkrumah realised that such objectives were long term objectives which were not amenable to legislation. All the same, he was firm in his conviction that working to achieve these objectives was a justification for winning independence from the erstwhile colonial masters. So he spells out his socialist objective as follows:

Production for private profit deprives a large section of the people of the goods and services produced. If, therefore, we are to fulfil our pledge to the people and achieve the programme set out... socialism is our only alternative. For socialism assumes the public ownership of the means of production, the land and its resources, and the use of those

means in fulfilment of the people's needs (Nkrumah, 1963, p. 119).

Nkrumah opted for socialist organisation of the mode of production and distribution of the wealth of the state. This was so because he believed it was such mode of production that would bring social and economic equity to the masses as opposed to socio-economic inequalities associated with the capitalist mode of production. This sums up the first phase of Nkrumah's socialism, namely, socialism as an ideology or a path to development. The second and third phases of Nkrumah's socialism are mainly enunciated in *Consciencism* and *Class Struggle in Africa*.

Nkrumah's Defence of African Socialism

In *Consciencism*, Kwame Nkrumah recognises that "the traditional face of Africa includes an attitude towards man which can only be described in its social manifestation as being socialist. In Africa man is [fundamentally] regarded as a spiritual being who is originally endowed with a certain inward dignity, integrity and value" (Nkrumah, 1964, p. 68). We aver that the idea of the original value of man imposes duties of a socialist kind upon Africans. Thus, this constitutes the theoretical basis of African communalism. Besides, this theoretical basis of socialism was expressed in the clan, the tribe and the family which together constitute the social group in which every African found himself. In this kind of social formation therefore, it was extremely difficult if not impossible for class antagonism to arise. Nkrumah thinks that, in this social situation, it was impossible for classes of a Marxian kind to arise (Nkrumah, 1964). Nkrumah

was not alone in the belief that traditional Africa was a classless society. Julius Nyerere expressed similar remarks when he contends that "...the idea of class or caste was non-existent in African society" (Nyerere, 1987, p. 10).

Nkrumah claimed that in traditional African society, no interest of a particular section of society could override others; nor was there any legislation or executive authority that aided the interests of any particular group at the expense of another. In fact, in Nkrumah's view, the welfare of the people was supreme. But he was quick to add that colonialism should take the blame for altering this traditional system. We can safely say that Nkrumah was actually appraising pre-colonial Africa in his work. Like Aristotle, who was appraising the Greek city states which had become obsolete as a result of the conquests of Alexander, Nkrumah was equally appraising a pre-colonial African civilisation that had been tremendously transformed by the colonial contact.

Recognising a bond between communalism and socialism, Nkrumah draws an analogy between the two as follows:

...if one seeks the socio-political ancestor of socialism one must go to communalism. Socialism has characteristics in common with communalism, just as capitalism is linked with feudalism and slavery. In socialism, the principles underlying communalism are given expressions in modern circumstances (Nkrumah, 1964, p. 73).

As communalism is linked to modern socialism, Nkrumah does not hesitate to express his preference for socialism. He thinks that socialism had the

capacity to abolish inequalities that had been created by the colonial system. Nkrumah considers the evil of capitalism as consisting in its alienation of the fruit of labour from those who with the oil of their body and the sweat of their brow produce this fruit. This aspect of capitalism in his view makes it irreconcilable with those basic principles which animate traditional African society. Thus, capitalism is not merely unjust and too complicated to be workable in the Africa which was regaining its independence, “it is also alien,” he concludes (Nkrumah, 1964, p. 76).

Nkrumah further recognises that the restoration of Africa’s humanist and egalitarian principles requires socialism, whose guiding philosophy he terms philosophical consciencism. He defines philosophical consciencism as “the map in intellectual disposition of forces which will enable African society to digest the Western and Islamic and the Euro-Christian elements in Africa and develop them in such a way that they fit into the African personality” (Nkrumah, 1964, p. 72). And the “African personality is itself defined by the cluster of humanist principles which underlie the traditional African society” (Nkrumah, 1964, p. 79). The proposed process of harmonising the combined presence of the three religious experiences which have created a crisis in the African conscience is what Nkrumah calls *Categorical Conversion* (Nkrumah, 1964). Philosophical consciencism takes dialectical materialism to be its operating methodology. Nkrumah’s dialectical materialism acknowledges the duality of matter and spirit. It further takes matter to be the “primary reality not the sole reality” (Nkrumah, 1964, p. 88). But Nkrumah rejects the idea that matter is apathetic to motion

(inertia). For him, matter is simply a plenum of forces and its dynamism lies in the fact that every quantitative transformation results in a qualitative change in the elevation of the human condition from lower to a higher form of existence (Okoro, 2010). This summarises Nkrumah's second phase of socialism.

Nkrumah's Defence of Scientific Socialism

It has been stated that in a letter to Engels, Karl Marx betrayed scientific socialism when he stated that "he" (Marx) was not a "Marxist" (Senghor, 1964, p. 102). But in a way that is not exactly similar to this assertion, some writers have argued that in spite of allegations that Nkrumah was a Marxist or communist, Nkrumah actually became a Marxist after his overthrow. This is borne out by the fact that Nkrumah fully embraced Marxian Socialism and repudiated his earlier thesis on African socialism and communalism. In other words, Nkrumah tried to correct his earlier idealisation and glorification of the African communal past. In "African Socialism Revisited," an article written in 1967, a year after his overthrow, Kwame Nkrumah recognises 'socialism' as a slogan that unites African leaders in their quest to restore Africa's past humanist and egalitarian principles. He expresses skepticism about the real meaning of socialism in the context of African political discourse. Thus, as at 1967, Nkrumah felt that socialism had lost its objective meaning "in favour of a distracting terminology and in favour of a general confusion. Discussion centres more on the various conceivable types of socialism than upon the need for socialist development" (Nkrumah, 1967, p. 1)

In this article, Nkrumah classifies African leaders into two distinct schools of thoughts, namely, African socialists and socialists in Africa. Socialists in Africa refer to those who use socialism with the aim of remoulding African society in the socialist direction; to reconstruct African society in such a manner that the humanism of traditional African life re-asserts itself in a modern African community (Nkrumah, 1967). In other words, Nkrumah thinks that socialists in Africa are those who believe that true economic and social development cannot be promoted without the real socialisation of the means of production and distribution. African socialists on the other hand are those who use the term with the belief that it would smoothen the path to economic development. On hindsight, this distinction appears to be a distinction without a difference. All the same, of the two schools of thought, Nkrumah espouses the former and despises the latter. In other words, he identifies himself with those who believe in the universal validity and applicability of socialism as an ideology of development. Nkrumah therefore denies the view which he held earlier that African society was a classless society in which no sectional interest reigned supreme over group welfare. He considers this view as an idealisation and glorification of traditional African society, which traditional Africa neither claims nor deserves. In brief, Nkrumah rejected or denounced his initial socialist thesis as follows:

Today, the phrase ‘African socialism’ seems to espouse the view that the traditional African society was a classless society imbued with the spirit of humanism and to express nostalgia for that spirit. Such a conception of socialism makes fetish of the

communal African society. But an idyllic, African classless society (in which there were no rich and no poor) enjoying a drugged serenity is certainly a facile simplification; there is no historical or even anthropological evidence for any such society. I am afraid the realities of African society were somewhat more sordid (Nkrumah, 1967, p. 73).

Thus, Nkrumah rejected, as fanciful, such African socialist movements as Nyerere's *Ujamaa*, Senghor's *Negritude*, Nasser's Arab 'socialism' and concludes that "it is the elimination of fancifulness from socialist action that makes socialism scientific. To suppose that there are tribal, national, religious or racial socialisms is to abandon objectivity in favour of chauvinism" (Nkrumah, 1967, p. 10). With this quotation and certain assertions Nkrumah made elsewhere in this article, he had by then made considerable progress towards abandoning the previous socialist thesis he defended in *Consciencism*. Nkrumah's later book, *Class struggle in Africa*, came to complete his departure from African socialism and his migration to scientific socialism. As the title speaks for itself, Nkrumah acknowledges that Africa cannot lie outside the ambit of class struggle in the world. It can only be considered as a continuation of the struggle between the oppressor and the oppressed. He argues that military coups and outbreak of civil wars in some parts of the African continent are indications of class struggle between oppressors and oppressed. And that the existence of class struggle in Africa is mirrored in the "unity between the interest of neo-colonialism and the indigenous bourgeoisie" (Nkrumah, 1970, p. 9). Though Nkrumah recognises the

existence of classes in Africa, his definition of a class as a group of people united by an interest which they try to protect, is inadequate.

The founder of the Soviet Union, Lenin (1870-1924), who was a Marxist, gives us a scientific and comprehensive definition of classes. According to Lenin,

...classes are large groups of people differing from each other by the place they occupy in a historically determined system of production, by their relation to the means of production, by their role in the social organization of labour, and consequently, by the dimensions of the share of social wealth of which they dispose and the mode of acquiring it. Classes are groups of people one of which can appropriate the labour of another owing to the different places they occupy in a definite system of social economy (Daglish, 1982, p. 258).

In keeping with the definition advanced by Lenin, Nkrumah defines class as “the sum total of individuals bound together by certain interest which as a class they try to preserve and protect” (Nkrumah, 1970, p. 17). This definition seems deficient because classes of different social standing could be bound by the same interest. Nkrumah further thinks that political systems such as parliamentary democracy, one party system, or open military dictatorship reflect the interest of a certain class or classes in such a society.

Relating the concept of class to Africa (post-colonial Africa which *Class Struggle* appraises), Nkrumah identifies three main classes in Africa, namely, indigenous African bourgeoisie, the proletariat and the peasant class. The

indigenous African bourgeoisie, Nkrumah observes, comprises “intellectuals, civil servants, members of the professions” as well as officers in the armed forces and the police. He notes, “it is the indigenous bourgeoisie who provide the main means by which international monopoly finance continues to plunder Africa and to frustrate the purposes of the African Revolution” (Nkrumah, 1970, p. 63). Nkrumah indicates that there was significant absence of capitalists among the national bourgeoisie, precisely because the colonial authorities discouraged local business enterprise. In other words, vital aspects of the economy such as the extractive industry, manufacturing industries, banking, wholesale trade and large-scale farming were owned by the colonial authorities. In this regard, the indigenous African bourgeoisie remained essentially a petty bourgeoisie (Nkrumah, 1970). Thus, it was due to the restrictions imposed on local businesses by the colonial authorities that led the indigenous bourgeoisie to oppose colonialism. However, the upsurge of national liberation movements in the aftermath of the Second World War saw the admission of the indigenous African bourgeoisie into spheres from which it had been previously excluded. More Africans were allowed into the state machinery and into foreign companies. With this measure, new African elite, otherwise called indigenous African bourgeoisie was created (Nkrumah, 1970).

Nkrumah observes that during the national liberation struggle, the African bourgeoisie could be classified into three main categories as follows: (1) There were those who were heavily committed to colonialism and to capitalist economic and social development. These were mainly those in the professions—lawyers,

doctors, civil servants and engineers. (2) The second category comprises what Nkrumah refers to as “revolutionary petty bourgeoisie”. This group is composed of nationalists who wanted to end colonial rule but who did not want to transform society along socialist direction. (3) The third category comprises those who were sceptical of victory being won by the national liberation movements as symbolised by vanguard parties like the Convention Peoples Party in Ghana. Members of this group avoided any confrontation with the colonial authorities such as the colonial police force and so, sat on the fence as passive onlookers (Nkrumah, 1970).

In spite of the split roles the categories of indigenous African bourgeoisie played during the struggle for national liberation, they remained for the most part a comprador bourgeoisie class, “sharing in some of the profits which imperialism drains from Africa” (Nkrumah 1970, p. 57). Nkrumah further reveals that under conditions of colonialism and neo-colonialism, the African bourgeoisie will never be encouraged by either neo-colonial or colonial authorities to strengthen its base in economic circle, since this would amount to creating indigenous business that would compete with foreign markets. In this direction, the African bourgeoisie largely remains a subordinate partner to foreign capitalism. Because of this constraint, the African bourgeoisie cannot, in Nkrumah’s view, achieve power as a class or administer affairs without the support of reactionary feudal elements within a neo-colonial country, or without the political, economic and military support of international capitalism.

In essence, Nkrumah observes that the indigenous African bourgeoisie is connected in spirit and flesh to imperialism, and hence provides the fundamental means by which international monopoly finance continues to plunder Africa.

...the bourgeoisie as a whole cannot be seen in isolation from imperialism, colonialism and neo-colonialism. While representing only a very small fraction of the population it is nevertheless a great danger to the African masses because of the strength it derives from its dependence on foreign bourgeois capitalism which seeks to keep the peasants and workers of Africa in a condition of perpetual subjection (Nkrumah 1970, p. 63).

The second socio-economic class which Nkrumah identifies in *Class Struggle* is the proletariat. The proletariat in post colonial Africa comprises workers who worked in mines and industries in some urban centres in Africa, prominently in South African mines. Nkrumah underscores the view that on the eve of independence, a modern proletariat already existed in Africa, though its number was relatively small. He recognises this class as a class that can be relied upon in building socialism in Africa. Thus, the proletariat in Africa must be seen within the context of the international working-class movement, a movement from which the proletariat in Africa derives its strength.

Nkrumah associates the emergence of the working-class in Africa with foreign capital and colonialism. Since colonialism discourages the establishment of large scale industrialisation in overseas territories, the size of the working-class in Africa had remained relatively small. However, though the size of the working-

class was insignificant at the time of independence, nevertheless, it played a significant role in the national liberation struggle. Employing non-violent measures such as boycotts of European goods, demonstrations and protest movements, the working-class in Africa succeeded in disrupting economic activities in the colonies and engendered great embarrassment to the colonial administration (Nkrumah, 1970). Nkrumah cites Kenya, Nigeria, Ghana and Guinea, as examples of countries in which demonstrations and boycotts organised by the working-class gradually led to political independence. For the purpose of illustration, Ghana is exemplified by the 1948 riots and the subsequent declaration of Positive Action in 1950. Nigeria is exemplified by the 1930 Aba riots and other riots similar to the Aba Riots. The *Mau Mau* movement in Kenya equally kept the British busy until independence was won.

Nkrumah points out that the African working class or proletariat remains largely illiterate and so, it is not conscious of itself as a class. This explains why it is not revolutionary. Thus, political education was needed to awaken them, so that they could become revolutionary. Though this class supported independence movements against the colonial power during the struggle for political independence, such support was provoked by the racist and discriminatory practices perpetrated by colonialism. In other words, the African proletariat suffered racism; it was discriminated against and abused in mining areas and other manufacturing and service industries. Nkrumah cites Senegal as an example of African countries where the illiteracy problem which prevents the African working-class from becoming revolutionary abounds. For instance, in post-

colonial Senegal, 99 percent illiteracy rate amongst women and 95 percent men illiteracy were conditions that did not help the working-class to become conscious of itself as a class (Nkrumah, 1970). In view of this obstacle, Nkrumah strongly believes that the working-class in Africa, who lives and works in urban centres, can be relied upon to carry out the socialist revolution which will in turn lead to the establishment of a socialist society. His reason is that the combination of the urban proletariat with the peasant class in the rural areas would swell up the number in order to bring such a revolution about (Nkrumah, 1970)

The third category of class to be discussed or analysed by Nkrumah is the peasantry. Nkrumah credits the peasantry as a class capable of carrying out a socialist revolution, partly because it was alienated from the fruits of its labour and was therefore discontented. In Nkrumah's opinion therefore, this class needed education to activate its dormant revolutionary potentials. Nkrumah recognises that though the African peasant class constituted 80 percent of the African population in the post-independent era, it was "dispersed, unorganised and for the most part unrevolutionary" (Nkrumah, 1970, p. 75). Nkrumah observes that the peasantry constituted the largest contingent of the working-class, and so it should be seen as a potential class for socialist revolution in Africa. Its weakness lay in the fact that it is, in Nkrumah's estimation, dispersed, unorganized and for the most part unrevolutionary (Nkrumah, 1970). More so, in the rural areas the peasantry is exploited by capitalist absentee land lords through rent. Nkrumah identifies the absentee landlords to be African land proprietors

...who live in the urban areas in luxury, while with the aid of capital, they control vast stretches of land in the rural areas [as a major means of production]. They live by exploiting the farm worker... Thus the farm labourer does not get guaranteed wages. He almost lives from hand to mouth. Hence the struggle between capital and labour..." (Nkrumah, 1970, p. 76).

Nkrumah sees the peasant class as a class that owns the smallest property in the rural areas. In other words, the peasant works a little land with or without livestock. The situation was however different in some southern African countries such as South Africa, Zimbabwe, and Kenya in East Africa, where large plantations were owned by corporations and individuals affiliated to the metropolitan colonial power. Generally, the peasant in Africa is largely dependent on natural factors; reasonable rainfall pattern brings him bumper harvest; bad weather or drought ruins him and forces him to become a paid agriculture labourer, who has to work on somebody's large plantation or farm in return for pittance. Like primitive societies that we find in Marx's historical classification that depended entirely on natural forces of production with their accompanying risks for either agricultural activity or domestication of animals, the peasant in Africa seems to face similar risks.

As a result of the ever rising cost of living among other things, for instance, soaring prices of manufactured goods bring more difficulties to the peasant. Moreover, since the peasant produces practically all the basic necessities of life at home, and rarely requires exchange of his product so that he could

accumulate capital for use as insurance against future contingency, the onset of natural factors such as excessive rainfall, floods and drought affect the peasant's standard of living. In short, the peasant's life is governed by insecurity for the most part (Nkrumah, 1970). However, Nkrumah recognises this class as a potentially revolutionary class, if only it is led by the urban and rural proletariat. He thinks that the revolutionary potential of the peasants and agricultural labourers must be developed because it is this class that is capable of providing the African socialist revolution with its main strength. Nkrumah therefore thinks that it is the task of the revolutionary cadres to politically awaken the peasant class to the realities of its revolutionary potential, and to win the peasant class and other petty farmers over to socialist form of organising agricultural production and distribution (Nkrumah, 1970). This objective, in Nkrumah's opinion, could be accomplished through the development of agricultural co-operatives backed by modern, mechanised and socialist form of production.

Nkrumah laments that the peasantry in Africa still lives under conditions which are not visibly different from conditions in pre-colonial and colonial periods. This is so because, apart from the economic, social and political exploitation the peasants suffer in the hands of neo-colonial firms, imperialism, and the national bourgeoisie, they bear heavy tax burdens, and in some cases and areas, they are compelled to do forced labour in order to subsist. Nkrumah therefore stresses education as a significant step towards the liberation of the peasantry from their ignorance. Due to the high rate of illiteracy among the peasant class, the colonial authorities exploited this weakness by co-opting the

rank and file of the peasants into the coercive arm of the state, namely, the armed forces, the prison service and the police service. The reason for this decision was that the peasants were regarded by the colonial authorities as submissive, conservative and more loyal to the colonial government than their native traditional authorities.

Nkrumah expresses optimism that the supposed loyalty of the peasantry, its conservative nature and its submissiveness to regimes of erstwhile colonial countries can be overcome through political education. Thus, just as peasant revolutions resulted in the overthrow of bourgeois governments in countries such as China (1948), Russia (1917), Cuba (1959), and Vietnam (1960), Nkrumah contends that if the peasant class is awakened through political education and brought into alliance with the rural proletariat, which together form the overwhelming majority of the African population, the socialist revolution he wished to see could be realised. He writes: “The countryside is the bastion of the revolution. It is the revolutionary battlefield in which the peasantry in alliance with their natural class allies—proletariat and revolutionary intelligentsia—are the driving force for socialist construction and transformation” (Nkrumah, 1970, p. 79).

CHAPTER FOUR

A Critique of Kwame Nkrumah's Political Philosophy

We have shown in the previous chapters that political philosophy entails a reaction to an existing socio-political and economic order and a proposal of the way forward. Kwame Nkrumah diagnosed the problems confronting Africa as imperialism, capitalism and neo-colonial forces which militated against the realisation of peace, political stability and socio-economic progress in Africa. Against this background, Nkrumah proposed three remedies for the progress of Africa, namely, political independence, continental unity and the socialist system of production and distribution. The object of this chapter is to carry out a critique of these three themes, which constitute the core of Nkrumah's political philosophy.

First, Nkrumah's much celebrated statement, 'seek ye first the political kingdom and all other independences will be added unto you' appears problematic (Mazrui, 1963). There is no doubt that sound economic planning on a continental scale could only be realised if the whole of the African continent were united under one federal democratic state. Nevertheless, if political emancipation is sought not as a means to an end but as an end in itself, any other independence such as cultural and economic independence would be made superfluous. In other words, what advocates of political independence, including

Nkrumah, overlook is a distinction in the science of logic. The flaw inherent in Nkrumah's political philosophy is his inability to distinguish between necessary and sufficient conditions.

Political independence was certainly a necessary condition for Africa to realise any of her fundamental aspirations- be they spiritual, material or technological. But by itself, the political kingdom as advocated by Nkrumah is not a sufficient condition for the attainment of all other independences.

Writing as far back as 1945, Nkrumah appeared to have embraced the Marxist thesis when he indicates in *Towards Colonial Freedom* that "the imperialists powers need the raw materials and cheap native labour of the colonies for their own capitalist industries ..." (Nkrumah, 1962, p. 16). The above conviction appears to be consistent with the central Marxist hypothesis of economic determinism, which claims that the ultimate basis of social behaviour and distribution of power lays in the realm of economics. Nevertheless, as Nkrumah got involved in the nationalist liberation struggle, he retreated in a significant manner from economic determinism. Nkrumah perhaps felt that it was no longer economic power that determined political matters. He argued that "political power is the inescapable pre-requisite to economic and social power" (Nkrumah, 1961, p. 162).

Nkrumah tried to reconvert to economic determinism when he remarked that "political independence is but a facade if economic freedom is not possible also" (Nkrumah, 1961, p. 44). Perhaps, this realisation on Nkrumah's part is an indication of the fact that the attainment of political independence, if not

accompanied with a change in economic relationship, would give rise to what Nkrumah himself calls 'client states'(Nkrumah,1965). Thus, the whole doctrine of neo-colonialism seems to support the idea that real power ultimately lies with those who are economically powerful. Perhaps, economic independence had proved Nkrumah wrong in his old optimism of "seek ye first the political kingdom and all other things will be added to you". Nkrumah appears to have come to the realisation that political independence on its own lacks the power to add the other independences to itself. It is therefore important to stress that the publication of *Neo-colonialism: the Last Stage of Imperialism* was an attempt by Nkrumah to reconcile his dilemma about what was more primordial– political independence or economic independence.

In his foreword to Jaramogi Odinga Oginga's *Not yet Uhuru*, Nkrumah summed up his continental union vision as follows:

It is clear than ever before that the political union of Africa, which has been one of my main pre-occupation since the attainment of independence by Ghana, is the key to Africa's economic and political stability, peace and progress. A Union Government of Africa backed by organized military power and sound continental and economic planning is bound to compel nations outside to respect our collective interest (Odinga, 1967, p. xiii)

Though the continental union dream which is clearly illustrated by the above statement was a noble idea, nonetheless the strategies, methods and procedures employed by Nkrumah towards its realisation were to a large extent

flawed. For instance, prior to the European incursion into and subsequent colonisation of Africa, Africans were not united on a continental scale. Empires and kingdoms in Africa such as the Oyo Empire, the Asante kingdom, the Songhay Empire, as well as the Mali Empire, among others, rose and fell. Their rise and decline could perhaps be attributed largely to internal wranglings that eventually became hindrances to the growth and further development of these empires and kingdoms. For instance, the sultan of Morocco, Ahmad al-Mansur Saadi invaded and destroyed the Songhay Empire when he suspected that the bulk of gold reaching the Middle East came from that region. This invasion did not come from Europe but was inflicted by one kingdom in Africa on another. Hence, to present the case as if Africa was united prior to the European advent but was disbanded during the colonial contact with Africa is to distort the historical facts.

And yet when it appeared that factors like race, language, common culture and common territory constituted a bulwark against continental unity, Nkrumah remained unrelenting and idealistic, and kept arguing as follows : "there are those who maintain that Africa cannot unite because we lack the three necessary ingredients for unity, a common race, culture and language ...yet in spite of this I am convinced that the forces making for unity far outweigh those which divide us" (Nkrumah,1963, p. 132). Repeating his conviction of unity in the midst of the above factors, Nkrumah argues in *Class Struggle in Africa* that "The notion that in order to have unity it is necessary for there to be a common language, a common territory and a common culture, has failed to stand the test of time or the scrutiny of scientific definition of objective reality" (Nkrumah, 1970, p. 88). But it is

significant to stress that it was basically some or all of the above factors that made continental unity difficult to realise. It is therefore a wonder as to why Nkrumah failed to consider these factors as militating against continental unity and take measures towards addressing them. How could the Islamised and Arabised North Africans be incorporated into Sub-Saharan, southern and East African communities without any clash of cultures? In terms of language, what was going to be the preferred language of the continental union government? It appears Nkrumah down played the effects the above factors could play in the continental unity he envisaged.

Nkrumah's conviction that the forces allowing for unity outweigh those forces which were against unity was a conviction which did not reflect the existing reality at the time. All the same, one could still argue that the most important development that could perhaps consolidate the economic and political independence of a continent which was emerging from colonial rule was the continental unity Nkrumah proposed. Continental unity would have given Africa an upper hand in the handling of such issues like diplomacy, security threats, potential civil wars, sound economic planning and a unified political front. More so, Nkrumah can be faulted not on the basis of his vision for Africa, but on the appropriateness of the means which he relied upon in order to bring about the continental unity. In other words, though Nkrumah's vision of a united Africa was desirable, the tactics he employed to realise this dream antagonised other African heads of states who combined to form a formidable opposition against him.

Nkrumah employed diplomacy and subversion to help him realise the continental union dream. The reliance on subversion as a strategy for unity for instance did more to harm that objective than Nkrumah probably realised. Those independence African leaders who found it politically imprudent to support the concept of African unity could concentrate the attacks on the means which Nkrumah had employed—and that is precisely what happened. Indeed it was their combined opposition which ultimately guaranteed the stagnation of continental union (Tunteng, 1973)

Not only was the tactic of subversion pointless, the men whom Nkrumah relied for its realisation and implementation made the situation more complicated. The men Nkrumah relied upon were generally referred to as fellow freedom fighters (Tunteng, 1973). However, within the rank and file of these fellow freedom fighters were nationalist leaders from southern Africa, refugees, anarchists and political exiles. Apart from trying to liberate dependent territories, some tried to overthrow legitimate governments in Black Africa. These were mainly opposition elements who failed to win power in their countries. Rather than submit to the authority of their leaders, they came to Ghana and hoped to overthrow legitimate governments in their respective countries, in order to take over the political leadership. Indeed, Nkrumah supported some of these disgruntled opposition elements with the hope that they could carry out a simultaneous task of overthrowing governments that were not favourable to Nkrumah's goal of African unification and sympathising with Nkrumah's continental union objective. African leaders who failed to subscribe to Nkrumah's

continental union dream were labelled by Nkrumah as agents of neo-colonialism. The overall negative effect of the use of subversion as an instrument of African unification was that it made Nkrumah's fellow independence leaders suspicious of him and so they made sure that African unity never became a reality.

It is also significant to stress that in his quest for African unification, Nkrumah was dealing with leaders of sovereign African states and not aspiring revolutionaries. These leaders were as much eminent nationalists to their followers as Nkrumah was to Ghanaians. Through hard struggles against colonialism, most of these leaders had attained enviable rewarding leadership positions which they could not be expected to surrender in favour of African unity. Besides, such leaders had national commitments such as economic development, social development and the security and well-being of their people. Such leaders were therefore not prepared to unilaterally commit their countries to the pursuit of continental unity. It was this factor that Nkrumah never carefully considered. His idealism goaded him to perceive continental union government as a glorious objective, but his impatience made him hostile to those who proposed and favoured gradual approach to African unification.

To conceive of Africa as an indivisible entity is an unassailable Pan-Africanist ambition, but to rely on this vision as a basis for policy may be a major miscalculation (Tunteng, 1973). This appeared to have been the bane of Nkrumah's strategy. He drew little distinction between his vision of an indivisible Africa and the diplomatic necessity to effect its realisation. Nkrumah's reliance on subversion appeared to have guaranteed the futility of his diplomacy. He failed to

realise that subversion and diplomacy are not complementary strategies. Once he attempted to oust some African leaders through subversion, such strategy made his diplomatic moves suspicious. We can conclude that continental unity never became a reality mainly as a result of Nkrumah's simultaneous application of incompatible methodologies, namely, diplomacy and subversion. Other strategies such as cautious diplomacy might have proved more rewarding.

In *Consciencism*, Nkrumah tried to demonstrate that two cultures, namely, Euro-Christian and Islamic culture have exercised tremendous influence on the mind of the African. At independence, therefore, Nkrumah felt that such a disoriented African mind needed to be addressed. The ideal remedy for this situation is what Nkrumah referred to as philosophical consciencism. He defines philosophical consciencism as "...the map in intellectual terms of the disposition of forces which will enable African society to digest the Western and the Islamic and Euro-Christian elements in Africa, and develop them in such a way that they fit into the African personality" (Nkrumah, 1964, p. 78). Nkrumah's consciencism is what Mazuri has referred to as the triple heritage, which is perhaps implausible as the original concept itself, because if heritage is seen as a positive legacy bequeathed to one by one's ancestors, it is a wonder how Islamic and Euro-Christian cultures constitute a heritage to the African.

The proposition of philosophical consciencism as the remedy to the confused African psyche is quite implausible. We agree with Nkrumah that by accident of European colonial advent and Islamic intrusion into Africa, post-independence Africa harbours two filaments of patriarchal monotheism; to wit,

Islam and Christianity. These two strands of monotheism are antagonistic to African traditional culture and religion, because they recognise only a single path to salvation. The one recognises Christ as the only route to salvation while the other recognises Mohammed. But African indigenous religion recognises several routes to salvation. Nkrumah fails to recognise that the metaphysics underpinning the thought process of African traditional world view is basically a pluralistic metaphysics (Okoro, 2010). And this kind of metaphysics recognises that nature or reality is multiple; this kind of metaphysics cannot be easily reconciled with the monistic metaphysics of Euro-Christian and Islamic cultures. It is therefore a puzzle as to how the proposed harmony of the triple heritage Nkrumah envisaged was going to be harnessed in order to achieve a harmonious co-existence? This leaves an analytical vacuum Nkrumah did not fill.

We think that philosophical consciencism as a theory of decolonisation is fraught with metaphysical discrepancy. Granted, Nkrumah had argued in "African Socialism Revisited," that we should not recapture the structure of traditional African society but its spirit, for the spirit of communalism is crystallised in its humanism (Nkrumah, 1967). Nevertheless, the programme outlined by Nkrumah in order to achieve the goal of winning back the disoriented African psyche is quite inappropriate. This probably explains why colonial structures and institutions were not reformed or adopted to suit Africans in general when political independence was won. For instance, a vital element of state's life such as education was still left in the hands of colonial missionaries. What was worse,

the medium of instruction in most African schools remained fundamentally foreign language.

There is no doubt among scholars that Kwame Nkrumah was a socialist. However, what is contestable in scholarship is exactly what type of socialist Nkrumah was. What even makes the situation more difficult is Nkrumah's wavering approach towards various conceivable brands of socialism. Nkrumah appears to have demonstrated gross inconsistency in his socialist theorising. At one point Nkrumah expresses preference for African communalism, which he equates with socialism, but at another point he dismisses such conception and labels it a fetish thought because "... to suppose that there are tribal, national or racial socialisms is to abandon objectivity in favour of chauvinism" (Nkrumah, 1967, p. 208). In one instance, Nkrumah tries to prove that because Africa never experienced the Industrial Revolution, socialism could be achieved through reforms. In his later works, like *Class Struggle* and *Revolutionary Path*, Nkrumah now argues that the realisation of socialism in Africa was solely dependent on revolution. Nkrumah appeared to have been proved wrong by the prevailing development of the social conditions of his time. Even so, one could still argue that Nkrumah's inconsistency about the socialist debate regarding the right way to achieving socialism in Africa could be blamed on his idealisation of the glorious history of traditional African society, a mistake he realised rather too late in his political career. While Nkrumah was busy expounding the basic tenets of socialism, some members of his government appeared to have ignored him and were amassing wealth for self-aggrandisement. As he writes:

...the basic organisation of many African societies in different periods of history manifested a certain communalism and that the philosophy and humanist purposes behind that organisation are worthy of recapture....Thus what socialist thought in Africa must recapture is not the structure of traditional African society but its spirit, for the spirit of communalism is crystallised in its humanism and its reconciliation of individual advancement with group welfare (Nkrumah, 1967, p. 203).

Perhaps, Nkrumah's inconsistency lies in the fact that he was trying to ancientise and at the same time modernise the post-colonial African society with the kind of socialism he envisaged. But this is incompatible with scientific socialism which recognises a discontinuation with the past through the adoption of more sophisticated and scientific means of production. What is more, the post-colonial African society is a confused society. The assurance of the old ancestral society is no more. The African tradition and religion of the old society had been utterly undermined by Western colonialism, science and technology, industrialisation as well as Christianity and Islam. The institutions which our ancestors fashioned over the centuries to cope with the problems of their environment have been rendered almost obsolete and indeed anachronistic. It was therefore simplistic for Nkrumah to suppose that the scientific socialist state he wanted to build could co-exist easily and harmoniously with the spirit of traditional African communalism.

Nkrumah can be said to have committed the error of reductionism by reducing most of Africa's problems to crisis of religion resulting from the combined presence of the Islamic tradition, Euro-Christian and traditional African culture. It can be argued that the combined presence of the above three religions in Africa cannot constitute a sufficient condition for the African psyche to be disoriented. In other words, even if the above factors constitute a sufficient basis for the African psyche to be disoriented, it is possible for psychological, social, political and economic progress to exist alongside the combined presence of the three religions. The argument can even be stretched further. One can argue that in post-colonial Africa there were perhaps far-reaching socio-economic and political problems that required more attention than the religious factor Nkrumah identified. It might have turned out that if other problems such as the basic needs of life had been given more attention, the religious factor may have perhaps become superfluous. The economic needs or the basic necessities of man may have been the motivating factor behind Obafemi Awolowo's saying that the central problem of man is economic: all other problems whatsoever are ancillary (Awolowo, 1977). Here, Awolowo, a contemporary of Nkrumah, was underscoring the primacy of economic independence as against political independence. Thus, the challenges of the post-colonial African state are much more than psychological crisis caused by the combined co-existence of the above three religions. It would have been useful for Nkrumah to look beyond the confines of religion in his search for cure for the post-colonial African state.

Besides, Nkrumah's critique of religion invites more questions than it provides answers. In keeping with Marxian tradition, Nkrumah's sees religion as false consciousness and so he could remark that "I am an Orthodox Marxist and a non-denominational Christian and I have seen no contradiction in that" (Nkrumah, 1957, p. 135). Nkrumah however glorified African communalism as one of the best socio-political and economic systems in traditional Africa which was devoid of a class structure and exploitation of man by man. Though Nkrumah later corrected his idealisation of the past African traditional system, nevertheless he failed to realise that African communalism thrived on African religious ethics—a body of norms which admonishes everyone to be his or her brother's keeper. It was this religious ethic of African communalism which frowns on individualism by threatening potential greedy people with calamitous happenings. People in traditional Africa were afraid to incur the wrath of a god should they become individualistic. This religious ethic sustained African communalism and made it appear egalitarian. Thus, Nkrumah's critique of religion in general amounts to a veiled attack on African Traditional Religion, a kind of religion whose ethics sustained the supposed egalitarianism of African communalism— a productive system Nkrumah idealised. What Nkrumah should have done was to defend the view as postulated by Mbiti that the African is deeply spiritual and not necessarily religious because the two terms are not co-terminous.

Still on Nkrumah's philosophical consciencism, the theory can be seen to be incoherent when it is examined carefully. It is interesting to note that philosophical consciencism is constructed on the word 'conscience' and yet not

once is this word from which consciencism is derived is mentioned. It is interesting to note that since Democritus, in whose fragments the word conscience was first considered, it has been consistently used to refer to the remorse that humans experience after a wrong deed, and the cause of joy and hope for people who lead just lives. Hence the etymology of the expression philosophical consciencism is conscience, an inner psychological or mental state which gives one a sense of remorse for a wrong act and a sense of hope and happiness after executing a good act. The word 'conscience' upon which philosophical consciencism derives its foundation and meaning is nonmaterial. However, Nkrumah's philosophical consciencism is grounded on vulgar materialism of the Marxian kind. This is unacceptable. Philosophical consciencism can therefore be seen as a half-constructed theory which neither reflects the spiritual nature of the African, his world view and his politics, nor the original word from which it was coined. Thus the whole of *Consciencism* is more of a disquisition on the history of philosophy than of a political philosophy addressed to the African people groaning under estrangement.

Political philosophy that is addressed to the administrative, organisational and intellectual leadership of Africa, and which hopes to appeal to the African conscience must perhaps begin with contemporary African problems couched in a more comprehensive form. Pretensions to specialisation in the history of Western philosophical systems in a manner that does not reflect the concrete realities of contemporary African experience would appear to be pointless (Okadigbo, 1985). To be sure, the pressing need for change and development in post-colonial Africa

can perhaps be properly articulated and tackled within the matrix of a concrete redefinition of the objectives and the strategy of the political struggle, in which the concrete goals of the liberation and subsequent reconstruction of the African nation-state could be determined.

Again, Nkrumah's examination of African communalism *vis a vis* its humanist impulse is based on a fundamental error. For instance, Nkrumah assumes without proof that "If one seeks the socio-political ancestor of socialism, one must go to communalism.... In socialism, the principles underlying communalism are given expression in modern circumstances" (Nkrumah, 1964, p. 72). But this assumption and conclusion could not have been borne out of a careful and objective inquiry into African communalism. A careful look at African communalism and its modes of production reveals that Nkrumah's position on the egalitarian structure of African communalism was far from the truth. Nkrumah's observation was based on a faulty logic because he appeared not to have worked out the basic features of African communalism yet he made reference to its egalitarianism and humanism and then proceeded in an arbitrary fashion to identify these tenets with orthodox Marxian postulations. In fact, Gyekye points out with ample evidence that the concept of the capitalist system of production was existent in traditional African ways of managing the economy. So in failing to appreciate the individualist aspects in traditional thought process, Nkrumah and his contemporary independence leaders may be described as "unrestricted, radical and extreme in their philosophical position on the communitarian idea...." (Gyekye, 1997, p. 149).

Gyekye's profound insights into the difference between communalism and socialism is worthy of note. We recall that in *Consciencism* Nkrumah pointed out that socialism is a continuity of communalism and that the principles underlying these two theories are the same. This is an assertion without proof. But this relation is not a logical relation because the relation between the two systems can logically be negated on the grounds that "... not everything that can be asserted of communalism can be asserted also of socialism, and vice versa" (Gyekye, 1997, p. 148). Therefore, Nkrumah's argument that there is a "continuity of communalism with socialism" should be seen as unfounded. With regard to land ownership, this assertion by Nkrumah is also false. This is so because modern ownership of land under a socialist government cannot be seen to be the same as the ownership of land under a communalist government.

More over, contrary to the supposition by most of the independence African leaders, including Nkrumah, that the African in traditional Africa did not exhibit individualism, many studies in the traditional African system of production have proven this assertion to be false. Various fields of life in traditional Africa have shown that individualism is not necessarily a Western lifestyle but is manifested by the entire human race. In the area of religion, petitions requested the gods to grant material blessings such as protection from danger, riches and health. Land was also perhaps not communally managed but owned by family heads, stools or clan heads as pertained in Asante (Gyekye, 1997). It would also be observed that the African desire for personal wealth and particularly for profit found expression in the field of commercial activities. This

is exemplified in the history of the Trans-Saharan trade, where African traders plied the trade routes from West Africa to North Africa. These African traders traded in kola, gold, salt and other commodities. These were private individuals who acquired wealth and made profits. Hence, Nkrumah's view that "the presuppositions and purposes of capitalism are contrary to those of African society" was not supported if one scrutinises the ideas and practices of economic thought and management of the traditional system. We agree with Gyekye that "capitalism was already a palpable feature of the pre-colonial system of economic management" (Gyekye, 1997, p. 157).

Throughout his political treatise, one gets the impression that Nkrumah was out to blame all the evils of Africa on Western imperialism and colonialism and that he saw socialism as the ultimate prescription for the cure of the ills in Africa such as poverty, inequality and illiteracy. His preference for scientific socialism seems to suggest that the evils of exploitation which is inherent in the capitalist system of production or the free market economy are checked in the socialist system of production. This conclusion ignores the view that exploitation is a human phenomenon, irrespective of whatever system of production is adopted. Thus, what should be checked for the purpose of eliminating exploitation is not the system but the human beings who operate the system. All the same, capitalism should take much of the blame because it enhances the modes by which individualism can be unleashed.

Finally, on the one party system Nkrumah adopted in independent Ghana, which attracted several criticisms from some political commentators and

historians, such as the Kenyan foremost historian, Mazrui, one can raise a major objection against Nkrumah's choice of the one-party system. We assert that it is against the soul of every human being to be in bondage or to have his or her freedom stifled. And so to make it virtually impossible for an alternative method of changing Nkrumah's one party government is to stifle human freedom and soul. And once the craving of the human soul for freedom explodes, it virtually eclipses everything on its way. It was this human craving for freedom that in the long run ousted Nkrumah from power.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

It is the contention of this dissertation that since the Golden Age of Greece, and especially since Plato, the primary aim of political philosophy concerns how the ideal state could be attained. Thus, theorising on the ideal political philosophy suitable to post-colonial Africa did not escape the intellectual curiosity of most African independent leaders including Kwame Nkrumah. African leaders reasoned that much of the progress that Africa stood to make would largely depend on the kind of political philosophy it adopted. Thus, we dedicated Chapter one of this thesis to examining and clarifying the subject matter of political philosophy as it was used by African independence leaders and especially, Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana.

Chapter two of this dissertation examined the related literature on the topic under consideration. It revealed that not many intellectual attempts, either in the field of political science or political philosophy or both, have been made to synthesize Kwame Nkrumah's political discourse or thought into a coherent political philosophy. We thus proceeded to examine Nkrumah's thought in order to find out what uniquely constitutes Kwame Nkrumah's political philosophy which is worthy of intellectual attention. We ascertain that three thematic areas constitute the political philosophy of Kwame Nkrumah. These are the political emancipation of Africa, the continental unification of Africa and the adoption of the socialist system of production for the proposed continental union government of Africa. We conclude that these three themes are either missing or examined in

isolation in much of the literature that we have reviewed in this work. We thus, systematised these themes in order to sieve the weaknesses from the strengths of Kwame Nkrumah's political philosophy. The weaknesses of Nkrumah's political philosophy constitute the forms of our critique in the last chapter of this thesis.

In Chapter three, the thesis painstakingly carried out an exposition of Nkrumah's political philosophy, concentrating on the three themes we have identified, namely, political independence, African unity, and socialism. The objective in carrying out this exposition was to isolate the weaknesses inherent in Nkrumah's political philosophy, in order to inform and enrich our critique. In this exposition, we realised that political liberation which was dear to Nkrumah and which he expressed in "seek ye first the political kingdom and all others shall be added unto ye", constitutes for him, both the necessary and sufficient condition for all other independences, including social and economic progress. Apart from political independence, Nkrumah reasoned that African territories such as Ghana and Nigeria that had regained their political freedom could not stand on their own, politically and economically, unless they were welded into a continental union government with common defence, sound economic planning and central political administration. This is what Nkrumah referred to as African unity or the continental union government of Africa. Since Nkrumah blamed the capitalist system of production for Africa's economic and social backwardness, he proposed the socialist system of production as the panacea to Africa's underdevelopment. In other words, Nkrumah felt that the continental union Government of Africa could stand on its own only if it was backed by the socialist

system of production. As Nkrumah succinctly puts it in *Class Struggle in Africa*, “...the achievements of African Union and socialism are organically complementary; the one cannot be achieved without the other” (Nkrumah 1970, p. 84).

We concluded our study of Nkrumah’s political philosophy by carrying out a critique in chapter four. We discovered, among other weaknesses, that Nkrumah’s call for continental unity is premised on a historical distortion, largely because Africa was not united on a continental scale before the advent of European colonisation. This historical fact is contrary to Nkrumah’s assertion that Africa was balkanised by the European colonial powers during the advent of colonialism. We also discovered that consciencism as an ideology for Africa’s decolonisation is flawed on two grounds: the combined presence of the ‘triple heritage’ (Islamic culture, Euro-Christian culture and traditional African culture) constitutes only a necessary but not a sufficient basis for the disorientation of the African conscience. Besides, the presence of the three cultures in Africa does not appear to constitute the only fundamental national reconstruction challenge in post-colonial Africa. Other equally significant challenges such as economic and social factors needed much more attention and redress even more than the religious question. It is the contention of this thesis that the political kingdom Nkrumah advocated as the way to all other independences only constitute a necessary but not a sufficient condition for all other indices of progress. This is so because considered in itself, political liberation falls short of other independences. We realised also that significant as Nkrumah’s conviction of continental unity

appeared to be, the political tools such as diplomacy and subversion which were simultaneously and somewhat arbitrarily deployed towards the realisation of this kind of unity were inappropriate as they failed to address challenges of the continental union vision.

We have also seen that Nkrumah's idealisation of Africa's history did not leave him much space and time to objectively elucidate the socialist thesis he puts forward. In his attempt to Africanise Marxian socialism, Nkrumah ended up affirming the basic tenets of Marxian socialism (historical and dialectical materialism). *Class struggle in Africa* and *Handbook on Revolutionary Warfare*, two of Nkrumah later books that lean heavily on Marxian socialism, further exemplify this ambivalence in Nkrumah's political philosophy.

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